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Assignment in Washington

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there are many. A greater discursive and explanatory approach to each chapter would be of value.

Judging by both content and format, this book as a totality was compiled for the developmental specialist, and as such not for general academic consumption. In short, as a whole, the book is a valuable contribution in its systematisation and comprehensiveness, for the specialist in this demographic field; and for the nonspecialist various papers provide valuable and recent data and insights. In essence, the benefits to be gained from this reference-type book depend on the researcher-reader's needs and capabilities.

If one does not wish to be too disappointed or confused, initially, then I recommend Chapter Five, "Labour Migration Amongst the ASEAN Countries," by C.W. Stahl, for both its content, (a refreshing look at the modern mode of an old phenomenon: international work-migration), and its honesty and style.

A final note should be added on the technicalities of the book's production, where the standard is less than perfect. Certainly one can tolerate the occasional typographical gremlin; but the frequent recurrence of spelling, grammatical and printing errors does no justice to a supposedly high standard of academic content. For the reader unfamiliar with the authors, such errors may reflect editorial haste or inefficiency, or simply cast doubt on contributors' qualifications and content accuracy.

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ASSIGNMENT IN WASHINGTON. By Eduardo Z. Romualdez. Manila, 1982 (Exclusively distributed by Bookmark). 418 pages.

"What is an Ambassador supposed to do?"

Eduardo Z. Romualdez, former Philippine Ambassador to the United States and the Dominican Republic, asks this question and answers it in a style marked by directness and clarity. He sums up the six fold function of the Philippine Embassy in Washington and shows how he performed the task of overseeing the entire operation for more than ten years, beginning in 1971.

Readers contemplating a career in the foreign service may profit from a perusal of documents pertinent to the presentation and acceptance of the Ambassador's credentials, notes verbale and aide memoires, and other models of the language used in diplomatic intercourse. One visualizes the envoy behind the dignified rhetoric, clad in either morning coat or black tie at a formal reception, or emplaning for South America on a special mission, or lodging a protest with the State Department "in the strongest possible

terms" over a diplomatic faux pas intended to embarrass the Philippine government.

At his listening post on "Embassy Row" Romualdez was witness to historic events involving the American presidency and vice-presidency, such as the downfall of Richard Nixon and the national trauma resulting from the near-assassination of Ronald Reagan. Having observed Washington newsmakers at the negotiating table, he offers us his candid assessments of their personalities. Henry Kissinger was difficult to deal with because he refused to listen and appeared to be a know-it-all on every subject. Similarly, Cyrus Vance seemed to be "not quite interested in what you were saying." As for Senator Edmund Muskie, he conveyed the impression that he was trying to say, "You may stop talking. I know all about it."

Romualdez expresses disappointment in American officialdom's "tendency to apply pressure (of whatever kind) in order to achieve an objective." Some of his experiences, however, prove that his government was perfectly capable of doing the same. An example was the planned omission of the Philippines from Agnew's 1973 Far East tour, a deliberate snub occasioned by the imposition of martial law. After a frantic exchange of telex cablegrams and phone calls between Padre Faura and the Embassy, Ambassador Romualdez delivered an aide memoire personally to the Assistant Secretary of State, expressing the regret of the Philippine government that the United States government "apparently did not understand the implications of such an omission." The implications became clear when Malacañang announced that President Marcos had ordered a "thorough review" of the military bases agreement between the U.S. and the Philippines.

The State Department took the hint (call it diplomatic blackmail, if you will) and altered Agnew's travel plans to include Manila. Clearly, Ambassador Romualdez played a major role in averting a Philippine-American crisis; a footnote, however, quotes the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos, as having said in 1977 that upon learning of Agnew's plan to bypass her country, she had gotten in touch with friends in the wire services, and they in turn "got in touch with their people in Washington." Treating his cousin's credit-grabbing with ambassadorial tact, Romualdez remarks: "To what extent this indirect approach influenced the official decision in Washington, I have no way of knowing."

With characteristic circumspection Romualdez makes no pompous claims in favor of the martial-law regime, although he confesses having felt "sheepish" when Filipinos came a-picketing as he was being entertained by American donors of aid to Philippine barrios. He felt they should have demonstrated against him at his hotel instead of embarrassing his well-meaning hosts.

More hair-raising was an experience undergone by the Ambassador in 1974, when he was handcuffed and held hostage for ten hours by a pistol-

packing, neurotic Filipino who thought his teenaged son was being detained by President Marcos.

It seems, though, that none of his countrymen distressed Romualdez more than his good friend, Raul Manglapus, then a political exile, who in 1973 had sought the Ambassador's assistance in arranging for his family's departure from Manila. While trying to facilitate their trip to the U.S. via official channels, Romualdez heard the "disturbing rumor" that the Manglapuses had been "spirited" from a military base and flown by an American aircraft to their destination. Instead of rejoicing, however, Romualdez wondered if the U.S. could defend the legality of its action.

Subsequently he learned that Manglapus was lobbying against U.S. military aid to the Philippines and leading anti-Marcos demonstrations. Granting that his fellow Atenean was patriotic, Romualdez nonetheless believed he had confused love of country with "an ambition for leadership."

In the light of the Batasan's refusal to heed an impeachment resolution filed by the Opposition against Ferdinand Marcos in 1985, Romualdez's analysis of the Watergate scandal sounds like a lesson for our time. He praises the congressmen in the House Judiciary Committee who had to forget party loyalty and personal considerations when they voted to impeach President Nixon.

Romualdez recalls that after the swearing in of Gerald Ford, it was business as usual in the nation's capital:

The United States had been engaged in a mighty struggle, One President had gone and another had taken his place — and there were no soldiers in the streets. It was another proof of the strength of the American system of government. The Supreme Court could issue orders and they would be obeyed. Congress could investigate a President and compel him to step down. The Presidency could change hands, and government would continue. In the United States, government could still be one of laws and not of men. (p. 264)

Unfortunately, Romualdez lacked the clairvoyance to foresee Marcos's ignominious exit from Malacañang in 1986.

President Marcos also has his own built-in machinery to temper his desire for power [writes Romualdez]. He is endowed with a high degree of intelligence and gifted with tremendous foresight. He is brilliant to a very refined degree. These are some of the natural breaks to the thirst for power. (p. 268)

Perhaps prudence and protocol inhibited the Ambassador from imparting the moral of the Nixon tragedy to Mr. Marcos. Either that, or he was dazzled, like so many others, by His Excellency's legendary charisma.

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