

B100 / 45
FILE / SUBJ.
DATE / SUB-CAT
SEP 1992

Philip Habib

1920-1992

Career diplomat Philip Habib, Ph.D. '52, was advisor and confidant to five presidents and four secretaries of state during a period in U.S. history of extremely complex and diverse foreign policy.

Habib, whose positions ranged from special envoy to President Ronald Reagan to ambassador to Korea, died of a heart attack in France on May 25 at age 72. He was the California Alumni Association's 1982 Alumnus of the Year, and a former Regents Lecturer at Berkeley's Institute of International Relations.

Habib served in the foreign service for nearly 30 years, rising rapidly through the ranks as an advisor and consultant on almost all areas of foreign policy: Asia, Central America, the Middle East, and the Philippines. From 1968 to 1971, he was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Vietnamese peace talks, at which time he advised Defense Secretary Clark Clifford to stop bombing North Vietnam. Although the statement put his own career in jeopardy, it also earned him the respect of his colleagues and established his reputation as an irrepressible "truth-teller" who was not afraid to deliver unpopular advice.

He served as ambassador to Korea from 1971 to 1974, and then as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs until 1976. After suffering two heart attacks, he retired



in 1978 and began teaching and doing research at Cal and the Hoover Institution. In 1981, he was called out of retirement by Reagan to serve as the President's personal representative in the Middle East, and later in the Philippines.

While at the negotiating table in the Middle East, Habib was able to help secure a cease-fire in Beirut and to convince the PLO to withdraw from Lebanon.

From 1986 to 1987, he was Reagan's special envoy in Central America. He urged the White House to negotiate with the Communists; the Reagan administration chose not to accept his advice, and Habib left.

Habib was born in 1920 in Brooklyn, the son of Lebanese Christian immigrants. He received his bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Idaho and attended Cal on the G.I. bill after World War II. He received his doctorate in agricultural economics and was recruited by the State Department straight out of Berkeley.

Habib was well known for his professionalism, honesty, loyalty, and courage to stand behind unpopular beliefs. "For government to work, it's indispensable to have gutsy people like Phil who will fight for what they believe on the inside," Peter Tarnoff, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, told the *New York Times*. "Most bureaucrats just keep quiet on the inside, go along, and then leak their disagreements to the press. Phil never went public, never destroyed his credibility with his superiors, and never betrayed his loyalty to the institutions of government."

He is survived by his wife Marjorie of Belmont.