

The State Department Boys: Philippine Diplomacy and its American Heritage. Marciano R. de Borja. Washington, D.C.: Vellum Press, 2014. 388 pages. ISBN 099150478X.

The literature on the Philippines' diplomatic history has often focused on Philippines-United States relations and on bilateral relations with other nations, looking, at times, on the lives of diplomats. *State Department Boys*, by Marciano R. de Borja, touches on both topics and uncovers several unseen facets therein. It discusses the career, political stances, and connections of the 40 Philippine diplomats trained by the U.S. State Department. These "State Department Boys" took a "crash course" on foreign service under Edward W. Mill. Mill was a Foreign Service Reserve Officer; he drafted the official statement of President Truman declaring the Philippine Independence in 1946.

The author, de Borja, was a senior career diplomat at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). He is presently assigned as Consul-General in Guam. He previously worked at different posts at the DFA-Home Office and at different overseas posts, including the United Nations. He began his stint in Foreign Service in September 1992, having been placed fifth in the Foreign Service Officers' Examination the year before. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and European Languages degree from the University of the Philippines and a Master's Degree in History and Geography at the University of Navarra in Spain.

The book consists of eight chapters: (1) The Pioneers; (2) Diplomatic and Consular Training; (3) A Foreign Office for a New Nation; (4) Dealing with America; (5) On the International Stage; (6) Reaching Out to a Larger World; (7) Surviving the Foreign Service; and lastly, (8) The Father of Philippine Foreign Service. Reflected in the chapter titles, the thrusts of the monograph cover the biographies of diplomats such as Carlos P. Romulo and the State Department-trained diplomats, national politics, the politics

in foreign service, US-Philippine relations, expansion of Philippine diplomatic posts, foreign policy improvement, and the history of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The primary sources for the book were Mill's papers at the University of Michigan and the documents from the DFA Archives that survived the fire at its former office in Padre Faura, Manila. The secondary sources were the writings of the State Department Boys and other scholarly publications. The prose is like that of a political journalist. While the background and larger picture are presented clearly, it nevertheless overshadows the focus on the diplomats.

Bionotes on these "Millmen" (another term for State Department Boys) in the Appendices serve as a guide. While many among the 40 made their marks in foreign service, de Borja admits that they were overshadowed by the diplomats of their time, such as Romulo and Narciso Ramos (294–95). They kept a low profile throughout their careers because they were trained by the U.S. State Department at a time when nationalism and anti-American sentiments ran high (313). Despite this, they still contributed to Philippine foreign policy and international relations. To name a few, Simeon Roxas, former Consul-General in Hongkong and head of ASECTAI (Now Manila Economic and Cultural Office) in Taiwan, helped improve relations with Communist China and became President Marcos' "China hands" (298–300). Jose Alejandrino contributed to the betterment of retirees in the foreign service through the Alejandro Doctrine, a landmark case in Supreme Court (317–8). The said jurisprudence (GR 44928) resolved the intricacies in issuing the monetary amount of unused leave credits during the service years of retired diplomatic officers. He also published his dissertation (PhD in Law) about the correlation between the Suez Canal Crisis and International Law (297). The dissertation was published in *Instituto Francisco de Vitoria*.

Another career diplomat, Luis Moreno Salcedo, served in Chile, Republic of Vietnam (the former South Vietnam), France, UNESCO. He was also the first ambassador to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

(U.S.S.R.). He wrote the book, *A Guide to Protocol*, a classic book in Filipino foreign service (296–97).

The reviewer disagrees with the author’s claim that Edward Mill is the “father of Philippine Foreign Service” (254). As narrated by the author, then-Vice President Elpidio Quirino made efforts to establish a sound foreign policy (83–89) after the Second World War. It was Quirino who established the Philippine Foreign Service, not Mill, for he was at the helm of the government and thus, had the greater responsibility and command to do so. Despite the disagreement, the reviewer avers that Mill greatly helped shape Philippine foreign policy during that time.

While the relationship of the Philippines and the United States focuses much on Military Bases Agreement, Parity Rights, and other unfavorable treaties, one must look at de Borja’s work for its contribution to international relations. The author presented many aspects of Philippine diplomacy and politics, and wrote about the organizational evolution of the DFA. He shed light on these “Millmen” whose stories were marred by issues of corruption and nepotism in the foreign service during the Third Philippine Republic from 1946 to 1986. It is a must-read for students of history, as it presents many untold stories in the least studied aspect of the discipline.

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