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Lifting 'Round the World': The Goodwill Weightlifting Tours of 1955

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ABSTRACT

In the first visit by American athletes to the Soviet Union since World War II, the U.S. weightlifting team included 340-pound Paul Anderson who startled the sports world in June of 1955 by pressing a world record 402 pounds, exceeding that of his Soviet adversary by 77 pounds. The admiration evoked by his colossal size and strength encouraged the State Department to send Anderson and other weightlifters on goodwill tours to counter Soviet expansionism in the Middle East and South Asia. The first tour evoked praise from President Dwight Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon, but the second tour proved disappointing when Anderson was unable to perform as expected and Coach Bob Hoffman made disparaging remarks about local customs, thus inadvertently planting seeds of ill-will. The 1955 weightlifting tours illustrated the likelihood of unanticipated consequences and limitations of using athletics as a Cold War strategy to counter Soviet influence in non-aligned countries. Previous accounts have provided chiefly macroscopic views with only a vague notion of what transpired on the ground during goodwill tours. This study provides a closer view of how they were conducted, examples of interaction between visitors and locals, and their failure to fulfil the strategic aims of the Eisenhower Administration.

KEYWORDS

Weightlifting; goodwill; diplomacy; USA; Asia

Officials have told me that when we go overseas with no government connection we accomplish more in two weeks than they do in six years. ... Our athletes can do the work of a thousand ambassadors to promote our way of life and world friendship.¹

The Rev. Bob Richards

I think the United States makes a serious mistake when it uses amateur athletes as political agents. ... I consider these practices damaging to our country. Foreigners are not necessarily stupid.²

Avery Brundage

In the first visit by American athletes to the Soviet Union since World War II, the weightlifting team included 340-pound heavyweight Paul Anderson from Toccoa, Georgia, who startled the sports world by executing a world record 402-pound press in drizzling rain at Moscow's Gorky Park in June of 1955. It exceeded his Soviet adversary's press by 77 pounds. Then he amazed the 15,000 spectators with a 425-pound clean & jerk.³ 'No one', Anderson recalls, 'could believe it'. Suddenly, there was an uproar. 'Men stood shouting on chairs, some tossing hats into the air. I learned later that the Russians, who worship physical strength, were screaming, "He's the strongest man who ever lived, he's a wonder of nature".⁴ Anderson's tour de force prompted a flabbergasted Soviet official to exclaim: 'He's Mr. America'.⁵

It was a climactic event during the so-called 'golden age of American weightlifting', when U.S. athletes captured seven world and Olympic team titles and 38 individual titles from 1946 to 1956. Although the six-man American team only tied the Soviets in overall competition and at a Leningrad encounter, the admiration evoked by Anderson's colossal size and strength was a moral victory and momentary hiatus from the acrimonious relations plaguing the two countries.⁶ That Anderson and the other weightlifters were aware of any Cold War strategy formulated by the Eisenhower Administration seems unlikely. Yet, it was obvious that his newfound celebrity could be an asset to American foreign policy. Subsequent goodwill trips by American weightlifters, spearheaded by Anderson, would test government initiatives to provide an alternative to more overt means of engagement. What was impossible for strategic planners in Washington to foresee was the hardships these athletes would encounter while performing in less-than-ideal conditions and their impact on native peoples. It was easy to perceive Anderson as a silver bullet who could mesmerize audiences and bureaucrats, much as he did in Russia, and thereby win the hearts and minds of distant peoples to the American way. This simplified scenario, however, only laid the groundwork for disappointment.

A Psychological Policy of Containment

Outwardly, the friendly competitions in Russia, pitting some of the strongest men of the world's strongest military powers against each other, provided a misleading template. They resembled the head-to-head confrontations between Communism and capitalism that characterized the Truman Administration's policy of containment, famously articulated by George Kennan's 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article.⁷ For the Eisenhower presidency, however, the Moscow event had a subtler consequence, signalling a policy shift to win the hearts and minds of the international community to the American way. It would involve, as Eisenhower stated in a 1952 campaign speech in San Francisco, a renewed 'psychological warfare effort' to gain 'victory without casualties', realizing that 'everything we do, and everything we fail to say or do, will have its impact in other lands'.⁸ Cultural diplomacy was multifaceted, but it was most evident in the strategic initiatives of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America, focussing principally on the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc and monitored by the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB).⁹ In 1952, the PSB reported that conditions in Europe, Africa, and Latin America were hardly ideal, but 'in

certain areas of the Middle East and of South and Southeast Asia, we are in real and imminent danger of losing the Cold War'.¹⁰

By this time, after much discretion, the Soviets abandoned their sport isolation policy and launched an offensive to establish Russia as the leading sports nation. There are signs of this policy gaining momentum in the early 1950s when the *New York Times* reported a new publication of Soviet training rules aimed at 'capturing the principal world records' and enable 'our strongest athletes' to gain victories 'for the glory of the motherland'.¹¹ In a 1951 State Department bulletin, Richard Walsh acknowledged these policies as 'positive proof' that the Kremlin had mounted a 'gigantic cultural offensive'.¹² Historian Toby Rider claims the Soviets were adopting these measures as part of Stalin's strategy to present Communism as a vehicle of 'peace' and America as a purveyor of war.¹³ Increasingly, as Jaime Schultz recognizes, 'sport became an important stage on which to act out Cold War politics' where athletes were 'players in international diplomacy'.¹⁴

While most studies of cultural warfare devote minimal attention to the non-aligned world, Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman, in *Waging Peace*, argue that Eisenhower knew 'America was squandering its ideological capital' and that the Soviets were reaching the masses of 'newly emergent countries and discontented colonies'.¹⁵ It was imperative that these regions, including the Middle East and Asia, remain free from Kremlin control and that the United States treat every Third World country 'as a sovereign equal' and unassociated with 'old prejudices' of its Western European allies.¹⁶ In *Total Cold War*, Kenneth Osgood explains how American propaganda was used to shape public opinion. Critical to this non-military strategy was an understanding of 'the accelerating pace of decolonization' in non-aligned countries where political allegiance and economic resources were at stake. Middle Eastern oil became a primary focus in this new kind of war, leading to the formation of the so-called Anglo-American 'northern tier' of states, a defensive line along the southern flank of the Soviet Union. The United States Information Agency (USIA), created in 1953 as the government's chief propaganda agency as well its cultural counterpart, the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), spear-headed these State Department initiatives. Both sought to create favourable perceptions of the American way of life. 'In a sense', Osgood recognizes, Eisenhower's 'new look' was 'a programme of psychologically waged containment'.¹⁷

Although much is made of how publications, trade fairs, and educational exchanges were employed to influence public opinion in Osgood's account, virtually nothing appears on the role of sports.¹⁸ Thomas Domer, however, addressed this topic in a 1976 Marquette University dissertation. 'As nuclear proliferation resulted in a military stalemate', he explains, 'confrontations in other arenas, particularly the cultural and sports arena, assumed correspondingly greater political significance. Sport became a potent tool of national policy and a powerful medium through which evidence of world superiority could be demonstrated'. Citing authorization from the Smith-Mundt and Fulbright Exchange Acts of 1948–1949, Domer recognizes the Eisenhower Administration's response to the Soviet Union's sports offensive by supporting visitations of four high-profile athletes – Sammy Lee (diving), Mal Whitfield (track), Harrison Dillard (track), and Bob Richards (pole vault) to Asia,

Africa, Brazil, and India in 1955. But he provides scant coverage of goodwill tours in the critical years leading up to the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 that utilized funds from the \$200,000 ear-marked for sport visitations from the President's Emergency fund appropriated by Congress in 1954.¹⁹ Roy Clumpner's 1978 article on federal involvement to promote policy objectives focuses more on team tours. It points out that 'by the end of 1955 nine State Department supported teams had travelled on goodwill tours overseas'.²⁰ But subsequent studies have dwelled on the cultural impact of competing in the global arena more than interactions with the 'masses' and public opinion.²¹ Notwithstanding resistance to government intervention in amateur sports, notably by International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Avery Brundage, the increase of Soviet cultural and sport visitations from 88 in 1954 to 148 in 1955 provided compelling evidence for greater American efforts.²² Rider cites similar data, noting the visits of 142 Soviet sports groups (including 2,186 athletes) in 1955, increasingly to Third World countries, were staged 'to build friendliness through athletics'.²³

In January 11, 1955 memorandum, USIA Deputy Director Abbott Washburn brought this concern to the attention of C.D. Jackson, the Administration's psychological warfare expert. He noted that a three-pronged Soviet cultural offensive not only targeted trade fairs and artistic performances but athletic visitations – 'all the way from chess teams to weight-lifting'. Regarding American efforts, Washburn was aware of one athlete's tour and the visit of a couple university coaches to India 'to hold "athletic clinics". That's all. No teams'. Meanwhile, the Soviets were 'cleaning up' in recent tours to England and Venezuela in many sports. 'They are clearly out to dominate the world's sports arena. They intend to wrest world supremacy away from the United States ... to convince by their victories that they are the wave of the future in athletics just as in industrial productivity, the arts, government, and everything else'.²⁴ On February 28, 1955 noted newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, Jr. provided strong support to rectify these unpleasant realities to the National Press Club. He advocated a national strategy 'for getting the people of the world on our side. Sports, theatre, educational exchanges; no field should be neglected' in coping with the Soviets.²⁵ General David Sarnoff, Radio Corporation of America chairman, expressed similar views in a May article entitled 'A New Plan to Defeat Communism' in *U.S. News and World Report*.²⁶ And on June 14, Democratic Congressman Torbert Macdonald argued that 'some of the best salesmen for the American way of life have been athletes sent abroad by the Amateur Athletic Union in cooperation with the State Department'.²⁷ Obviously, there was considerable support for any mission to counter Soviet claims of sports superiority with socio/political implications.

The First Goodwill Tour

In the wake of the June 1955 mission to Russia and euphoria stemming from Anderson's performance, the American team embarked on a Middle East trip at the invitation of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran for a 'command performance'. Bob Hoffman, York Barbell Company President and team coach, normally paid for

overseas trips representing the United States and often complained of lack of government support. This time, however, the U.S. and Soviet governments paid for the Russian phase of the journey, while the Shah likely funded the Middle East portion. It seemed a perfect fit for all parties. Hoffman, often dubbed 'Father of American Weightlifting', was passionately patriotic and anti-Communist and was unrestrained in his convictions in *Strength & Health*, his company's publicity medium. 'America's victory in weightlifting more than any other one thing', he believed, 'depicts America's strength'.²⁸ This hastily assembled side-trip seemed an ideal opportunity to show off America's physical strength to a critical region of the world. It also appealed to the Shah's desire to bolster his regime's support from the United States in the wake of the coup engineered by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. What helped make Iran an appealing base for U.S. cultural diplomacy was the Shah's personal interest in weightlifting, which he practiced and was strongly rooted in his nation's traditions. Indeed, Iranian weightlifters won 53 Olympic and world championship medals from 1891 to 1991, 32 of them during his reign.²⁹

Prior to its Iranian performance, however, the American contingent of Chuck Vinci (bantamweight), Joe Pitman (lightweight), Tommy Kono (middleweight), Stan Stanczyk (light-heavyweight), Dave Sheppard (mid-heavyweight), Paul Anderson (heavyweight), Clarence Johnson (manager), John Terpak (assistant coach), and Hoffman visited Egypt, another Middle East country with an illustrious weightlifting tradition. A large delegation of weightlifters carrying bouquets of flowers greeted them after their marathon air journey from Leningrad. The athletes stayed at the Continental Hotel, the best in Cairo, and had a sumptuous dinner at one of former King Farouk's palaces. By the time of their exhibition on June 23, after travelling 12,000 miles, Hoffman's lifters were weakening. 'Strange food, strange water, and irregular living conditions were taking their toll'. Their performance was lacklustre (with Anderson failing to repeat his 402-pound press), but it compared well to what a Soviet team had done on a recent Egyptian tour and the audience seemed appreciative.³⁰ It was much the same story in Alexandria following a trans-desert bus trip where 5,000 spectators were 'greatly impressed' by the Americans, according to the Associated Press: 'All were suffering from upset stomachs and fatigue from their tiring journey, yet exhibited feats never seen in this part of the world'.³¹ Publicity continued to focus on Anderson who, deprived of milk, drank 24 Coca-Colas in one day and appeared in front of the Sphinx and the great pyramids aboard a camel groaning under his 340 pounds.³²

After a brief exhibition in Beirut, the lifters arrived in Tehran to a heroes' welcome. They were guests of honour in 'a big parade', Hoffman observed, with 'one man to a jeep, loud speakers to announce our coming, flowers and wreaths and much warm applause' from a large crowd. While Hoffman and Johnson met the American ambassador, the team went to its lodgings, an elegant former palace with Oriental rugs, elaborate tapestries, a pool, dance band, nightly entertainment, and waiters in full dress (Figure 1). A multi-course feast complemented this ambiance. But the lifters were getting travel weary and homesick, and a stomach virus inflicting the entire team added to their misery. They increasingly encountered the choice of either fasting or facing the consequences.³³ Peak performance could hardly be expected from



Figure 1. Members of the American weightlifting team with Brigadier General Henry A. Byroade, American Ambassador to Egypt. Kneeling l-r: Chuck Vinci and Joe Pitman. Standing l-r: Dave Sheppard, Paul Anderson, John Terpak, Byroade, Clarence Johnson, Bob Hoffman, Stan Stanczyk, and Tommy Kono.

weightlifters who were dehydrated, undernourished, and losing bodyweight. Yet, they not only had to exhibit their athleticism but compete with a contingent of Iranian strongmen.

For this purpose, the Shah had constructed a 4,000-seat arena that was filled to capacity. He greeted Hoffman and told him that he had been using York barbells and reading *Strength & Health* for many years. ‘He is all man’, Hoffman concluded, the best tennis and football player in Iran and adept at shooting, riding, golfing, swimming, skiing, and weightlifting; and ‘his picture in bathing costume showed that he is a Mr. America type’. Hoffman was impressed that the Shah shook hands with all the American lifters and wished them luck (Figure 2).³⁴ With Mohammad Reza presiding over the competition, the Americans did well, besting their Iranian counterparts in all classes despite their diminished strength. Most affected was Anderson who lost 25 pounds and could only press 363 pounds. His sickness also prevented him, to the disappointment of fans, from accompanying the team to the ancient capital of Esfahan where the best performer and crowd-pleaser was Vinci, the smallest American, who not only fended off an Iranian champion but impressed the crowd with his physique. What enabled Vinci to perform so well was his ability, unlike his colleagues, to eat the food. ‘He had been sick’, Hoffman explained, ‘but he would lose it like the ancient Romans and eat again’.³⁵ Kono, regarded as the world’s greatest weightlifter, complained to his father in Sacramento on July 3 that he was ‘still stuck out here’ for several more days owing to airline snarls. ‘I’m tired of the trip’.³⁶ Similarly, delays in New York and Atlanta frustrated plans to provide Anderson a hero’s homecoming with a 50-car motorcade to Toccoa, a chicken dinner serving 300, and a programme featuring the lieutenant governor. Meanwhile, his mother accepted the keys to the city on his behalf, and a proclamation from Governor Marvin Griffin designated July 5 as ‘Paul Anderson Day’.³⁷



Figure 2. The Shah of Iran greeting members of the American team l-r: Bob Hoffman, John Terpak, Chuck Vinci, Joe Pitman (partly hidden), Tommy Kono, Stan Stanczyk, and Dave Sheppard.

Despite hardships, Hoffman deemed their tour a great success: ‘Our fellows were well liked wherever they went’. Indeed, American Embassy officials in Tehran reported that the weightlifters received ‘wider press coverage’ than any visitation they could recollect. ‘Apparently, international visits of sportsmen can develop more enthusiasm, more interest, and a greater sense of camaraderie than is apparent among other visiting groups. The American weightlifters won the hearts of young people in Iran in less than a week’. On returning in July, Pitman, Sheppard, and Anderson accompanied Hoffman to Washington for a personal welcome by the chief executive at the White House and Richard Nixon in his office. They said, ‘[W]e were the best ambassadors America ever had’, Hoffman reported. ‘We showed the way’.³⁸

Cordiality prevailed. Hoffman then wrote a follow-up letter to Nixon on August 20, explaining how his weightlifters were in the forefront of the war against Communism in the Third World. He had known Egyptian lifters since 1936, but that country had recently experienced anti-Western rioting. Although treated well, he could ‘see the undercurrent of fear, distrust or even of dislike’. In Iran, it was a question of bolstering the regime and sustaining ties with the United States. Hoffman observed that ‘nearly all of the important men in Iran, are the king’s buddies, men who play on his football team, men who have lifted weights and swam with him’. It was mostly wrestlers and weightlifters who spear-headed the insurrection against Mosaddegh. ‘I don’t need to tell you how important this change was to our country. Now we cannot afford to let the Russians get in there too strongly again’. Hoffman endorsed the government’s funding of teams for competitions and exhibitions to ‘countries which are on the fence’. He was willing to ‘make goodwill trips to any place the state department would like to have us go’.³⁹

What pre-disposed the vice president to goodwill tours, aside from their strategic potential, was his own 1953 tour to gauge the hearts and minds of people in Burma, India, Pakistan, and Iran. Despite adverse sentiment in India of a pending American military pact with Pakistan, the New Delhi ambassador’s office was pleased that

Nixon's visit accomplished 'much more than most observers thought would be achieved'. Iranian press coverage emphasized his engagement with average people. 'Nixon met and talked to Iranians of all walks of life', observed the *Post*. 'He was extremely kind, courteous and modest'. *Etela'at* commented that upon his airport departure he not only said farewell to officials but shook hands with all the ordinary people.⁴⁰ That future tours of athletes might receive attention was implied by L.N. Jha in *Current*, who described Nixon as a keen sportsman:

His sudden rise in public life, ostensibly, has made up for his unfulfilled ambitions in football. He wrote recently, [F]ootball was my great ambition, and the fact that I did not make the team may account for my avid interest in the sports pages to help make up for it. If I have had one hobby, it is my interest in sports'.⁴¹

Given this proclivity, the sudden fame of Paul Anderson, the successful weightlifting mission, and Nixon's agreeable Asian tour, it is hardly surprising that he would encourage a follow-up weightlifting tour to reinforce the Administration's cultural offensive.

The Second Goodwill Tour

Always seeking recognition from high places, Hoffman was gratified by Nixon's support for another expedition in the fall to more countries on the Soviet southern perimeter, although his athletes were still recovering from sickness and fatigue. Furthermore, it was imperative that the Americans be in top condition for the world championships in Munich. Even if Hoffman had to pay for the trip, 'we can't let the Russians win, it is worth millions in propaganda value for most nations admire strength more than any other one thing'.⁴² Although the Soviets narrowly defeated the Americans at Munich, media attention focussed again on Anderson who executed a 408-pound world record press. Adding to his celebrity status was an article, 'The Strongest Man on Earth', that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, before the lifters left for Germany.⁴³ *Lifting News* editor Peary Rader confirmed his renown:

His fame has spread over the world until he is one of the best known athletes of our time, for he has appeared in movie newsreels repeatedly, had feature write-ups in national magazines, appeared in the newspapers, demonstrated in national TV hookups and in general reached nearly every person in America in one way or another. Everyone is talking about Paul Anderson, the world's strongest man.⁴⁴

Hoffman recruited other team members to appear on New York television shows and a fund-raiser at Madison Square Garden for the 1956 Olympics, using this opportunity to tell vast audiences 'about the part lifting was playing in world affairs'.⁴⁵

As their recognition reverberated through the media, the propaganda potential for the lifters' next goodwill tour in mid-November increased dramatically. The team consisted of Chuck Vinci (bantamweight), Tommy Kono (middleweight), Jim George (light-heavyweight), Clyde Emrich (mid-heavyweight), and Paul Anderson (heavyweight) along with Johnson and Hoffman. The first leg of their 8,000-mile journey took them from York, Pennsylvania, to Baghdad, Iraq. Here, observed Hoffman, they found 'an odd and ancient land. It is just the same now as it was a thousand years ago, as it was five thousand years ago'. At Basra, where the team gave

its first exhibition, he was gratified that the crowd included, along with dignitaries, many *Strength & Health* readers, and 'confirmed barbell men', who knew the Americans' first names. The lifters performed well, including Anderson who repeated his 402-pound press and hoisted a modified 451-pound clean and jerk. The next day Vinci and Kono wowed a high school audience with posing and muscle control exhibitions. Later the team was treated to a 'unique' dinner called a 'Kuzi', consisting of three whole lambs that everyone ate with fingers. 'The food tasted quite good', Hoffman observed, 'but the piece-de-resistance was a bit gruesome. The eye-balls of the animal are considered to be a delicacy and the skulls were shattered in order to get at the brains, another delightful tid-bit! Personally, we will take Vanilla'.⁴⁶

The lifters journeyed next to the northern city of Kirkuk, but it was a problematic trip. Not only was the mortality rate high for passengers of small planes, but the only flight available seated five. Emrich and Anderson therefore volunteered to take a taxi overland, unaware that thugs and thieves often awaited disabled cars. The desert ride lasted six hours through a blinding sand storm. Upon arrival, according to Hoffman, 'a couple of the saddest looking dust-covered white ghosts staggered out of it that you ever saw'. They were unrecognizable, recalls Jim George, 'aside from the fact that Paul was who he was'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Anderson was the star attraction. People on the streets were 'fascinated' by the Dixie Giant, observed Hoffman. 'At one spot a crowd gathered around us, and Paul happened to give away a photo of himself, and immediately the people went wild - everybody wanted a picture!' The weightlifters found refuge in the local USIA office. At nearby Irbil they were taken aback by the sight of small boys carrying butchered sheep to storage by inserting their heads inside the abdominal cavities of the carcasses 'with gore running down their bodies in rivulets. ... They looked like walking zombies'. Before leaving Iraq, the team had lunch at the Royal Athletic Club in Baghdad with another Kuzi. 'By this time we had become so hardened to exposure to scrambled sheep, that we ate it with relish'. Anderson highlighted the final exhibition that evening by executing a modified clean and jerk of 457 pounds, but as a victim of sand fly (Pappataci) fever, it was the last lifting he would do on the tour.⁴⁸

On November 10 the American team arrived in Afghanistan. At Kabul, Hoffman learned that the country was served by no railroads, only two planes weekly, and a trickle of trucks crossing the Khyber Pass, despite war-like conditions, from Pakistan. The lifters received a warm welcome from the Afghans whom Hoffman described as 'handsome' and 'fierce-looking'. He was also fascinated by a popular sport called Budkashi [Buzkashi] or 'dragging the sheep', a game resembling football where the ball is a 150-pound sheep and the 22 players are on horseback. There were few Western-style sports, and they were non-existent for women who were 'not seen at all except in their *chauderis*, or "walking ghost" costumes'. Although the Americans were able to savour some American food, largely from cans, their living quarters were spartan. The old section of the only hotel in Kabul was cold and dark, and Hoffman 'nearly froze to death at night'.⁴⁹

Conditions for their lifting exhibitions were hardly better. Emrich recalls they had '55-gallon barrels in a roped off place where we lifted. Why we lifted in Afghanistan I don't know, cause' they advertised us as strongmen and we'd be lifting cows or

something. It was the only country where they didn't know what weightlifting was. And men were walking around with guns over their shoulders'.⁵⁰ Jim George remembers Afghanistan as 'one of the most backward civilized countries in the world'. The only available weights were a 'mix-matched set of plates and bar. We made up what we thought were the poundages. We were breaking world records right and left'.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the estimated crowd of 10,000 expected the 'world's strongest man' would fulfil the 'real program' organizers had arranged for him, more in keeping with their cultural conditioning. 'They wanted to test his pulling power against a horse, they wanted to see him pull a string of cars, they wanted him to lift a car or truck'. Unfortunately, Anderson stayed in bed during the team's six days in Kabul. 'He had a touch of sand fly fever, a headache, and indigestion. Perhaps his main trouble was homesickness', Hoffman speculated. George believed Anderson's nonappearance stemmed from Afghan perceptions of weightlifters as strongmen who lifted rocks, cars, and objects to which people could relate. 'My understanding is that's why Anderson left. He was concerned that they were going to put him in a ring to fight a bull or something. We were all sick'.⁵²

Again, Vinci compensated for the big man by staging what Hoffman called a 'phenomenal display' of muscle control. With 'the best back in the world', he was 'called back time after time to show his wonderful muscles'.⁵³ Uppermost in Hoffman's thoughts, however, was his lifters' impact on public opinion and America's strategic goals. Some Afghans told a group of visiting U.S. congressmen, who witnessed the exhibition, how they were grateful to see ordinary Americans, not just officials and engineers. The goodwill tour had arrived at an opportune time since a plebiscite would soon determine whether the country would favour the Soviet Union or America; a group of tribal chiefs and headmen told Hoffman that 'our visit might be a deciding factor which would sway the people of Afghanistan more strongly toward the West'.⁵⁴ These concerns were reflected in an October 1955 USIA intelligence report of continuous anti-Western propaganda stressing 'Soviet friendship and cultural ties with countries of the area'. In Afghanistan, there was 'no let-up in personal appeals to Muslims' by Soviet officials, 'utilizing slanderous references concerning Americans and their world policy'.⁵⁵

Much the same strategic considerations confronted the tour in India. At New Delhi, embassy and USIA representatives escorted Hoffman and his lifters to a trade fair 'dominated by displays of the communist bloc', mostly of machine tools. Obviously, those countries 'had gone to great lengths to make a favourable impression'. While Anderson departed on the next plane, the others arrived in Bombay where they stayed in a comfortable hotel with palatable food. Hoffman was disappointed, however, that the 800 people at their first exhibition, though enthusiastic, were 'more interested in the physique part of the show than the lifting'. Later in a large stadium, the Americans performed well, but again the main attraction, in lieu of Anderson, was Vinci, who 'lifted splendidly and showed his muscles well', according to Hoffman. Newspaper headlines the next morning exclaimed, '*Vinci wins the heart of the crowd*'. To Hoffman's chagrin, the Indians were more enthusiastic about Vinci, who had never won a world championship, than Kono, who had won three and an Olympic gold medal. No less disconcerting was the

Indian press that was 'leaning very strongly to the communist countries'. Hoffman attributed this attitude to India's trading. Russia needed rice and cotton which India supplied for manufactured goods. America provided 'foreign relief', enabling Indian elites to enjoy Western-style luxuries and the country to maintain a strong defence posture. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was 'smart to play both ends against the middle'. It intrigued Hoffman that their goodwill tour was being followed by 'the Russian Rover Boys', Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin, dual heads of the Soviet State. Whereas the weightlifters attracted huge crowds, 'they had millions to our thousands'. Nehru also declared a long holiday to welcome the Soviets, bringing countless rural citizens to the cities 'ready to be enthusiastic about anything, particularly "kings" from another land'. It signified the Indian leaders' desire to work more closely with the Kremlin.⁵⁶

The weightlifters could hardly escape this harsh Cold War reality. Soon after arriving in Calcutta on November 20, they learned the Russian Rover Boys had received a 'great welcome' in Bombay. 'Few foreign dignitaries have cottoned on to our people as did Mr. Nikolai Bulganin and Mr. Nikita Krushchev', reported the *Times of India*. Heading the American coverage was the 'hard luck' story of the world's strongest man whose Indian visit was cut short either because 'his health failed' or he had 'a mild affliction of home-sickness'.⁵⁷ While the article focussed mainly on Kono, Vinci received the greatest approbation from crowds. 'Mighty Mouse was always ready at the drop of a hat ... to show his muscles', noted Hoffman. That Indians preferred bodybuilding annoyed Hoffman who believed 'a lot of good muscles are going to waste' that could be employed in the Olympics. 'Muscles were intended by nature to use, not to look at'. His weightlifters exemplified an ideal not in synch with local practices (Figure 3).⁵⁸

In Burma, the final country on their tour, Hoffman again seemed at odds with local sentiment. Only recently liberated from decades of British rule, Burma conveyed a sense of anti-colonialism. 'There are some who don't like the British, but I doubt if there are any who do not admire their ability and their tenacity to their principles'.



Figure 3. American mid-heavyweight Clyde Emrich performing a 350-pound jerk in Calcutta.

He believed the British did ‘a great deal’ for Asia. The Burmese, however, could easily identify Hoffman’s Western-style capitalism as similar to that of their former overlords. Although local lightweight Tun Maung had placed third at the world championships in Munich, young men seemed disinclined towards weightlifting. At a clinic in Rangoon, Hoffman observed ‘a good many skilled lifters, but unfortunately as in other eastern countries, the bodybuilders, the aspirants of Mr. This and That, outnumbered the lifters’. The Americans’ weightlifting, hampered by intense heat and flying bugs, was lacklustre, but the spectators enjoyed it, particularly when Kono and Vinci displayed their muscles. “‘Little Samson’ was well liked, the people seemed to appreciate his cocky attitude, his determination and terrific muscular development’. What stirred their passions, however, was football, even arousing violence among a normally peaceful people.⁵⁹

In Mandalay, the farthest destination on their tour, the weightlifters stayed at the home of a USIA official in ‘very comfortable’ quarters. Again, Hoffman noted, there were ‘good reasons’ why Americans seek foreign service careers. ‘They live very well abroad’. At their parting exhibition, Maung and other Burmese lifters joined the Americans before several thousand spectators. It was a festive occasion featuring an orchestra playing native instruments and girls performing ancient dances. An awareness of their mission’s importance occurred during a sightseeing tour when Hoffman observed that they were near the Communist China border, and people in one remote village were ‘hard at work putting up decorations for the visit of the Soviet leaders’ a few days later. Geographically, he reckoned they were half way around the world from York. Kono was the only lifter who circumnavigated the globe by going east to his home in Honolulu. ‘Those who saw us at the airports regretted they did not have the opportunity to see the great Paul Anderson’. For Hoffman, it was ‘a wonderful trip to strange and wonderful places’, but questions remained about its impact on public opinion.⁶⁰

Unintended Consequences

Initial responses were not encouraging. There were no crowds, especially with Anderson’s absence, awaiting team members in New York, Chicago, or Honolulu.⁶¹ Nor were there White House invitations or State Department commendations. ‘There was none of that’, observes Clyde Emrich. ‘There was no response at all. I don’t recall any coverage in the Chicago papers. Just friends asking how it was’. Jim George recalls the trip ‘ruined my life. After returning, I was down for a couple months with hepatitis. I lost about 40 pounds. Was I congratulated for serving my country or given any sort of accolade locally? No. No ticker tape parades’. Emrich could not explain why so much acclaim was bestowed on the first goodwill tour and none to his own.⁶²

Meanwhile Hoffman and Johnson rushed back to Louisville on December 2 to attend the annual AAU national meeting where Johnson was on the Executive and Foreign Relations Committee. They encountered unpleasant news. First, Hoffman, for undisclosed reasons, was not confirmed as a delegate to the International Weightlifting Congress prior to the Melbourne Olympics. Then AAU President Carl

Hansen met with a committee of past presidents to discuss complaints concerning the overseas goodwill trip. Johnson duly conveyed their views to Hoffman.

First and foremost was correspondence from the State Department setting forth complaints from officials of Foreign Countries objecting to articles that appeared in *Strength and Health Magazine* and certain actions that occurred on our tours.

From Iraq alone came a voluminous letter stating that references to their country, customs, and people appearing in *Strength and Health Magazine* were very objectionable. For example they pointed out that with reference to a *Kuzi* it was stated they hammered a skull of a lamb and that the eyes were considered a delicacy. They pointed out that it was our boys who tore the skull of the lamb apart and that we had no basis for accusing them of such barbarous actions. They objected strenuously to references to their religion and customs.

This is just an example of their complaint as the letter itself was over six pages long. The State Department takes the position that we were on a good will tour for them and that articles such as this has undone all the good that was accomplished while we were there and in addition has created an animosity which is very difficult to overcome. They bring up incidents that happened in other countries and statements that were made. It appears that they might even withhold privileges of travel in the future because of this.

The committee brought forth several copies of *Strength and Health Magazine* from which articles on other countries were written showing our athletes wearing shirts and jackets with York imprinted thereon. Just a short time ago they had banned certain use of such pictures from instructional material because it is against the A.A.U. rules and they claimed that we have been doing this for some time and should know that it is not proper.

Johnson explained that the committee was inclined to believe these complaints because of numerous improprieties by Hoffman at other AAU events, most recently at a Mr. Universe Contest at Virginia Beach. It was imperative that Hoffman address these objections to 'get things ironed out in time for the Olympics'.⁶³

Interestingly, these protests surfaced mainly *after* the goodwill tour, but a glance at the March 1956 issue of *Strength & Health* provides a rationale for complaints lodged at State Department and AAU offices. In addition to referring to the 'gruesome' practice of *kuzi*, the text included a picture of an Iraqi boy with his head in the abdominal cavity of a slaughtered sheep to display his 'horribly bloody' and zombie-like appearance. There were also references to the 'shrill whine' of Eastern music, tiny donkeys serving as transportation for many people, men as 'beasts of burden', and Mosul as a city of 130,000, 'including extra wives', seemingly to justify Hoffman's initial reference to Iraq as 'an odd and ancient land'.⁶⁴

The most offending passages, however, were embedded in Hoffman's editorial, 'Many Ways to Heaven' that focussed on the 'thin line' dividing cults from religions. It was laden with many self-serving passages conveying an air of superior knowledge and way of life. Much commentary dealt with indignities suffered by Islamic believers in countries where 'no religious freedom' existed. Yet 'teeming millions of poverty-stricken people find a great deal of solace in religion, for it is almost all they have in the way of beauty and peace'. Some practices he found 'incredible', noting Muslims

... not only face Mecca and pray four times a day, but they are compelled to bathe themselves before each prayer. Everywhere we saw people washing in drainage ditches, washing their teeth, bathing their bodies in foul water. It is little wonder that a full 80% of these people are afflicted with disease, much of it blindness and skin affections. To the stranger, it would seem there could be a better way to follow one's religion than to daily risk infection.

No less offensive to Hoffman was the treatment of women prescribed by Islamic tradition.

In Afghanistan, when a girl reaches thirteen she puts on a *chauderi*, a garment which completely conceals both face and figure from the world. She becomes, in effect, a *walking ghost*. ... They can see the few Westerners, the American and European women who are living there, dressing in present day freedom, and naturally they envy their sisters this privilege, but there is nothing they can do about it; once they don the veil, they are doomed for life.

In Buddhist countries, Hoffman concluded, their biggest obstacle to progress was their priest-ridden culture. In Mandalay, a city of 130,000, there were an estimated 20,000 priests or monks.

Like the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet they are the youngest, strongest and healthiest of all the men we saw. In Bangkok, 10,000 priests go out every morning with 'begging bowls'. It would seem to the casual observer that a great deal of man power is going to waste, and that this is one of the strange customs that makes these countries *backward* nations.⁶⁵

However objectionable these practices might be to a Westerner like Hoffman, it is easy to see how the Eastern peoples would be resentful to his criticisms and superior air.

Differing perspectives on the outcome and impact of the goodwill tour are revealed by two of the weightlifters. Clyde Emrich, later strength coach for the Chicago Bears, views his international experience as successful. 'My mind was on my lifting. That was the purpose for our visit. It was a goodwill thing. It was about being with the people to help them and explain something about lifting'. He could not remember any incidents where team members violated local sensitivities. Nor did Emrich witness Hoffman overpromoting himself. As for promoting the American way of life, Emrich was unaware of their trip's strategic purpose, but he remembers Bob 'always greeted people with respect and made sure that we were always respectful'. Emrich does not recall the *kuzi* dinner but believes what appeared to be an insult was more in the article than anything else. It got blown out of proportion by public opinion manipulators.⁶⁶

Jim George, who became an Ohio dentist, reckoned the sole interest of Vice President Nixon and the State Department in the weightlifters' goodwill tour was to showcase Paul Anderson. 'In my own head, I was thinking, I'm a propaganda machine'. As they visited numerous embassies and consulates, George overheard a cynical remark by a consular official. 'You know, we asked for Jesse Owens, and we get a bunch of dumb weightlifters'. In formal meetings with dignitaries, 'I think we were treated more as the entertainment'. Official business was left to Johnson and Hoffman, with the former 'concerned that we would say something wrong. I don't know which was the worst representative', but Clarence at least was 'deferential'. Bob

was ‘bombastic’ and ‘braggadocio about the US and his own accomplishments’. Neither of them was disrespectful, but both had personal agendas related to their respective businesses. George remembered the *kuzi* incident because his parents were immigrants from Bulgaria where ‘lamb and sheep were staples, and the head was considered the delicacy when we grew up. I was offered a lamb’s head. I was sitting next to Bob, and he got up and moved and made a big show of it’. For George, it was a memorable faux pas where Bob was dishonouring the honour. Regarding interactions with ordinary people, George recalls that ‘we treated them like we were stars and they were our loyal followers’. Social hierarchies limited their exposure. ‘We were dealing with the elite. They weren’t bringing in common people, except in Afghanistan where these guys came in on their horses and camels’.⁶⁷ Even for George, whose ethnic upbringing provided a modicum of toleration for foreign lifestyles, the goodwill tour was a culture shock.

The Ugly Americans?

Three years after the weightlifters’ tours W.J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick published their classic Cold War commentary on American foreign policy. *The Ugly American*, notes sociologist Paul Hollander, conveyed the notion that ‘Americans abroad, and officials in particular, were both totally ignorant of local customs, social norms, and culture and cheerfully insensitive to the feelings and beliefs of the peoples they were seeking to patronize and defend from the communist threat’.⁶⁸ Although the novel’s hero serves as the ‘ugly American’ because he tried to counter these impressions by identifying with the indigenous population, the term took on the opposite meaning of Americans who exhibited offensive behaviour abroad, thereby enabling Communism to take root. In this sense Jim George reflected on the book’s application to his own experiences on the frontline of American diplomatic efforts in 1955. He concluded that his team ‘unconsciously’ projected the ugly American image: ‘Yes, we were the Americans. We were the best and this and that. Why didn’t the whole world understand how good we were? This was our internal propaganda. We were the greatest thing that has ever happened to the world. We were the only true superpower. We were the ugly Americans’.⁶⁹ Clarence Johnson viewed this cultural arrogance in the broader context of hypocrisy endemic in American foreign policy. ‘We aren’t too well loved in most countries of the world’, he reflected, ‘mainly because of the take-it-or-leave-it attitude of many of our diplomats. In certain countries where meat eating or drinking alcohol is not allowed because of religious beliefs, too many of our people indulge anyway. The officials don’t say anything but often are offended’.⁷⁰ Whatever the incidental shortcomings of American weightlifters in 1955, State Department strategists seemed oblivious to their own more consequential failings.

Considering the second goodwill tour fiasco, it is not surprising that a subsequent trip to East Asia projected during the euphoric days following the first tour never materialized.⁷¹ However, Hoffman’s insensitivities and his lifters’ unfamiliarity with local customs only partially explain the lack of further weightlifting tours. Sickness and exhaustion were pervasive on both trips. Ultimately, it was unrealistic

expectations that doomed this promising strategy to make friends and check Communism. The State Department and Vice President Nixon placed too much confidence on Paul Anderson after his stunning performance in Moscow and his popularity in Egypt and Iran in June of 1955, leading them to believe he could excite the peoples on the southern borders of the Soviet Union into thinking the United States was the strongest nation with a superior culture. His illness and inability to live up to those expectations dampened these assumptions. When Anderson failed to appear for an exhibition in Kabul, some doubted that he was as strong as he was reputed to be.⁷² No less confusing for Indians in Bombay was a *Times of India* headline, 'The American Weight-Lifters Bring House Down With Great Display', followed by regrets that 'much of the glamour attached to their visit' was 'dimmed by the absence of their leader, Paul Anderson, the heavyweight champion and the strongest man in the world, who ... was ill and homesick and had to be sent back home from Delhi'.⁷³ A tone of resentment is evident in Hoffman's report on the team's condition in Calcutta where he contrasts Anderson's lassitude with Kono's fortitude. Though also 'sick and just hanging on', Kono, after touring the world for weeks, was 'breaking world records while the strongest man in the world had long before gone home sick'.⁷⁴ Such lapses of duty could easily be interpreted by State Department officials as lack of patriotism. Displays of strength by Kono and Vinci's physique were no substitute for the world's strongest man.

What contributed most to Anderson's instant fame six months earlier and becoming the centrepiece for the State Department's goodwill tours was his mystique, based not only on his strength but his representation of the popular image of a strongman: 'The wonderful thing about Anderson, when viewed from a publicity-man's angle, is that he looks exactly the way the public expects its strong men to look', observed journalist Ed Linn.

Those thighs of his are so big, for instance, that he has to swing one leg around the other when he walks. When his form flashes on the newsreel screen, an inevitable gasp runs through the theater, followed by a sort of exhalation of laughter. In Iran, the townspeople just naturally fell into step behind him as he waddled down the street. Within a short time he was leading a barnyard parade as farmers going to market fell in line with their chickens, goats and sheep.

Adding to Anderson's mystique was his agility. 'A man that big shouldn't be able to move at all', quipped Jim George.⁷⁵ The weightlifters' failure to fulfil the State Department's strategic aims must be attributed as much to disappointments over Anderson's non-appearances as to Hoffman's public relations gaffes. Contrary to expectations, he provided no magical weapon to wage Cold War diplomacy. In Anderson's defence, he reasoned that exhaustion was a consequence of having to lift three or four times daily: 'If we were in a goodwill tour, we certainly couldn't walk out on the platform and perform some type of nominal effort and take a bow. We had to produce every time'.⁷⁶ Unlike their understanding of baseball players who could perform efficiently for 154 games a season, State Department officials and the public, who had little knowledge of the sport, did not realize weightlifters required intense mental preparation to produce maximum effort and record-breaking results.

The Weightlifting Tours in Retrospect

It would be misleading to assume that the trying circumstances and unfortunate outcome of the 1955 weightlifting tours was a fate that befell all government-supported sports initiatives to unaligned countries. Coincident with these visitations, the State Department enlisted Hamilton Richardson, Bob Perry, Karol Fageros, and Althea Gibson to stage exhibition tennis matches in Southeast Asia. Gibson, as the star attraction, was recruited to dispel international concerns about American race relations. She deemed their tour, which ended in January of 1956, 'an unqualified success'. Gibson recollected having 'never done anything more rewarding'.⁷⁷ On the other hand, a 1971 goodwill tour to Africa by basketball superstars Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Oscar Robertson did not fare as well. Although greeted by enthusiastic crowds, both athletes seemed uninterested in their diplomatic roles and were later dismissive of the trip. As historian Kevin Witherspoon explains, 'an over-eager diplomatic corps, blinded by the prospect of exhibiting two of the best basketball players of all time' never adequately prepared the players and 'thus put them in a position to fail'.⁷⁸

The failings of the weightlifters may also be ascribed in part to overeager foreign policy operatives hoping to use sports for political ends. Unlike the foregoing tennis and basketball tours, there was no racial component to provide meaning and sustenance to their efforts. Their impact seemingly depended on the drawing power of a single athlete. Perceptions that Paul Anderson could win friends for America by displaying his mammoth size and strength proved illusory. It was also unreasonable to expect that he and his teammates, representing a sport that was little known and appreciated in the non-aligned world, could have an impact similar to tennis, basketball, or track and field for which American athletes were often idolized. Finally, although the weightlifters were dispatched to harsh environments that were culturally dissimilar from their homeland, there is no evidence in extant State Department and USIA files that they received sufficient support from foreign service officers to ameliorate conditions and ingratiate themselves to native peoples.

Whether dismay over the outcome of the second weightlifting trip was a factor cannot be determined, but the State Department sponsored fewer goodwill tours to the Middle East and South Asia in succeeding years. Their abandonment reinforced repeated warnings by Avery Brundage about using amateur athletes to execute American foreign policy. 'The teams the AAU sends abroad are considered in foreign countries to represent the United States', he advised former AAU President Douglas Roby in 1957. 'Foreigners form their opinion of the United States by hearing and seeing these individuals' and any ill-considered selection 'injures the standing of the United States'.⁷⁹ These misgivings echo C.D. Jackson's caveats in a speech to a St. Louis American Legion gathering in 1953 at the outset of the Eisenhower Administration's psychological warfare policy. To achieve diplomatic success for America, 'the game is to score without leaving permanent scar-tissue'.⁸⁰ The inability of the 1955 weightlifting tours to achieve that goal, largely because of Hoffman's ill-advised comments and unrealistic expectations for Paul Anderson, signified a breakdown of favourable public opinion – the very outcome goodwill trips were intended to promote.

Notes

1. Bill Davidson, 'Your Stake in the Olympics', *Collier's*, January 6, 1956, 70.
2. Brundage to Douglas Roby, August 30, 1957, Roby File, Box 65, folder 11, Avery Brundage Papers, University of Illinois Archives.
3. Gottfried Schodl, *The Lost Past, A Story of the International Weightlifting Federation* (Budapest: Gutenberg, 1992), 245–6.
4. Paul Anderson, *The World's Strongest Man* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1975), 63. See also Dominic G. Morais and Jan Todd, 'Lifting the Iron Curtain, Paul Anderson and the Cold War's First Sport Exchange', *Iron Game History* 12 (February 2013): 16–39. For similar articles in this genre see 'Sport Diplomacy Forum' in *Diplomatic History* 40, no. 5 (September 2016): 807–84.
5. Harry Paschall, 'Behind the Scenes', *Strength & Health* 23 (September 1955): 26.
6. Sponsoring the weightlifters to Russia occurred after Olympic gold medalists Stan Stanczyk and Norbert Schemansky had to refuse an invitation by the Polish Weightlifting Federation to participate in an international youth festival in Warsaw. Its 'major purpose', State Department Officer Walter Stoessel explained to AAU Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Ferris, was to 'support Communist attacks on the United States and its foreign policy'. Stoessel to Ferris, February 23, 1955 and April 27, 1955, General Records of the Department of State, 1955–59, RG 59, Box 4062, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
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8. 'Eisenhower Calls Korea Peace Talk Red Trap for U.N.', *New York Times*, October 9, 1952, 1.
9. See Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain, Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom, The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000); and Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback, America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).
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13. Toby Charles Rider, 'The Olympic Games and the Secret Cold War: The U.S. Government and the Propaganda Campaign Against Communist Sport, 1950–1960' (PHD Diss., University of Western Ontario, 2011), 125.
14. Jaime Schultz, *Qualifying Times: Points of Change in U.S. Women's Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 85.
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17. Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War, Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 47, 132, and 106. See also Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
18. For non-sports cultural exchange programs see Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).
19. Thomas M. Domer, 'Sport in Cold War America, 1953–1963' (PhD Diss., Marquette University, 1976), 3–4, and 133–4. For Lee, Dillard, and Richards tour reports see *U.S.*

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 21. See Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews, eds., *East Plays West, Sport and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2007).
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 35. Hoffman, 'Lifting 'Round the World', 49.
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 42. Hoffman to Nixon, August 20, 1955, Nixon Papers, Series 320, Box 346.
 43. Furman Bisher, 'The Strongest Man on Earth', *Saturday Evening Post*, 228, October 8, 1955, 96.
 44. Peary Rader, 'Grunt and Groan', *Lifting News* 2 (January 1956): 6. In December the *Atlanta Constitution* named Anderson "Georgia Male Athlete of the Year". Anderson, *World's Strongest Man*, 72.

45. Bob Hoffman, 'Weight-Lifting Reaching the Heights', *Strength & Health* 24 (February 1956): 40 and 42.
46. Bob Hoffman, 'Strength Safari', *Strength & Health* 24 (March 1956): 10–11 and 54.
47. Ibid. and Jim George Interview, June 17, 2016, Akron, Ohio.
48. Hoffman, 'Strength Safari', 56–7. Reaction from Iraq was encouraging. In an open letter in *Al Yaqdha* to Ambassador Waldemar Gallman, 'Sportsman' Hussain Al-Zubaida expressed appreciation for the visit of Anderson and Kono, leading embassy officials to conclude that the weightlifters 'brought about closer understanding between the Iraqi and American peoples'. National Archives Records, Group I, box 24, folder 13-IES Digest, 1956, Special Collections, University of Arkansas.
49. Bob Hoffman, 'Lifting 'Round the World, Part III', *Strength & Health* 24 (April 1956): 11 and 52.
50. Clyde Emrich Interview, June 9, 2016, Lake Bluff, Illinois.
51. George Interview.
52. Hoffman, 'Lifting 'Round the World, III', 54–5, and George Interview.
53. 'They called me up a half-dozen times to see the muscles I had in my back', Vinci recalls. Chuck Vinci Interview, August 23, 2016, Elyria, Ohio.
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55. USIA Research Reports, 1954–56, National Archives, RG 0306, Container 2.
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57. 'The Social Whirl', *The Times of India*, November 27, 1955.
58. Bob Hoffman, 'We Visit Calcutta', *Strength & Health* 24 (August 1956): 40–2.
59. Bob Hoffman, 'Our Trip to Burma', *Strength & Health* 24 (October 1956): 9 and 43–4.
60. Bob Hoffman, 'Burma Visit ... Mandalay', *Strength & Health* 25 (December 1956): 8–9 and 45–7.
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63. Johnson to Hoffman, n.d., letter in author's possession. See also Barton Horvath, 'The Hoffman Expose', *Muscle Builder* 6 (October 1956): 22–7.
64. Hoffman, 'Strength Safari', 10, 37, 54–7.
65. Bob Hoffman, 'Many Ways to Heaven', *Strength & Health* 24 (March 1956): 3–4, 42 and 44.
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