

transcribed from tape

Authorities in Mexico continued the search today for kidnapped American diplomat John Patterson. Patterson was seized a week ago and is reportedly being held in lieu of \$500,000 ransom. According to Reuters, the kidnapping took place in the northern town of Hermosillo, where Patterson was assigned as the U.S. commercial vice-consul, but police sources said the chances are he's been smuggled out of there and could be held practically anywhere in Mexico, or even across the border in the United States.

In any case, the only communication about the kidnapping that's been confirmed is a ransom note that was found at the door of the American consulate soon after Patterson disappeared last Friday [22 Mar]. The contents of the note were not disclosed but, according to Reuters, it reportedly instructed Patterson's wife to deliver half the ransom to the border town of Nogales and the other half in another Mexican city. Sources told Reuters that she went to both rendezvous points but the kidnappers never showed up to take the ransom. In addition the note had warned against any publicity, which accounted for the kidnapping being held under wraps until two days ago, and incidentally it was U.S. Attorney General William Saxbe who told the press about it.

Anyway, there's still something of a mystery as to who kidnapped Patterson. The ransom note said he was taken away by the People's Revolutionary Army of Mexico, a group not heard from before. Also, police sources told Reuters that Patterson was last seen with an unidentified American. And other sources said that the ransom note had a distinct lack of political content and no communiqués were sent to the press. As such, one theory is that Patterson is being held just for the money and not for political motives, and that his abductors may be underworld figures here in the United States and not left-wing guerrillas in Mexico. There's also another theory making the rounds. According to AP, there's some doubt as to whether Patterson was even really kidnapped.

[Complete.]