

U.S. Consul Still Held

Wife Tries to Pay Ransom in Mexico

By Marlise Simons

Special to The Washington Post

MEXICO CITY, March 28—The wife of U.S. Vice Consul John Patterson has made two unsuccessful attempts to hand over ransom money to his kidnapers, informed sources said today.

Patterson, 31, was abducted last Friday in Hermosillo, northern Mexico, where he worked.

Today, an advertisement appeared in a Hermosillo newspaper, signed by Patterson's wife Anne. It said: "I have the money you need for transaction. Please contact me so I can send it to you."

A U.S. spokesman here said that Mrs. Patterson had made "every possible effort" to follow the instructions contained in the ransom note, which he said was delivered to the U.S. consulate in Hermosillo a few hours after Patterson left the building Friday. Mexican authorities have said he was last seen getting into a car with an American.

The ransom note, apparently in Patterson's handwriting, said he had been kidnaped and reportedly gave instructions for delivery of \$500,000.

Since then, informed sources said, Mrs. Patterson has gone to two meeting places carrying unknown sums of money, but at neither time did the kidnapers keep their appointment.

Mystery has surrounded this latest diplomatic kidnaping, the third in Mexico in the past year, and there are hints that it may be the work of ordinary criminals rather than leftist guerrillas.

The Mexican government says only that Patterson is missing, and rumors of the

kidnaping were not confirmed at all until U.S. Attorney General William Saxbe inadvertently mentioned it yesterday at a news conference in Washington.

Unlike previous kidnapings here this time there is no guerrilla group seeking publicity. In last year's cases of abducted U.S. Consul General Terrance Leonhardy and British Honorary Consul Anthony Ducan Williams, for example, the guerrillas published several communiqués, made frequent contact with the wives of the victims, and asked for the release of political prisoners.

This time the kidnapers have only asked for money, have kept away from Mrs. Patterson, and reportedly have demanded complete silence about the kidnaping.

Apparently they call themselves "the People's Revolutionary Army," a name which has not appeared before on the long list of Mexican revolutionary groups. But since leftist terrorists began to stage their actions in 1971 many arrests have been made and whenever a group is disbanded it is soon replaced by another group under a new and different name.

Some Mexican authorities in Hermosillo have suggested that the kidnaping of the U.S. diplomat may have come as a reprisal for the recent death of a young guerrilla. Last week when a group of five leftists were arrested police announced that the group's "instructor," Paul Reichel, had died of a "cerebral hemorrhage." Leftist groups charged that the cerebral hemorrhage was caused by police torture during Reichel's interrogation.

One U.S. official here said he considered the Patterson kidnaping a "suspicious case." Patterson and his wife come from wealthy Philadelphia families. The reported presence of FBI agents in Hermosillo underlines the suspicion that American gangsters rather than Mexican guerrillas may be responsible.

Paris Bank Strike

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, March 28—Striking bank workers marched through Paris today in support of their claim for higher pay and better working conditions.