

U.S. VICE CONSUL MISSING IN MEXICO

Aide Believed Kidnapped in
Hermosillo Last Friday
NYTimes ~~MAR 28~~ 1974

Special to The New York Times

MEXICO CITY, March 27—United States and Mexican officials announced today that 31-year-old John Patterson, a United States vice consul stationed in northwest Mexico, disappeared last Friday and was presumed kidnapped.

A spokesman at the United States Embassy here refused to disclose when or how the diplomat was seized or whether any ransom demands had been received.

"We just cannot go beyond this," he said. "It's a matter of the personal safety of the officer."

Mr. Patterson, who is married, has been assigned since January to the United States Consulate General in Hermosillo in the state of Sonora, 160 miles from the Arizona border. It is his first foreign post.

But a statement from the office of the Mexican Attorney General said that Mr. Patterson, a commercial officer, was last seen leaving the consulate Friday at about 10:30 A.M. in the company of an unidentified American. The statement said

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CIA

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they left in a car, which was later found abandoned. Neither man has been seen since.

"The state authorities and the federal Judicial Police have launched a search for the Vice Consul, so far without results," the statement said.

The refusal to provide details has led to speculation that negotiations may already be under way between captors and the Mexican Government. The disclosure that Vice Consul Patterson had disappeared was made here only after the United States Attorney General, William Saxbe, told reporters in Washington that his planned trip to Mexico to discuss a campaign on narcotics was being postponed because a Foreign Service officer there had been kidnapped.

Last May, when the United

The Proceedings In the U.N. Today

March 28, 1974

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Committee on Colonialism
—10:30 A.M.

Subcommittee on petitions
and information—3 P.M.

ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

Committee on Science and
Technology for Development
—10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Committee on Elimination
of Racial Discrimination —
10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Tickets may be obtained at
the public desk, main lobby,
United Nations Headquarters.
Tours: 9 A.M. to 4:45 P.M.

States Consul General in Guadalajara, Terrence G. Leonhardy, became the first foreign diplomat to be kidnapped in Mexico, the Mexican Government acceded to the demands of his guerrilla captors and released 30 so-called political prisoners who were flown to Cuba.

But in October, when leftist guerrillas kidnapped the British Honorary Consul in Guadalajara Dr. Anthony Duncan Williams, and a wealthy Mexican industrialist, Fernando Aranguren, the government changed its policy and refused to meet the guerrilla demands. Dr. Williams was released unharmed after four days, but Mr. Aranguren was murdered.

There was no indication whether the Government of President Luis Echeverria Alvarez would be willing to review its new hard-line policy on negotiating with kidnappers.

Urban and rural guerrilla groups have intensified their activities in Mexico over the last three years, most of their actions directed at large landowners or wealthy businessmen who have been accused of exploiting workers.

Communist Group Active

The most active group, known as the 23d of September Communist League, has been held responsible for numerous attacks on banks and other business premises. The league

also said it had carried out the kidnapping of Mr. Leonhardy in Guadalajara last May.

In the mountainous state of Guerrero near the tourist resort of Acapulco, rural guerrillas have been holding off the army for the last six years.

Known as "the party of the poor" and led by a former school teacher, 33-year-old Lucio Cabañas, the guerrillas have been blamed for several ambushes of army patrols in the last two years in which over 60 soldiers have been killed.

Since the wave of terrorist activities in the cities of Monterrey and Guadalajara last fall, the Mexican Government has begun a campaign to break up the guerrilla groups. At least 200 people are known to have been arrested and charged with acts of terrorism during the last five months.

The Mexican Government does not acknowledge the existence of politically motivated guerrillas or of political prisoners. Traditionally it has described both as "common criminals."