

stiffed on money matters; but after all, what are friends for?). On a larger scale, he was a liberal *bête noire*, high on Robert Kennedy's hate list.

But having said that, I remember Cohn best for reducing anti-Communism to its lowest common denominator, i.e., trying to keep his buddy David Schine out of the Army and, in the process, giving the liberals the ammunition to bring his boss, Joe McCarthy, down. Nor can I forget that Cohn's "conservatism" became full-blown only after Nixon and Reagan went to the White House; that in 1964, when conservatives were in the trenches with

Barry Goldwater, our good friend Roy was front-running with Lyndon Johnson.

All of the above is simply for the record. My real point in writing this memo is simply to say that, my daughter's advice to the contrary, I'm bailing out on both the von Hoffman and Zion reviews. Unlike theater critics, book reviewers can't do the I-left-at-intermission bit, because books are different from plays: the reviewer is expected to plow on, to the bitter podophyllinized end.

No can do. Two books on Roy Cohn, warts and all, is two too many. □

## AMBASSADOR IN PARIS: THE REAGAN YEARS

Evan Galbraith/Regnery Gateway/\$16.95

Ernest van den Haag

In the past—without telephones and jet planes—ambassadors were important in diplomatic negotiations. Their principals needed to be represented abroad by plenipotentiaries. Today the principals find it easier to negotiate directly with one another by telephone or in person. Ambassadors were important too in informing their governments about what was going on in the country to which they had been sent. Today an embassy is at best one of many sources of such information, competing with newspapers, TV, and official travelers of all kinds.

Are embassies obsolete then? Not quite. They help to overcome the obstacles governments put in one another's way. Governments often make trade and travel difficult and embassies help travelers and businessmen. Further, in closed societies, embassies still are of importance as contacts with the government. Above all, in free societies, embassies have become the major public relations centers for their home countries and the policies they pursue.

Not all our ambassadors have fully understood, or are able to accomplish, their new task. Evan Galbraith, our ambassador to France 1981-86, has. He came to the job magnificently equipped. Having lived in Paris as an international banker, he spoke French well (for an American). In France, justly proud of its language, this is particu-

larly important. Indeed it is important everywhere to send someone who speaks the language of the country to which he is ambassador. This may not be easy with respect to Afghanistan—although more efforts could be made. But France? Surely there are enough qualified persons in America who speak French. Yet unfortunately, Evan Galbraith was the exception rather than the rule. The French appreciated his knowledge of their language and his love of their civilization; and he used his gifts fully in the service of his country.

Galbraith understood early on that his real task was not to sit in the embassy reading the cable traffic, too voluminous anyway to be read by anyone (it hardly ever is), and add to it. Much of this traffic is of importance only to bureaucrats who want to make a record. American embassies are expected to report on everything (all by cable): "economics, finance, agriculture, military affairs, politics, science . . . transportation . . . drugs, crime, labor." It never seems to have occurred to the State Department that most of the cabled information, difficult as it was to procure in the eighteenth century, is now readily available from public sources, and much of it is not needed. Soviet embassies are not overstaffed, since they are used for much spying. Ours, so used by the CIA only to a minor degree, are overstaffed. True, the personnel barely suffices for what they do. But much of what they do need not be done by the embassy.

But Galbraith did grasp the truly important job of a modern ambassador.

I doubt that the U.S. has had a more persuasive and diligent representative in Paris since Benjamin Franklin. And Ben only had to impress and persuade the Court. Galbraith traveled all over, gave speeches like a candidate for election, and appeared on television. He worked hard and produced results. America is better known and liked in France because of his efforts.

Galbraith was confronted with a difficult situation. When he arrived, France had a socialist-led government that included Communists, who did what they could to make the life of the American ambassador difficult and to hinder his mission. Later France acquired a government of a socialist president "cohabitating" with a conservative cabinet. Neither was above trying to use policy toward America and the American embassy for purposes of domestic political advantage. Some diplomacy was needed indeed to avert damage to American interests. Galbraith managed to avoid it.

His book clearly suggests that Galbraith's interests were not limited by his public relations activity. There are substantial analyses of French and American foreign policy and of the sources that produce it. All of it is well written, but the diary part—a cross between Eleanor Roosevelt's *My Day* and William F. Buckley, Jr.'s published diaries—is most fascinating. Neither as tedious as the former, nor quite as witty as the latter, the ambassador's diary entries are informative, lively, and often

revealing. His style is easygoing and he has no trouble making his ambassadorial life interesting. It was. I wish he had had more careful editors: there is no word "appendixes" in any language; and there are some other lapses. They do not detract, however, from the readability of his informative book replete of "instruction and amusement alike." □

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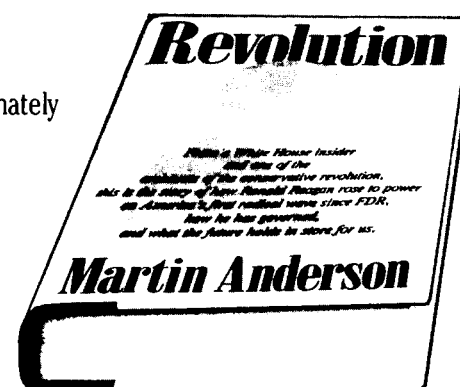
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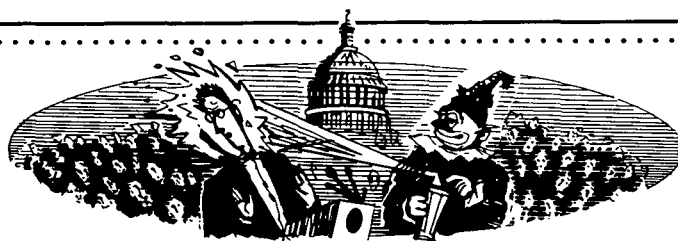
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# THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR

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Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, wrote Shakespeare, although we all know it's not so much the eye of heaven as the humidity. After an uncertain spring of random showers and backsliding cold spells, Summer chose the week of Memorial Day finally to enfold Washington in its sweaty embrace. More than an embrace: it's a death clutch, and Washingtonians thrash dumbly in attempts to give it the slip. Hundreds of thousands, according to the newspapers, head to the beaches of the Eastern Shore in search of soothing littoral breezes, and find themselves instead beneath the unblinking eye in a traffic jam on the Chesapeake Bay bridge; a smaller number, though in their way no less romantic, fly off to temperate Moscow, for palaver—leading to what, nobody knows. Some drive deep into the Blue Ridge to mountain retreats, there to be harassed by shotgun-toting gangs of moonshiners aflame with perverted desires.

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Those of us who remain behind—those of us, for example, who have seen *Deliverance*—have our own methods of coping: there is the surrender and resignation of sun bathing, or the opium pipe of a televised ball game watched in a darkened, air-cooled room, or the companionship of steady drinking in a drafty saloon. Some methods work better than others; and some of these too can backfire, with horrible consequence. A word to the wise in such matters should be sufficient. It was the heat of one Washington summer afternoon, historians warn, that induced President Zachary Taylor to seek remedy by “consuming an excessive quantity of cucumbers, washed down with copious drafts of iced milk.” Within seventy-two hours he was dead.

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The horrible consequence being, in this case, Millard Fillmore. Other remedies will have other consequences, also unforeseen. On the Friday before Memorial Day, as Summer pressed down on the city like a damp blanket, the Senate escaped the heat by burrowing deep into its chamber and voting at last on the INF treaty. President Reagan was in

Helsinki, waiting to fly to Moscow. Howard Baker, also waiting to fly to Moscow, remained in Washington, hoping to bring the approved treaty with him. At the Capitol a White House aide remarked, “Air Force Two is sitting on the runway out there at Andrews [Air Force base], with the motor running, just waiting for Howard to get aboard with the treaty.” The Senate hustled, as the world now knows, and didn't disappoint Howard.

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I arrived at the Capitol early Friday morning to watch the final day of what we insiders call “the ratification process.” There had been a minor breach in senatorial decorum the evening before—Majority Leader Robert Byrd, angry that Jesse Helms insisted on bringing up various “crippling amendments” to the treaty, had sent the senators home early—and I hoped, if not for a resumption of hostilities, at least for a tense moment or two. A few minutes before ten, I walked with some other reporters onto the Senate floor and waited by Senator Byrd's desk for the “dugout,” the majority leader's pre-session briefing to give the press an idea of the strategy he hopes to follow in maneuvering a bill through whatever process (legislative, ratification, nomination, deliberation—so many processes, so little time) presents itself. A few senators were already in the chamber, which, since the intrusion of C-SPAN, is now as brilliantly lit as a movie set. Senator William Proxmire, a notorious early-riser, wandered about, talking in a loud voice and casting an occasional glance to the gallery to see if he was being noticed. Proxmire's shtick as the crotchety-but-lovable eccentric, which at one time made him the object of an adoring press, has been wearing thin over the last several years; it is now mostly considered a petty annoyance. (This may have something to do with his decision not to seek re-election.) Also wearing thin, incidentally, is Proxmire's celebrated hair transplant from several years ago: the crop has degenerated to the point where he has had to opt for a poor modification of the George McGovern rope-throw, a style first popularized by the Sage of South Dakota in which the hair above the left

ear is allowed to grow long enough to be tossed sideways across the pate, giving the illusion of a bale of pampas grass scattered over a sheet of ice.

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Under the circumstances, what resentments must poor Bill Proxmire harbor against his majority leader? Here is a man who will never need resort to tonorial wizardry. Senator Byrd's cockatoo-sweep of silver-blue hair is his most magisterial feature. On this historic Friday he had chosen from his wardrobe a synthetic seersucker and a tie of pale-blue stripes; watching him enter the Senate chamber one instinctively checked (in vain, as it turned out) for the tell-tale white shoes and matching belt. In his demeanor no trace of the rancor from the night before remained. “Hello, everybody!” he called to the hacks gathered around his desk. “Today is treaty day!” Without prodding from the reporters he proceeded to outline the day's business. “I'm confident that, with a little help from the other side in tackling this thing, we can finish today.” Out at Andrews, remember, the motor was running. Byrd outlined other legislative business, and then interjected some comments about Manuel Noriega, whose protracted negotiations with the State Department had broken off the day before. “I've been urging the Administration to Latinize this matter all along, and go the diplomatic route, so we can avoid any recourse to military action.” Did that mean Senator Byrd would countenance military action against the Panamanian slimeball? “Let's not cross that bridge till”—he paused and backpedaled—“Let's not roll up our britches till we cross that creek [crick].” We hacks laughed and Byrd smiled, happy to have brought an endearing bit of West Virginia, however canned, into this august chamber.

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After the dugout I went back up to the press gallery and resolved to watch the entire treaty day process. Ready myself for a session of complicated legislative activity, the Senate resembles nothing so much as a dress rehearsal for a high school variety show, with

Senator Byrd as the slightly addled faculty adviser. In place of a clipboard, the majority leader uses a scrap of paper on which he jots down the order of business, as the senators chat among themselves or make demands on his attention. When he needs a moment to collect his thoughts or clarify a request, he signals for one of his allies to begin talking for the record—with the C-SPAN cameras rolling, the show must go on. For that reason Senator Patrick Leahy began killing time by giving a little lesson on English usage. “Mr. President,” Leahy said, as Byrd and Bob Dole sorted out some bit of business, “my seventeen-year-old son, still in school, has been reminding me, apropos of what's happening here today, that the Senate does not *ratify* the treaty. It *advises* and *consents* to the treaty.” Leahy shot his cuffs, greatly enjoying his unlikely role as the H. W. Fowler of the Upper Chamber. “The *President* ratifies the treaty,” he continued. “It will be ratified next week in Moscow, with, I'm sure, a full panoply of fanfare.” With outstretched arms he made an expansive gesture to indicate the fullness of the panoply.

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I didn't stay much longer after that. The Senate had settled into one of its long stretches of collegiality—no more fireworks—and the truth is that senatorial collegiality can be a snooze. And troubling, too. The final vote on the treaty was 93 to 5. “As the vote was announced to the hushed chamber,” wrote Helen Dewar in the *Post*, “the public gallery burst into rare applause. . . . Then, in the almost family way that the Senate operates even at momentous events, [senators] posed for photographs. . . .” “In the family way”: it is a phrase pregnant with meaning. The Senate isn't a family, and when *tout le* Washington unites behind a single project, as it has with INF, something's amiss. Summer couldn't have come at a more opportune time: for along with the bay bridge traffic jams and the tanning oil, the cucumbers and iced milk, Summer means congressional recess, and recess means the senators disperse, before too much damage can be done.

—AF