

Career Officer No 'Wheel' But He Makes Them Turn

By ARTHUR EDSON
Of the Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The roster of State Department brass lists 242 names. Nowhere among them is that of Robert Arnold Hurwitch. But without him and his like, the wheels of American diplomacy—whether involved in a crisis in Cuba or a cultural exchange in Sierra Leone—cannot turn.

Hurwitch is the first to acknowledge he is no State Department wheel. But since his is an important, responsible job and since his whole life is, and will continue to be, the Foreign Service, we probably can better understand how the department works by looking at Hurwitch than at some of those perched above him.

We sometimes look on diplomats with suspicion, as wearers of striped pants, as sippers of champagne, as men who if not outright liars are at least truth-fudgers.

In our stock portraits a diplomat is bland, urbane, world weary.

Robert Arnold Hurwitch doesn't fit the usual preconceptions.

At 42, Hurwitch is a bundle of enthusiasms. Far from being world weary, he lets words like "interesting" and "exciting" dart through his conversation.

Our image diplomat is debonair and tall, or looks tall in full evening dress.

No Ivy Leaguer

Hurwitch is of average height and his business suit might be that of a skilled machine operator, which he once was, going to confer with management, which he once did.

Although Hurwitch is from New England (Worcester, Mass.) that's about as close as he ever got to the Ivy League. His parents were born in Kiev, Russia, and were brought to this country as small children.

The Hurwitches were poor, but Robert won a scholarship to the University of Chicago.

"I hitchhiked my way out there," he says, "and worked my way through. The usual jobs: washing dishes. Waiting tables."

"But in my last year I decided I wasn't learning all I wanted to know. And, anyway, I was really tired, so I dropped out. I went to trade school and became a machine operator."

He was soon involved in the plant union, became a shop steward and worked on a labor-management team.

In 1943 the draft caught Hurwitch.

He eventually was on his way to the German front as a replacement for a rifle platoon leader, a type that needed frequent replacing.

When he reported for duty, he found a vigorous but inconclusive argument spluttering between the brass and a Frenchwoman. Hurwitch volunteered his linguistic abilities in French and German and instantly solved their simple problem: The officers wanted to rent her restaurant as a command post, and she was willing.

"Do you speak this lingo?" Hurwitch was asked.

His Career Changed

This inelegant question was to change his whole career. He obviously did speak the lingo, and since the outfit's intelligence officer had been hit in the head by shrapnel, a new one was needed. Hurwitch got the job.

These coincidences were to have lasting results. For he would stay on in Europe as a part of the military government, work in the demilitarization program, serve as a liaison officer to the French and pick up an enduring love for diplomatic life, return to the University of Chicago to finish work on his degree, pass his Foreign Service examinations and start his slow climb that could end, if he has enough additional interesting coincidences, in an ambassadorship.

Hurwitch knew French and German, but thought he should also have Spanish. So he asked for a Latin-American assignment.

This accounts for his inter-hemispheric career, from Lima to Hamburg to Bonn to Bogota. In Washington, he has put in time on the Cuban desk, and now handles Cuban problems for Edward M. Martin, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs.

Hurwitch reportedly played an important, but characteristically quiet, role in helping



(AP Newsfeatures photo)

Vital Cog

Giving his notes a last-minute checking, Robert Hurwitch halts outside the office of Undersecretary of State George Ball in the State Department in Washington, before going in to confer with him. Hurwitch, State Department specialist in Cuban affairs, does background work for important decisions by the department big wheels. He was one of the few in on the Cuban crisis while it was still a Washington mystery.

to arrange the release last month of Cuban prisoners held in Havana since the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion.

During the October Cuban crisis, which brought about the momentous confrontation between the United States and Russia, Hurwitch also was in action behind the scenes.

He isn't about to detail the part he played. But for that whole, hectic week, there was no letup for Hurwitch.

"I was pretty beat," he recalls.

At one point during the tense crisis, Hurwitch was startled in his office by the ringing of alarm bells.

With an embarrassed grin, he remembers:

"My first thought was: 'How many bells for an air raid alarm?' Most of us think of the Cuban problem simply as Fidel Castro. To Hurwitch, it's an unending source of complications.

Hurwitch believes every department in the government has come to him with specialized problems involving Cuba.

Hurwitch says decisions are mostly the result of combined thinking.

"A problem comes up," he says. "I do the leg work. I suggest several possible solutions and make my recommendation: This is what I think. Okay. Fine."

"It goes to Ed Martin. He's got the whole hemisphere to worry about."

The final decision not only should work, but it also should not offend another part of the hemisphere—or another part of the world.

Hurwitch thinks this country is right in trying to steer a

course between those who would invade Cuba or at least squeeze it to death, and those who say let's learn to live with Castro.

He thinks Castro succeeded because Cubans desperately wanted reforms, and "you don't kill that by force."

"War is the easy thing. You can always go to war. We've got to come out of this with Castro out and with our own integrity."

As one of the few diplomats who have ever walked a picket line, Hurwitch may be prejudiced, but he is firmly convinced that the best long range bet in Latin America is a strong, independent labor movement.

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Jerusalem Quiet Following Strike

JERUSALEM, Jordan Sector (AP)—Shops and offices reopened and Jerusalem returned to normal Saturday after a tense general strike against replacement of popular Gov. Anwar Nusseibeh by a non-Palestinian.

Extra security measures continued, however, in case of possible trouble in the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem, divided between Arabs and Israelis.

To back up the government's unpopular decision to replace Nusseibeh, King Hussein paid a surprise visit to Jerusalem Friday night and congratulated the new governor Fadi Dalqamouni, former undersecretary of communications.

U.S. Launches 16th Polaris Submarine

GROTON, Conn. (AP)—The Navy launched Saturday its 16th Polaris-firing submarine, the Na-

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