



Behind Embassy Walls: The Life and Times of an American Diplomat

Brandon Grove

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Behind Embassy Walls is the extraordinary autobiography of a career American diplomat and an account of his role in key events of the Cold War era. The son of an international oilman and a Polish émigré, Brandon Grove spent his childhood before World War II largely in Europe, in Nazi Germany, Holland, and Spain. He recounts his acquaintance with William Faulkner while at Bard College, his service in the navy in the Korean War, and his thirty-five-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, focusing on diplomacy as practiced behind the scenes.

Woven into the narrative are observations about the impact of McCarthyism; the relative advantages of career versus political appointees to ambassadorships; the training of ambassadors for which he was responsible during the administration of George Herbert Walker Bush; lawyers as diplomats; CIA stations at U.S. embassies; and crisis management in Washington, notably the interagency task force he led in 1992 for the relief of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. The author opened the first U.S. embassy to East Germany in 1974, served as consul general in Jerusalem in the early 1980s during the war in Lebanon, and was ambassador to Zaire during three years of Mobutu Sese Seko's infamous reign. As director of the Foreign Service Institute, he became largely responsible for creating the State Department's permanent training center.

In this candid personal account, Grove voices criticism of the Foreign Service and the State Department, while at the same time revealing the human face of diplomacy. He offers discerning assessments of such notable personalities as Chester Bowles; Robert Kennedy; George Kennan; Omar Torrijos; John Sherman Cooper and his wife, Lorraine; Philip Habib; Willy Brandt; Mobutu; Vernon Walters; Jimmy Carter; and Ronald Reagan, among others. He also describes the requisites for effective American diplomats today

Grove's firsthand involvement adds his unique perspective to the body of knowledge concerning the international events he covers. With great finesse, and at key intervals, he also sheds light on his personal life, including lessons he learned about life, love, and family. Especially poignant is the epilogue in which Grove and his son separately recount the occasion on which his son acknowledged his homosexuality to Grove. Fascinating and informative, *Behind Embassy Walls* will be an indispensable look at the diplomacy of

the past century.

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