

# EXCURSUS 1

## L. Thomas Walsh on UNSUNG HEROES—THE FOREIGN SERVICE

A visitor at the diplomatic entrance of the State Department off C Street in Washington, D.C., may notice two large plaques on either side of the doors. Engraved here are the names of 130 officers of the Foreign Service who died or were killed in the diplomatic service of the United States.

The first plaque is headed by William Palfrey, who was lost at sea in 1780 en route to Europe for his first posting as a diplomatic officer of this young country. Palfrey's name is followed by eighty-nine others, the last eight of whom died within the two-year period 1965-67. It took 187 years for this plaque to be filled.

The second plaque, begun in 1967, is already half full and now contains the names of forty officers. It is entirely possible that there will soon be new entries if the hostage situation in Iran is not concluded peacefully.

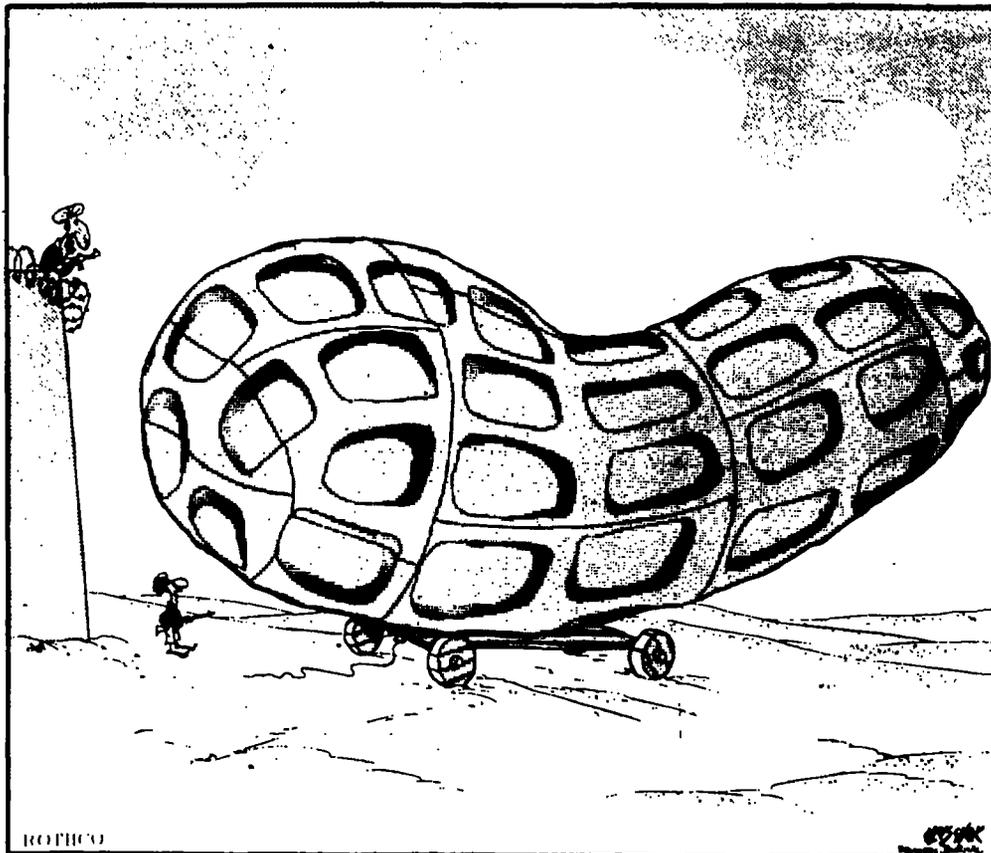
The Foreign Service of the Department of State is small. There are only about 8,000 employees, of whom 3,400 are officers posted to our 272 diplomatic installations around the world. At any one time about 40 per cent of these officers are in Washington, devoting their energies to country desks, branches, and bureaus of the department. Rarely do they become secretary, undersecretary, or even an assistant secretary, the highest positions at State, usually reserved for White House appointees. Nor will many of them become ambassadors.

About 30 per cent of our 141 embassies are headed by political appointees of the president. It requires little imagination to deduce what posts are offered to career officers. They are the ones that are most dangerous, require fluency in another language, or have the least to offer in the way of cultural and creature comforts. London, Rome, Brussels, The Hague, Tokyo, Mexico City, and now Moscow have U.S. ambassadors whose principal qualifications are that they were either heavy contributors to the 1976 election campaign of Jimmy Carter or were politically powerful in their home states. Candidate Carter promised to end this practice of paying off political debts with ambassadorial appointments, but President Carter seems unable to amend it.

Some of these political appointees make excellent representatives of our country. Others do not fare as well. Last year, for example, Mr. Carter appointed Democrat Richard Kneip as ambassador to Singapore in return for political favors Kneip had rendered as governor of South Dakota. Mr. Kneip was shocked to learn there were two separate Koreas and that there had been a series of wars between India and Pakistan. He had never heard of the leaders of India, Pakistan, West Germany, and France, nor of the legendary Chiang Kai-shek. He was uncertain what Islam was, apparently thinking it a Middle Eastern drink not too different from the milk he distributed before becoming governor.

### ANOTHER GRIM STATISTIC

It is no accident that those ambassadors who have fallen in the line of duty have all been career foreign service officers serving at posts considered too risky for political appointees. Their deaths emphasize another grim statistic



"CAREFUL - IT COULD BE ANOTHER CARTER RESCUE PLAN."

of foreign service life: Since 1968 this nation has lost more ambassadors to hostile action directed at the U.S. by various terrorist groups than we lost generals in the Vietnam war.

The great travesty is that none of the murderers has been prosecuted in the countries in which the crimes occurred. The Government of Cyprus arrested three men for the assassination of Ambassador Roger Davies, who was killed on August 19, 1974, but they were never prosecuted. The Palestine Liberation Organization has twice claimed credit for such outrages. Ambassador Cleo Noel, Jr., was executed by PLO gunmen March 2, 1973, in Khartoum, Sudan, and Ambassador Francis Meloy, Jr., and another embassy officer were gunned down in the streets of Beirut, Lebanon, on June 11, 1976. Ambassador John Gordon Mein was killed by Guatemalan terrorists August 28, 1968.

The most recent casualty—the last one entered on the second plaque—is that of Ambassador Adolph ("Spike") Dubs. He was slain in Kabul, Afghanistan, when Soviet-directed Afghan police stormed the hotel in which he was being held hostage, February 15, 1979, by anti-Communist terrorists.

Diplomats of other nations have also had their casualties. The most recent was last January in Guatemala City. Two members of the staff of the Spanish embassy and thirty-five others were burned to death when, following seizure of the embassy by antigovernment farmers and terrorists, security police stormed the installation. But the brunt of all such outrages by armed militants, regardless of their political persuasion, appears always to be directed at American official and commercial missions and their personnel.

At this writing our embassy in San Salvador is a fortress awaiting attack. Iron gates and newly installed thick concrete walls guard the main entrances; sandbagged gun emplacements are strategically located on the roof. Last October leftist demonstrators attempted to storm the embassy but were turned back by tear gas. Today the threat is from the extreme Right, which believes the U.S. is responsible for the leftward drift of El Salvador. This scene is repeated with monotonous regularity around the world. It is curious that militant groups have rarely sought to express their anger against their own or a foreign government by attacking the official installations of Communist countries.

Last November 19 an obscure fundamentalist group of some three hundred Muslims representing the Utaibih tribe of southern Saudi Arabia and South Yemen startled authorities in Mecca by seizing the Great Mosque. For fifteen hours after the initial assault Saudi Arabian authorities imposed a nationwide communications blackout. After eight days of hard fighting and over sixty casualties inflicted upon Saudi troops, the group was finally subdued and identified.

During those eight days, nine official and commercial U.S. installations were attacked and burned in as many countries—from Izmir, Turkey, to Bangkok, Thailand, and this last is not even a Muslim state. The reason given by the various governments for these well-coordinated assaults was that the Muslim world believed the U.S. was in some way responsible for the attack in Mecca. There is little doubt now that the clandestine radio stations the Soviet Union maintains along its southern borders, beaming its messages to areas of the Middle East and to the USSR's indigenous agents, played a major role in circulating this rumor.

On December 27, Russian armor moved in force into the Muslim nation of Afghanistan. But not one Soviet

installation anywhere in the world was the target of any mob or terrorist demonstration. The conclusion is inescapable: Most actions directed against U.S. installations and our citizens are Communist-directed and bear little or no resemblance to world public opinion.

## **MAD DOGS**

There is another aspect to this conclusion. It is universally recognized that the United States places great emphasis on the rule of law and the power of the written word. When outrages are committed against this country and its citizens, we send diplomatic notes to the offending government, which often scorns these pieces of paper, not even bothering to make a reply. It's great fun to attack something that will not fight back or will suffer the most grievous provocations. Not so the Russians; if threatened, the Soviets are not averse to meeting force with force, wherever it occurs. It's no fun to attack a mad dog. Mobs and other fanatics leave it alone.

Too many fanatics and governments around the world confuse our desire to live by the rule of law with weakness. They feel they can with impunity perpetrate the greatest atrocities upon our personnel and get away with it. "Do you know what we would do if a mob attacked our embassy in Washington?" an Ecuadorean official asked after every window in our Quito embassy was smashed during a well-planned demonstration. "We would use our machine guns and go put-put-put until every one of the SOBs was dead! Then we would ask why someone didn't send help!"

Certainly, Teheran and Colombia emphasize the need for the U.S. to declare once and for all that open season on our citizens and diplomats has ended. Otherwise the plaques commemorating those who have given their lives for this nation will cover all the walls of the Department of State.

*L. Thomas Walsh, a foreign affairs specialist and freelance writer living in Washington, D.C., served in the Foreign Service from 1957 to 1971.*

## **EXCURSUS 2**

### **Elliott Wright on IRAN AND THE UNITED METHODISTS**

America's liberal-leaning Protestant denominations have formed the habit in recent years of addressing most of their resolutions on domestic or international affairs to the federal government. They petition and instruct Washington on everything from the family farm to the future of Taiwan.

Church resolution-makers flourish without knowing or even asking if government hears their appeals and accepts their advice. Therefore it came as something of a surprise in April when a United Methodist Church resolution got both immediate presidential notice and headlines—then, quick as a helicopter crash, plunged out of the news, leaving the denomination's quadrennial General Conference wondering whether it was an institutional prophet without honor or simply had egg on its ecclesiastical face.

The issue was Iran—in the week that included April 25, disaster day for the U.S. military mission to rescue the hostages in Teheran.