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# THE CONTINUING CRISIS

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• February 9 to March 6. The hair curls. The palms begin to sweat. Premonitory messages of a return to years of sleepless nights are felt. I am a member of the constituency of conscience. I am a progressive, a reader of newsletters, a member of *ad hoc* committees, a contributor to causes, and I know that it is no accident that Richard Milhous Nixon moved to New York in February. When he got on that airplane he knew what he was doing. But do we know what he is doing? That is the question now reposing in the minds of my fellows, and, as it reposes, sometimes it wets the brain.

• Ronald Reagan stalks the land. Teddy campaigns in an existential void, dated spring 1970; and I am left monitoring news reports from National Public Radio, while unanswered fund appeals from Barry Commoner's Citizens' Party pile up. Am I for a national youth registration? Only if it is committed to good works! But what if women yearn for combat? Well, perhaps if we were finally to go to war with Chile. And what is the position on Jimmy? How can he keep missing the signals from Moscow? Russia's trade union daily, *Trud*, has just announced the opening of two Moscow pizza parlors. Clearly, Mr. Brezhnev does not want war. It would play right into the hands of the Fortune 500. The oil companies are my enemy. The cities are going to explode. There is rage in the powder rooms of America. Jimmy Carter has deceived me. When he wore work shirts and Levis in 1976 he was not sincere. I shall vote for Anderson of Illinois! He is the candidate of seemly sentiment! And now back to my therapy group.

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• Meanwhile in Washington, the Wonderboy, now a bit wan and wrinkled, pitches himself into the world's problems. Inflation has hit an annual rate of 18.2 percent. The prime rate is at its highest since the Civil War. Gold is selling for over \$625, and the dollar is sent get-well cards from international bankers. In Cuba, the infamous Soviet brigade has resumed maneuvers, according to the State Department. In Afghanistan the Russians are taking fearful punishment, according to Western journalists covering the slaughter from the cafés of Pakistan. Fifty-three American nationals remain the prisoners of the dirty-necked mullahs of Iran. The American Ambassador to Colombia has been taken hostage. And Jimmy grows even more concerned. He is easily the most concerned President of all time. Has the world ever seen the likes? In Johannesburg, South Africa, a 35-year-old woman was beaten and robbed while trying to commit suicide.

• In early March Western journalists were summoned to a mystery spot in northern Cambodia where Prime Minister Khieu Samphan and Deputy Prime Minister Ieng Sary of the deposed Pol Pot regime, both dressed in business suits, suavely confessed that Pol Pot

had made some policy mistakes. The fellows sought understanding. After all, as the Prime Minister allowed, "Everybody has a past." They sought aid. They spoke of a global "domino theory" of Soviet conquest. "Our main duty is not to make the socialist revolution or build socialism," the fellows asserted; and from Beverly Hills to Georgetown the fires of idealism cooled. Tom and Jane took the news especially hard. And in Mineola, New York, Mrs. Ursula Beckley has filed suit against the Dairy Barn Stores, contending that a six-inch, grayish-black snake crawled out of an egg she had purchased from one of the chain's stores.

• A prize for passive solar house design has been conferred by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on Mr. Donald Finkel, whose entry was a solar doghouse. A 375-pound inmate continues to terrorize correctional officials in New York, breaking many noses and spilling much blood, despite the fact that he has been examined by shrinks, transferred to Bellevue Hospital, and fêted with a small birthday party by armed guards wearing chest protectors. Mrs. Mary Bates of Marshall, Michigan, has filed a \$1 million damage suit against a casket firm and a funeral parlor, charging that shoddy workmanship caused her husband's mortal remains to fall through the casket's bottom and be trampled upon as it was being borne to its grave site. Yet there is also cause to rejoice. In New York City, Dr. Leo Wollman is practically singing the news that one of his patients, a 40-year-old man, has successfully breast-fed his daughter, aided solely by sex hormones. Moreover, Dr. Wollman reports that he has personally tasted the milk, and, though slightly different from female milk, it is clinically safe and nutritious.

• American purchasers of 1979 domestic and foreign automobiles seemed to take the news calmly when the Department of Transportation announced that most of its 1979 test cars had failed head-on tests at 35 miles-per-hour. Still, the news greatly vexed Miss Joan Claybrook of the Highway Traffic Safety Administration, who apparently speaks for the nation's drunk drivers and homicidal maniacs. English purchasers of dachshunds received similar news regarding the crashworthiness of their pets when it was divulged in a Knutsford, Cheshire, court that Mrs. Vera Moss's dachshund failed to survive its test against a stationary barrier. Mrs. Moss's dog was propelled by Mr. Peter Bennett, who held it by the back right leg as he repeatedly bashed it against a garden wall. He was fined; the Department of Transportation got off scot-free.

• Maryland's House of Delegates passed a bill exempting manure from state property tax. A pretender to the Afghan throne has been found selling shirts at Bergdorf Goodman. And in far-off Tokyo, American idealism and honor are

being defended by two remarkable Yanks, Mr. Dexter Cate of the Hawaii-based Fund for Animals and Mr. Norman Hastings, a U.S. Consular officer with a conscience. Mr. Cate was arrested in late February for cutting the nets of Japanese fishermen and freeing some 200 dolphins. He had tried to enter into dialogue with the fishermen, who refer to dolphins as "gangsters of the sea," and to elucidate his position that "dolphins should have rights similar to human rights." Yet the fishermen responded only with inscrutable oriental gesticulations and lawsuits—a chilling response, that, and so Mr. Hastings is setting things straight: "We are obligated to see Mr. Cate's human right is protected and not discriminated against under Japanese law." What a fury Mr. Hastings would be in Teheran. Yet let us remember that not even the Iranians so cruelly abuse the dolphins as these greedy Japanese!

• And meanwhile in Teheran the singularity of the Iranian revolution grows ever more manifest. It is no less than the precursor of a new era in international relations, an era in which power and prominence correlate not with the size of one's army or national treasury but rather with the number of hostages a nation can sock away in its national hoosegow. Allah never notified the Shah of the power that accrues to the international kidnapper. This revelation he granted only to the Rev. Khomeini, D.D., B.P.O.E. The government of Iran has been handed over to a gang of low-grade graduate students drawn from the universities of Europe and America, where they once slept through classes and terrorized coeds, yet Iran remains inviolable, thanks to its arsenal of hostages. Were the Rev. Khomeini's galoots to invade a few more embassies, Iran might become a superpower.

• When the American hostages are viewed from this perspective it becomes clear that in demanding their release we go too far. Look at it from the Iranian point of view. These hostages are fundamental components of Iranian security. To demand their release is to demand of Iran something on the order of unilateral disarmament.

• Meanwhile the Wonderboy remains in voluntary confinement in the White House. He grows even more austere. He has put aside his threats and sanctions. He now sends the Iranians hints of affection and promises of eventual U.S. aid and commerce. What gives? Psychologists are familiar with a condition they call the Stockholm Syndrome, wherein ex-hostages come to the defense of their captors. Some develop deep feelings for their tormentors; some marry them.

• Jimmy is the first man ever to suffer the Stockholm Syndrome without actually having been taken hostage. I do not expect him to forsake Rosalynn for an Iranian militant, but it is apparent that he is not apt to do harm to his Iranian tormentors. His is a sad case. —RET

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# EDITORIAL

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## THE MARION STONEHEAD REDEEMED

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

I wonder whose idea it was to send Mr. Muhammad Ali, Esq., as presidential envoy to explain American foreign policy to African heads of state. The story has been chastely banished from the headlines, but we scholars must not flinch from such episodes. Let the others avert their eyes. We shall ponder the travesty and be improved by it.

If the idea did not have the authentic savor of our President's populist whoop whoop, I would have laid the ensuing opéra bouffe to the mischievous designs of Donald Segretti or the Bulgarian secret police. Possibly there was a drunk loose late at night in the State Department's operations center. Perchance, Ham's bartender had a hand in it. But no, this is the administration that has unveiled such inimitable bladder scenes as Dr. Peter Bourne, Bert Lance, the Hon. Andrew Young, B.D., Midge Costanza, Ham, Jody, Billy—halt! the room begins to spin. No President in history has been so closely associated with a barrel full of monkeys. Somewhere in the wilds of Ohio the descendants of Warren Gamaliel Harding rejoice. The Marion stonehead is redeemed.

A retired pugilist with a penchant for hallucinating in public—make him our Clark Clifford for Africa! Here is Carterism with its grinning face. Imagine, there he was in Africa, Howard Cosell's legendary heavyweight champion of the world—an agglutination of Plato, Hercules, and St. Theresa of the Little Flower—and what happens to him? He is rendered schizo when interviewed at the Dar es Salaam airport by a handful of Tanzanian Dan Rathers. Would Joe Frazier ever have writhed so pathetically? Of course not, but then Joe Frazier was always a man of dignity. In the 1960s and 1970s this always put him at a PR disadvantage when he confronted Ali.

Think of what the Carter White House pulled this time! Our government actually sent a plane to snatch

Ambassador Ali up from a remote sparring session somewhere in metropolitan Madras, where some disappointed stringers for Western news services were stuck with him: he aging gracefully, they praying for a newsworthy moment. Then came the news that Ali was to be made a diplomat. Suddenly it was 1971 again. The stringers perked up. The champion perked up. Once again he was The Greatest, and off the entourage went to the Dark Continent.

The thing was a piece of populist cleverness, until sometime on February 3 when word began to spread through the Carter White House: Our 250-pound Richelieu has run amuck

at the Dar es Salaam airport, *and there is nothing we can do about it—Not Even An Entebbe-Style Raid!* Our foreign service officers try to stifle him, but he gibbers on. They try to assist him with the questions, but he grows irritable. There is no chance he will go home early, and he has already called President Brezhnev one of the "two baddest white men in the world." How will Secretary Vance ever explain that one to the Politburo?

Well, whose masterpiece was this? Was it the work of Patt Derian, Richard Holbrooke, C. William Maynes, or Richard Moose? All are Assistant Secretaries of State, and all are capable of such marvels. How about Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

David Aaron, Special Advisor to the Secretary of State Marshall Shulman, or Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff W. Anthony Lake? Come on boys, break from your meditations on ways to reassure the Soviets of our peaceful intentions. (How about lavender uniforms for the 82nd Airborne? Could we turn the dishes of our early warning radar system into solar collectors? Let's replace the stars on our bombers with flowers. Hey, we could commission Salvador Dali!)

What I want to know is which of you beauties decided to send Ambassador Ali to visit the presidential palaces of Africa? I know all about your incomparable understanding of and respect for the Third World, but what did you expect President Nyere to say when Ambassador Ali rope-a-doped into his office? What could a man who failed his military intelligence test say to this graduate of Edinburgh University? Of course Ali will always have a very special meaning for you children of the 1960s, but Woodstock, Simon and Garfunkel, Peter Max, and strobe lights do not have the same resonance in Africa and other foreign lands.

It was patronizing to send Muhammad Ali to Africa. And, remembering Ali's eccentricities, it was reckless. We sent high-level presidential advisors to India and Pakistan. Why send a retired boxer to Africa? 'Twas a botch. Yet when the administration began congratulating itself on this botch ("The impact he's having is tremendous," said Hodding Carter III), the thing took on an even more pernicious dimension.

In a democratic society much of what the average citizen knows about government comes from examples set by his elected officials. To solemnly assert things that are not true, i.e., that the Ali mission was successful and intelligent, is to further degrade many a citizen's understanding

