

Stupidity Surpassable

ANY normal-minded citizen who handles guns knows rule No. 1: Never point a gun at anybody unless you plan to shoot him.

The excuse that came from gunners in the Israeli fighter plane that shot down a Libyan commercial airliner last week and killed 106 passengers or crewmen on an off-course flight was that they "didn't mean to" shoot it down.

The kindest thing that can be said about this is that it reflected monumental, inexcusable stupidity. Only one thing could have justified it: Hard intelligence that the Libyan airliner's flight was not what it seemed — that it was hostile, armed and bent on a destructive mission instead of merely crossing ground it had no business

over. No such vindication has been found.

Instead, the world has witnessed in the international domain an incident that parallels the sickening reports from time to time about a street-beat officer who fires "warning shots" and kills a youngster who had swiped an apple from a fruit stand and was running off. Certainly the fugitive should stop — but is the crime worth someone's life . . . or death to 106?

The incident, of course, grew out of and embodied all the anger, hate, hostility and fear that blind both Arabs and Israelis in the whole Middle East. Understandably, the rage-reaction has been potent too.

But even the stupidity that brought it on can be surpassed and dwarfed if greater-still stupidity attempts to make this an excuse for something worse: Another round of open warfare in the Middle East.

Street-Parking Under Gun

WHEN a city council seriously talks about prohibiting almost half the on-street parking in a good-sized town full of cars, one safe bet is that a lot of wind will blow before the council gets through. Iowa City's councilmen ran this one up the pole recently, and hometown interest will be only part of what results from the provocative idea.

Take away the bellyaching that countless auto owners who lack driveways or garages naturally will do for reasons of expected personal inconvenience, and the parking-ban idea makes a good deal of sense.

Iowa City's approach aims at easing traffic congestion, promoting mass transit and making bus maneuvers easier by the removal of some 8,600 parking spaces from availability along bus routes, arterial streets and narrow residential streets. Such a system automatically would make it easier to clean streets and clear snow too.

One claim, of course, will be that people have as much right to park on public streets outside their homes or elsewhere as they do to drive on streets. The argument does not bear scrutiny too well.

In any town, almost all the older streets where traffic now is difficult were streets before they ever felt a car, parked or moving. Horses, buggies, wagons and the like supplied the reason for their being. While daytime parking at the curb was common even then, overnight storage certainly was not. For horses and the wheels of the day, nearly everybody had a

back-alley "barn" behind the house.

In other words, the fundamental purpose of a street has always been to move — not store — conveyances. Current times of automotive inundation tend to shadow that fact. But it can be persuasively contended even now that streets exist primarily to drive on, not to roost on.

In a value-test of whether to create new trafficways or widen old ones, against alternatives of finding parking space somewhere else, the parking option almost always wins both economically and in quality-of-life considerations. Offstreet parking is the lesser evil and the greater obligation.

Wiping out all onstreet parking in such areas as those in Cedar Rapids full of one-way residential streets — heavy on apartments now and short on driveways and garages — would, however, lead to hardships, inconvenience and a storm. One answer, possibly, would be removal of a house or two in every block, conversion of the space to surface-level parking (probably for pay) and no more curbside storage so that moving traffic is the streets' sole function.

What needs to come across and sink in now wherever traffic has become oppressive is the point that parking — longtime storage in particular — is more a duty and responsibility of auto owners than a right that goes with gas-propelled mobility.

If good old Iowa City pulls it off and makes it stick along these lines somehow, the feat is likely to provoke not only awe but emulation.

Way with Words

Error-Record Set?

By Theodore M. Bernstein REDUNDANCY. A reader in Buffalo, Neal C. Farwell, sends in a newspaper sentence that he thinks may set a record for most errors in fewest words. There are only two errors, but there are mighty few words.

Here's how it goes: "Married in 1964, they have two twin girls, both 3½." If they are twins you don't need the word two, and if they are twins you don't need the word both because obviously they are of the same age. You might call those twin errors.

Odd reply. A letter from San Francisco asks about the expression "Not that I know of." First the letter poses a situation in which someone comes into a bookstore and asks whether there are any copies of "Moby Dick" in the store and the stock answer is, "Not that I know of."

The letter writer says he can't grammatically analyze that reply satisfactorily. But it can be so analyzed if you think of it as an ellipsis for "There are not any copies that I know of."

A second situation that the letter writer poses is not so easily disposed of: Someone asks, "Is your boss going to work overtime tonight?" and again the answer is, "Not that I know of."

That one can't be analyzed grammatically in any satisfactory way. A proper reply would have to be something like, "Not so far as I know." It may be that the stock reply will have to be set down as an idiom; that certainly is the only

explanation of it that can be advanced, but it's not a very good one.

Word oddities. A cabal is a group of conspiring persons. Folk etymology has it that the word is an anagram formed from the initials of five English ministers who intrigued during the reign of Charles II: Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington and Lauderdale.

However, the word goes much farther back than that. It originated in the Hebrew gabbalah, meaning received doctrine, the Jews' occult version of the Old Testament. Then it came to refer to something secret or to an intrigue, and in English use to an intriguing group or to its machinations.

Insights



Only a mediocre writer is always at his best. Somerset Maugham

By James Reston

WASHINGTON — The Kissinger-Chou Wen-lai conversations in Peking have made progress mainly because the two men have been faithful to the agreement they made at the very beginning of their talks last year:

"Get the principles straight first, and the practical problems can then be sorted out at leisure."

They agreed on the principle that Taiwan was part of China and that the political future of that island was a question to be settled by the Chinese themselves.

They agreed on the principle that the political future of Vietnam should be settled by the contending parties in Vietnam after a cease-fire. The continuing withdrawal of American troops, arms, and prisoners has undoubtedly contributed to the success of Kissinger's latest visit to Peking.

They agreed on the principle that a new peaceful order should be established in Asia, that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means, and that their agreement on these principles was not directed against any other country, meaning of course, the Soviet Union.

Having settled this much, though both sides are eager to "bring about the normalization of relations" while the aging leaders of the Peking government are still in power. Neither side has insisted

on the urgent settlement of the practical problems. No deadline, no hidden deals. Peking obviously wants the United States to withdraw all its troops from Taiwan. They number only a few thousand whose main job has been not to defend Taiwan but to assist in supplying the American expeditionary force in Vietnam. But Chou En-lai has not attempted to insist on a specific date for their departure.

At the same time, Chou has said in the past that his government would not establish an official mission in Washington as long as the Chinese nationalists occupy the Chinese embassy here on Woodley road. Nevertheless, he has agreed to establish a "liaison office" here and permit the U.S. to do the same in Peking.

This agreement implies much more than it says explicitly. It does not establish formal diplomatic relations, but it authorizes the creation of a diplomatic presence of unlimited size in both capitals, with diplomatic immunity for the members of both missions, and "a concrete program of expanding trade as well as scientific, cultural, and other exchanges."

Presumably the members of these missions will be restricted in their travels around both China and the United States — as U.S. and Soviet diplomats still are in these two countries. But the modestly named new "liaison offices" will in ef-



James Reston

fect be diplomatic missions in everything but name.

The fact that Mao Tse-tung held a two-hour conversation with Kissinger, which was conducted according to the joint communique "in an unconstrained atmosphere . . . earnest, frank and constructive," is of great symbolic importance.

This gives the approval of China's legendary leader to the dramatic turn in U.S.-Chinese relations from hostility to normality.

It is a reminder to the Soviet Union that the United States wants to work with China, the Soviet Union and Japan on the peaceful reordering of state relations in the Pacific. And this is a point of some importance to the leaders in Peking who feel threatened by substantial Soviet armies and nuclear weapons on their border.

The way is now open for the President

to dramatize his "even-handed" policy between Peking and Moscow by inviting Chairman Brezhnev of the Soviet government to the United States.

Later in the year, the Japanese emperor will also be visiting this country, leaving only the personal rancor between the leaders of the United States and India to be resolved.

President Nixon, who personally started this "opening to China" during his conversations with former President Charles de Gaulle in 1969, thus is moving with admirable skill and purpose to turn the cease-fire in Vietnam into a more enduring general settlement in Asia, and to transform the initiatives of his first term into enduring achievements in his second.

All this is still in a preliminary and fragile state. It will need a great deal of understanding and cooperation from the congress, particularly on aid to North Vietnam and trade with Japan, before becoming stable.

But Nixon is now clearly embarked on the most constructive American enterprise abroad since the Marshall Plan in Europe after World War II. Like the Marshall Plan, which led to the reconstruction of a peaceful Europe, it aims at nothing less than the reconstruction of a peaceful Asia.

For this the President needs and deserves the gratitude and support of his fellow-countrymen.

New York Times Service

The People's Forum

Racism's Downtrend Deemed Irreversible

To the Editor:

Time and time again, in town after town, state after state, HEW and the courts have come to one conclusion — that when there is a conflict between the goal of quality, integrated education and the long cherished neighborhood school concept, some form of busing is inevitable.

This is the case in Cedar Rapids, 1973. It is no longer a matter of IF — it is a matter of WHEN, since our school district is already in violation of state and federal guidelines.

Dr. Currie and his staff should be commended for their positive efforts to achieve quality, integrated education in Cedar Rapids. They realize as most concerned people do, that learning to respect others of different ethnic backgrounds must be accomplished at an early age.

One or two of the plans they have presented to the school board have the potential for achieving just that. They will also provide for some exceptional educational innovations that have been entirely overlooked in the emotional furor over the mechanical aspects of the plans.

However, racism — especially white racism — cannot be overcome by children alone or with the good intentions of the school administration. It will take a great deal of soul-searching and growing on the part of parents as well.

Breaking down generations of racism which has been built into the fabric of our society including schools and religion is a monumental task, but a task that can be accomplished in Cedar Rapids. We can make it happen if we want to.

We challenge the school board to lead in helping to make quality, integrated education a reality in Cedar Rapids. Any backtracking now would be unconscionable.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Barnes 2119 Blake boulevard SE

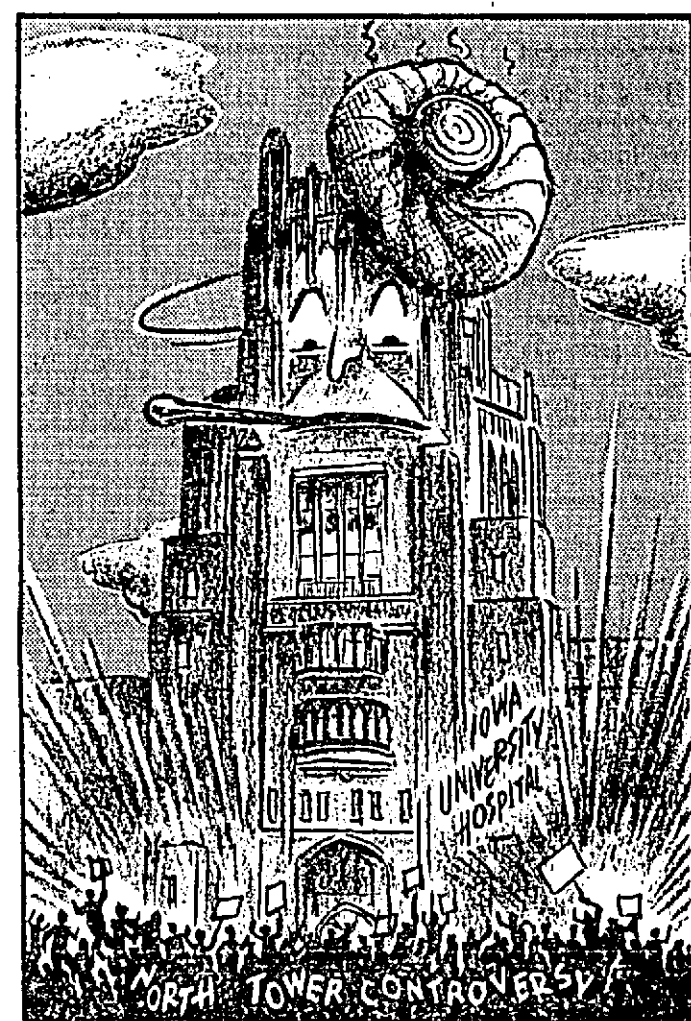
Out of Reach

To the Editor:

What will happen to the low-income and needy people of our society, now that President Nixon has decided that there are no poor people in this world, so there is no need for HACAP and its programs?

In the last four or five years HACAP and its programs have proven the need for these programs by guiding and aiding low-income and needy people. Who are these people going to turn to for help in such matters as legal aid, family planning, Neighborhood Youth Corps and the supplement food program?

Where can a 14-year-old student find a summer job, without experience, to make some money for school clothes or to help in a family problem? Of course



Trauma Center

he can turn to the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

What about the family that cannot afford legal advice and needs it? Yes, there is the Legal Aid Society.

Where can a woman go to learn how to plan her family? The Family Planning Service is always available.

These are only a few of the programs offered to low-income families.

How do people learn of these programs? Through the OEO outreach workers in their county. But these outreach workers will no longer be available to these people, since President Nixon goes on believing poor people do not exist in our society.

President Nixon wants to educate low-income and poverty-stricken people, but how can they be educated when

there will be no one to guide or aid them?

How can they stand on their own two feet and raise themselves to a better level? By keeping HACAP and its programs available for all who need them.

Betsy Curley Oxford Junction

Searchers Thanked

To the Editor:

I wish to address a very sincere thank-you to everyone who was directly or indirectly involved in the search around rural Toddville the last few weeks for Guy Heckle.

Thanks would come more easily if all the combined efforts had proven fruitful. This, however, was not the case. But

it is rewarding to know that people were concerned and did actively participate in a physical search — participated by offering suggestions and, more recently, participated financially—in the attempts to locate the missing boy.

There have been numerous occasions when I, as an officer, and we, as a department, should have expressed thanks to many people for assistance in investigations that have received less publicity. But, for some unknown reason, we take too much for granted and consequently just assume that people will know their efforts were appreciated.

The difficulty in extending personal thanks is that we have no idea as to the names and addresses of all those who assisted. These people encompassed all age groups, social, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and were drawn together in a tremendously harmonious effort toward a common goal.

Again, thanks to all for the physical help and moral support. I am sure it was offered with great personal and financial sacrifice.

George Griffin, Captain Sheriff's Department Cedar Rapids

Took Gifts

To the Editor:

Several years ago, our Iowa county supervisors were publicized, criticized and forced to resign, because they took gifts and accepted favors. To me that is no different from teachers or office help using their time or school equipment, typewriters, paper, etc., for clubs, groups and political parties at taxpayers' expense.

Now we find that employees of WOIT-TV owned by the Iowa State university at Ames accepted cameras, mixers, hair dryers, electric razors, wallets and other goods worth a total of nearly \$1,500 distributed to them as Christmas presents for the years 1968-71. Reasons given by the university were "trade-out procedure" on advertising.

We could not give our supervisors an excuse of being college intellectuals, but it seems we should expect more from the university. State Auditor Lloyd Smith says the personal use of property technically owned by the state is illegal.

Why was this not discovered before? Is there no way this can be taken into court so that the TV cameras and newspapers can carry accounts as they did for our supervisors, who were subjected to this for weeks and months?

Frankly, I fail to see the difference between the board of supervisors accepting gifts and the employees of WOIT-TV doing it. Let's have some publicity and pictures from WMT-TV like what it gave our supervisors.

Pauline Lillie Ladora

Sharp Analysis by Britisher

Judgment on JFK: Unable to Do 'Nothing'

By James J. Kilpatrick

WASHINGTON—One of the most perceptive writers in Washington, British correspondent Henry Fairlie, has written one of the most perceptive political books of our time. The late Niccolo Machiavelli, dead these 450 years, could not have done a better job than Fairlie has done with "The Kennedy Promise."

Machiavelli's purpose in his masterpiece, "The Prince," was to advise a young Medici on the arts of statecraft. Fairlie's purpose in this brilliant work is to analyze a young President's aborted administration.

His retrospective judgments on the "thousand days" are the best judgments yet rendered, but his observations on the American presidency look beyond the Kennedy years.

Fairlie has subtitled his book, "The Politics of Expectation." His thesis is

that the Kennedy administration dining on a diet of daily crises, lived on the rich sauce of things it meant to do. In their public lives, no less than in their private lives, the brothers Kennedy and their team had to have action. That was the watchword: Action!

Yet, looking back, Fairlie asks what it all meant. The incessant demand for action ruled out the alternative of inaction, of simply, in a given situation, doing nothing. The Kennedys never knew how to do nothing.

The spirit of the New Frontier, in Fairlie's telling line, was a spirit of "physical" bravado joined to intellectual bravura." The thousand days became a concerto composed entirely of cadenzas. "Whenever there was something which he wished to do, he went before the television cameras and could rely on obtaining the desired popular reaction; the expectation was aroused, and the expectation was supported; but on the

following morning the thing had still to be done."

A part of Kennedy's difficulties rested in the intellectual activism of the men who were closest to him. With few exceptions, they were new to power.

They had studied power, and analyzed power, and talked about power, but they never had exercised power. And when at last they got their hands on this beautiful instrument, they wanted to play it loudly and with flare.

Thus, in the ill-fated Alliance for Progress, the team acted on the assumption that it was "one minute to midnight" in Latin America.

Says Fairlie: "But it was at one minute to midnight that the administration believed that the hands of the clock always stood, all over the globe; and they were driven by the fear that, if they did not act before the clock struck, they would all seem to be pumpkins. They aspired to greatness, not just occasion-

ally, but all the time."

The atmosphere of dizzy expectation, in Fairlie's view, was bound to produce the Bay of Pigs fiasco. It could not have been otherwise.

The Kennedy players, supremely confident of their skill in putting intelligence to work, saw only the promise of glory. "The sails of the administration were indeed filled by each breath of the intelligence which it gathered, impelling it forward to yet another operation. What it lacked was an anchor."

Fairlie's judgments may seem harsh. Ten years after the Kennedy administration, he remarks, "It is hard to find a trace of any method of government he established which has survived."

Kennedy wished to do so much—but wishes are not enough: "He in fact achieved very little." It is a pity the verdict has to be rendered, but pity 'tis, 'tis true.

Washington Star Staff Writer