

editorials

Legislature picking its way through college mine field

The Nebraska Legislature should tread carefully as it winds its way through the mine field of post-secondary education.

A legislative committee, headed by Sens. Jerome Warner of Waverly and Frank Lewis of Bellevue, probably already realizes what it has stumbled into. It is holding hearings across the state to determine public opinion on legislation ending duplication in post-secondary education.

In other words, the committee is looking at cutting some programs at some of the state-supported colleges and NU. The idea is not to have the state pay for the same program twice.

That idea is good. But cutting programs at some schools is like pulling teeth.

Local interests do not support cuts in local schools. This is especially true of NU's little brothers, the state colleges, some of whom are fighting for their lives.

Indeed, NU is not anxious to be forced into cutting certain programs either, although officials say they generally are pleased with preliminary suggestions.

The arguments against cuts are almost as good as arguments for eliminating duplication.

Each school or technical community college serves its area for the most part. Some students, like those out at Chadron in the western part of the state, may not want to come to Lincoln for school. It's the old big school syndrome about

getting lost among 22,000 students.

They want freedom of choice to go where they want. So, they would prefer keeping as many programs as possible at local colleges.

NU is not without its complaints. It does not want to give up some less-than-four-year programs that do not lead to bachelor's degrees.

Let's be honest. For each school the simple economic fact is more students, more money. Cuts which eliminate some programs—and some students—are opposed in the interests of the institution. It's hard to fault a school for sticking up for itself.

However, in the interests of the state, some cuts are indicated. Some duplication is necessary, but some can be eliminated.

Where should the cuts be made? We hope the Legislature's committee comes up with some good options. Of course, we have our ideas, too . . .

Maybe we're biased because we think NU serves the state with its complete education. Maybe we're biased because we don't think it's all bad that students are exposed to thousands—not hundreds—of ideas and can learn from that experience.

We don't think it hurts to travel some to get to Lincoln. And it's not bad to get away from home sometimes.

Of course, we're biased . . .



letters to the editor

Raphael Zariski asserts (*Daily Nebraskan*, Dec. 2) that the (Palestinian Liberation Organization) PLO wants to destroy Israel and perform genocide on the Jews.

Actually, the PLO wants to establish a secular, democratic state in Israel. This would be a state in which the interests of both Jews and Palestinians are represented.

Zariski, like other Zionists, immediately pounces upon this and exploits the guilt of Americans and Europeans. To gain sympathy he concocts the charge of genocide.

But it is the foreign Zionists who have been massacring the native Palestinians.

In Deir Yasin, more than 200 Arab civilians were murdered by the Irgun, led by Menahem Begin. Yes, the same Begin who now leads Israel. Begin even boasted about the operation.

In Kafr Kasim, Arab civilians were again rounded up and murdered by Israeli border police.

And, of course, there are the air attacks reminiscent of Nixon's bombing of Vietnam. The Israeli's logic seems to be that if you kill more Palestinians, there will be less of them to return their country.

If there is a Jehovah, and if he is just, Israel will pay for these crimes.

Krishna Madan

Cronkite, doing his job, stumbles into diplomacy

New York—He didn't think anything of it. On Wednesday of that week, there was a report that President Anwar Sadat of Egypt said he wanted to go to Israel to negotiate a peace settlement. As Walter Cronkite read this in his office, he remembered the first time he had interviewed Sadat, in January of 1971.

"I would like to go to Israel," Sadat had said.

Cronkite jumped. He thought he had a major news story. When he asked Sadat, would you to Israel?

"As soon as there is peace," Sadat said.

"Oh," Cronkite said.

Now, on this Wednesday in 1977, Cronkite was unimpressed with Sadat's latest statement. But two days later, as he was preparing his CBS news story for Friday night, Cronkite found himself dealing with a story of how Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin had beamed a telecast at Arab countries and asked for the meeting with Sadat.

jimmy breslin



"We can help each other," Begin said. "It will be a pleasure to welcome and receive your president."

The gentle words came at a time of violence. Palestinians had set up Russian rocket launchers on bare rock-covered hills in Lebanon and fired down into the Israeli town of Nahariya, killing three people, one of them a mother reaching for her children. Immediately, Israeli jets dived at Palestinian camps in Lebanon and killed scores of people, including what seem to be prime targets in the Middle East: women and children.

Peaceful speeches

Yet no one took the peaceful speeches of Sadat and Begin seriously. Diplomats have taught the world that these things are impossible. There must be orderly methods of setting up such conferences, the diplomats tell you.

If people are killed while orderliness is being followed, then this is simply the price one pays for the necessity of conducting orderly diplomacy.

But it was a new story, Walter Cronkite knew. The trouble for him was that he thought it would be happening over the weekend, when he wasn't on the air.

"When I finished on that Friday night," he recalls, "I assumed that somebody would get to Sadat by Saturday and ask him about what it would take for him to go to Israel, and Sadat would give one of those 1971 answers and that would take care of the story. But on Saturday, nobody went to Sadat. Then on Saturday night, Bud Benjamin, the producer here, got on the phone. He lined up Sadat for an interview on Monday.

"I thought somebody would get Sadat before that. On Sunday, still nobody busts the story. On Monday at 9 a.m. I'm right outside there and we have Sadat."

He pointed through the glass walls of his office to a curved white desk that sat under a ring of tin-hooded spotlights. Two cameras were aimed at the desk. This is the place from which Cronkite reads the news to so much of the nation and, at times, to the world, each weekday night.

On this Monday morning Cronkite sat at his desk and was about to start a week that would end with Sadat in Jerusalem.

Cronkite spoke to Sadat on that morning through cameras that sent voices and images curving through the sky over continents. But the technique he used was about the oldest in the reporting business. You have grown so used to associating Cronkite with that multimillion-dollar voice that you forget that he was a major newsman before he knew what television was.

His record is simple: He went to fires and trials and to wars. He did not leave when there was shooting. And now, speaking to Anwar Sadat, Cronkite was slipped into what he calls his "rewrite man's syndrome." You interview a person, get him to say something, then immediately go to the man on the other side of the question and ask his reaction.

'What's next?'

"I said to him, 'What's next, Mr. President?' He said he had to have a formal invitation from Israel. He said that this perhaps would be arranged through America.

"Then I said to him, 'What are your conditions for a trip?' There goes the story now, I figured. I'll get the same answer from him that I did in 1971. And he did. He started talking about the 1967 boundaries and the Palestinians. I figured, there goes the speculation about any peace meetings. But I figured I still had a good story. We'd take these quotes to Begin and get his answer and at the end of the day there would be no more speculation about a meeting of Sadat and Begin.

"So I just said, well, in order to go to Israel you must have these concessions, and he said, 'On no no, I never said that. I said that they are the conditions for peace. They are not the conditions for a visit.' Now I used a word that people have pointed out is wrong. I said, 'What are your preconditions for the visit?' I should have said conditions, I guess. What was the difference at a time like this? Sadat knew what I meant. He said, 'On, I have none.'

A way out

"Now I had to ask him when would he come. I figured this would be his way to get out of it. But when I asked him, he said, 'As soon as possible.' Well, I knew what to do now. Let's make specific sense out of this. And right away. I said to him, 'Would you say within a week?' And Sadat said, 'You could say that.' And I said, 'No, would you say that?' And he said, 'Yes.'"

It was then 10 a.m. in New York, which was 5 p.m. in Tel Aviv. When Cronkite started to put the second half of the move together—get the other side's reaction—he was told that Menahem Begin was driving from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv for a speech and would be unavailable until after the speech. Cronkite finally waited. Begin appeared in a hotel room in Tel Aviv and his image came into the studio

on 57th Street and Cronkite talked to him. He told Begin that Sadat had said that he would, if invited, come to Israel within a week or so.

On the screen in front of Cronkite, Menahem Begin's figure shook a little.

"Well, if President Sadat is ready to come next week—if he tells me that he will come next week—I will have to postpone my trip to Britain, because I am . . ."

It was done. To get out of the trap, Sadat and Begin would have to chew off their legs.

Face hanging out

"You can say a thing in print, make a promise and then weasel out of it," Cronkite was saying the other night. "But when you make the promise with your face hanging out there on television, then you can't quit so easily. I could see a dozen reasons from Monday of that week until Saturday for the two of them to back out. But they had made these promises with their faces hanging out on television. And then the world became too excited by the news. There was no way for them to go back."

Cronkite was dressed in a light blue pinstriped suit, and a red tie. He had his feet on a desk and he was lighting a cigar. "We just put them on television and practiced lesson No. 1 in journalism: Ask questions and get reactions to the answers."

"Do you remember the first time you did it, calling up a couple of guys and getting a good story out of it?" he was asked.

TV diplomacy

His mind went back to wire service cubbyholes from Texas to London. He shook his head. "I can't remember one particular time I did it," he said. "It's all I've ever done, isn't it?" He took a drag on the cigar. "Now they'll call it TV diplomacy."

Sadat said Begin was speaking through the person regarded as the most believable of all American figures. There are many reasons why people believe Walter Cronkite. You can trust a man with those eyebrows.

He said his back hurt him and he decided to go home instead of stopping off for a drink. He put on a topcoat and walked out of the building and stood in the cold night mist and waved for a taxi.

"I was proud of my questions to them," he was saying. "They were short and succinct. After that, I don't know. They can call it whatever they want. To me, it was just a straight-assed journalism job."

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Ralph is missing

The Ralph comic strip will not appear in today's *Daily Nebraskan*. Apparently the strip was delayed in the mails and did not reach the *Daily Nebraskan* by publication time.

Hopefully, the comic strip, drawn by Ron Wheeler, will arrive in time for Wednesday's issue.