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NEWSPAPER REVIEWS PHILIP HABIB'S POLITICAL CAREER

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["Man in the News" by Xu Jingjing "Philip Habib, U.S. 'Global Envoy'" -- capitalized passages published in boldface]

[Text] Whenever an "explosive" situation emerges in any world hot spot, Philip Habib is always dispatched to that place. Not long ago, after the deadlock in the Philippine general election eased, the "trouble shooter" again received instructions to go to Central America to start another difficult round of shuttle diplomacy.

"FIRST-RATE PERFORMANCE" ON THE MIDDLE EAST STAGE

It is still remembered that in 1981, using the Syrian deployment of Soviet-made guided missiles in northern Lebanon as an excuse, Israel threatened militarily Lebanon so that the Middle East was faced with the fearful prospect of becoming entangled in a war. At that time in his capacity as President, Ronald Reagan asked Philip Habib, al, a diplomat who had retired twice because of heart attacks, to take up the post of Middle East special envoy and to mediate between the two parties. At that time many people did not entertain any prospects for his success. However, by virtue of his outstanding diplomatic stratagems and "miraculous efforts," Habib succeeded in relaxing the situation whereby the "triggers have been cocked and preparations have been made to open fire." In June 1982, the crisis again broke out with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Habib shuttled back and forth scores of times among the capitals of the Middle East countries and attended an endless series of secret meetings. Eleven weeks later, he finally succeeded in putting out the flames of war temporarily. For this reason, President Reagan presented him with a Freedom Medal, the highest honor awarded to nonmilitary personnel in the United States.

THE "SECRET" OF HIS SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION

Habib's talent does not lie in guiding the development of the situation in order to seek a solution, but in coordinating the conflicting parties and guiding them patiently and by roundabout routes. In the course of negotiations, he first listens patiently to the views of other people and promptly and accurately transmits information from various parties, and then sets forth his proposals according to the circumstances.

Habib is good at assessing the mood of the other party and removes tense feelings with his sense of humor. He grew up in a Jewish residential area in Brooklyn, New York. His father was a Lebanese American. When he held talks with the Israelis, he jokingly said: "I had been a Zionist before I knew what Zionism meant." And, when he met with Lebanese representatives, he often slipped into his conversation, a few Arab curses which he had learned as a child, in order to please the Lebanese representatives.

As a mediator in a difficult situation, Habib often attains his success by dint of his indomitable will. During the Beirut negotiations, he often had to be woken up whenever a new crisis emerged. Sometimes he stood simply in his underpants, dictating cables to Washington while eating sandwiches.

He keeps his mouth shut about his work. Whenever reporters press him on any new progress in the negotiations, he invariably replies: "Sorry, this is a dumb show." -- you figure it yourselves! [punctuation as published]

SPENDING MOST OF HIS DIPLOMATIC CAREER IN COUNTRIES WHERE DISPUTES OCCURRED

Habib's superb diplomatic stratagem is inseparable from his previous extraordinary experiences. At the age of 22 he received a Master's Degree at Idaho University and in 1949 he joined the diplomatic service. In 1952 he received a PHD at Berkeley University. He spent most of his diplomatic career in countries where disputes occurred. In the 1960's he was a government affairs attache in the U.S. Embassies in South Korea and South Vietnam. During the Paris talks to solve the Vietnam issue, he was an important member of the U.S. delegation and was once acting head of the delegation. When Richard Nixon opened U.S. relations with China, Habib was an important member of the policy-making body. He visited China with Henry Kissinger and Gerald Ford on two occasions. After Jimmy Carter took office, he was appointed Under Secretary for Political Affairs and tried to mediate privately for a thaw in U.S. relations with Cuba. Suffering a heart attack in 1978, he retired from the government service and worked as a senior research fellow at the Harvard Institute. In 1979, at the request of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, he worked as a government senior policy adviser. In 1980 he again retired because of illness. One year later he was reappointed by Reagan.

REAGAN ON MILITARY ACTION AGAINST LIBYA, SYRIA

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[Text] Washington, April 23 (XINHUA) -- U.S. President Ronald Reagan today threatened to take military actions against Iran and Syria if there was "irrefutable evidence" that the two countries were involved in terrorist activities. Reagan made the threat during an interview with a small group of journalists at the White House. Asked whether he would order attacks similar to those against Libya last week on the capitals of Iran and Syria, Reagan replied, "Yes, if we had that kind of evidence." "If we have irrefutable evidence, I think we should do that. We must have the same policy" against terrorism regardless of which state sponsors it." However, he said that "it is much more difficult to trace to the source of terrorism sponsored by others than it is by Lybia." He also noted that "state sponsored terrorism is a form of warfare and you just can't sit by and let somebody else declare war on you and pretend that you're still at peace."