

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.

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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.

The Methodist resolution, passed April 19, ordered a General Conference delegation to Washington to urge executive "restraint" in attempts to free the hostages and to encourage President Carter to promote "reconciliation" between the American and Iranian peoples. It was drafted after a speech by Bishop C. Dale White of New Jersey, who had visited Iran, though not the hostages, last December with an ad hoc clergy group. Bishop White was evidently impressed by the Ayatollah Khomeini, whom he met, and depressed by the lingering effects of the shah's regime. Iranians are angry at America because, he said, "they believe that a bankrupt U.S. foreign policy kept the cruel dictator in power...and that rapacious U.S. interests siphoned off their oil money and ruined their economy." The bishop touched a responsive chord—most likely the easily touched chord of Protestant guilt—in a majority of the thousand General Conference delegates. Subsequent conference expressions on the Iranian crisis generally reflected White's opinion that U.S. Christians should try to understand the anger vented in the embassy takeover.

A sense of urgency mingled with euphoria in the Indianapolis convention center when Carter agreed to receive the Methodist callers, putting out the welcome mat for a group soliciting "utmost patience" from a commander-in-chief who, only days earlier, had projected "some sort of military action" if sanctions failed to bring speedy release of the captives. Making it even sweeter for the Methodists, Walter Cronkite read the delegation's mandate on the evening news!

Off the delegation flew, first to meet in New York on April 23 with Iran's representative to the United Nations and then to the White House. Along with an appeal for his government's cooperation in "reconciliation," Ambassador Monsour Farhang received a message for Khomeini from the General Conference. "We...hear the agonies of your people;...their cries for freedom from foreign domination, from cultural imperialism, from economic exploitation," said the Methodists.

Back in Indianapolis on April 24 the delegation waited for the president's formal response before reporting to the conference, and when it came, the words from the Rose Garden were not those the would-be reconcilers wanted. Though no one knew it then, Carter's message was totally congruent with his decision to authorize the ill-fated rescue attempt already in the countdown stage when he had greeted the Methodist delegation. His two key sentences read: "The United States has explored every avenue to find a peaceful solution to this crisis....We have offered the hand of peace and friendship to the people of Iran, but the kind of relationship of mutual respect which we seek cannot develop while innocent Americans are being held prisoners."

Delegation spokesmen were hesitant to tell the conference straight out that their mission was basically unproductive. Before reading the presidential message Bishop William Cannon of Georgia said: "I want this body to know that President Carter is a committed Christian." Even though the president's response had an impatient tone, had he not cordially welcomed the Methodists and thanked them for coming? "It was a real privilege to go with this delegation to visit with the president," said D. W. Brooks, another prominent Georgian and a major Carter backer. Brooks told the conference his friend had already practiced more restraint than other presidents would have.

The news on the morning of April 25 cast a pall over the General Conference. Given the president's message and the fact that the failed rescue effort was not a military invasion of Iran, the peace-seeking Methodists could not

really feel betrayed. Yet many did, or at least felt embarrassed. Why, they wondered, had Carter bothered with their delegation after he had decided on a rescue strike that could have touched off war? Why had they indulged in euphoria just because a president noticed the denomination?

Aware that it had lost the public spotlight on Iran, the General Conference nonetheless reaffirmed its appeal for restraint, asked Carter to assure the Iranians that "we honor their national independence," and, for the first time as the official United Methodist voice, asked Iran to send the hostages home. "In the sorrow of the moment we celebrate the gifts of grace and hope and pray for new beginnings," were the United Methodists' last words on Iran before their conference adjourned.

One wonders whether the clergy and laity elected to run America's churches mightn't do more good for the world by hope and prayer than by sending resolutions to Washington.

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EXCURSUS 3

John Tessitore on BREAKFAST OF OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS

Monday morning, 7:45. In front of me sits a bowl of noisy Rice Crispies, yet each time I pick up my spoon I drop it, bored. What good's all this noise, I think, without a little fruit? Then my eye falls upon a lone banana lying atop the refrigerator. I can see it is entering its final stages of decline, but my elation will not be abated. My salivary glands come alive; the cacophony of snap, crackle, pop rises to a triumphant crescendo. Only after I have peeled and sliced the yellow treasure do I notice a small red, white, and blue sticker affixed to its exterior. For a moment I gaze uncomprehendingly, but soon the truth dawns: I am eating an Official Olympic Banana.

My first response is cynical: Apparently not even nature's own banana is safe from the long arm of the Olympic Committee. Slowly, though, another thought eases its way into my consciousness. Maybe, just maybe, there's more here than one first suspects. I mean, suppose there really *is* something special about Olympic food. Suppose it wasn't the Wheaties but all those Olympic bananas on top that propelled Bruce Jenner higher and farther and faster than all the other guys! Not the bananas alone, of course—but imagine a combination of all the foods that make their way to the tables of the U.S. Olympic teams. Why, the effect could be tremendous! "You are what you eat," we are told (by whom, I forget). Doesn't it follow then that to eat Olympic food is to become an Olympian? I resolve to find out.

Walking to the subway some half-hour later, I feel a slight, unfamiliar bounce to my step. Might this be the first sign? I move with redoubled vigor. Once on the platform I steal furtive glances at my fellow commuters. How to describe the sensation as I bear witness to this array of physical imperfection? It is something approaching horror! Have they always appeared to me so, I wonder, or is this too a manifestation of the new me? Keeping very still, I listen for the metabolic changes I suspect are taking place at this very moment, but a subway platform is too noisy for a proper study of internal medicine.