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Baldwin

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Baldwin : Embassy at War (Studies of the East Asian Institute) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Embassy at War (Studies of the East Asian Institute):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The American Embassy in the first three months of the Korean War, an insider's accountBy Donald M. BishopBorn in Pyongyang of missionary parents and educated in Korea, Japan, and the United States, Harold J. Noble (1903-1953) was First Secretary at the American Embassy in Seoul in 1950, serving under Ambassador John Muccio. Embassy at War is his memoir of the first three months of the Korean War.Noble gave a first hand account of the unpreparedness of the Korean Army, its few American advisors, and the American Embassy on the eve of the war. After the North Korean attack on June 25, the Embassy evacuated from Seoul to Taejon, to Taegu, to Pusan, and -- following General MacArthur's landings at Inchon -- back to Seoul. Noble gives an account of the difficulties confronted by the South Korean government, and he also described America's "tempestuous marriage of convenience" with President Syngman Rhee.When Noble died in 1953, his manuscript had not been published. Frank Baldwin did an excellent job in editing the draft for publication. Included are biographical and editorial essays and a reprint of one of Noble's magazine articles on the Korean situation. Eighty pages of editorial footnotes follow the text.Baldwin carefully compared Noble's narrative to official histories published by the armed forces, other published accounts, and the recollections of major participants -- American, British, French, and Korean. Especially valuable are long excerpts of unpublished diaries and letters written by diplomatic and military personnel who also served in Korea.A reader can see through Noble's account the tendency of a military force to assume policymaking power in wartime. He also described ethnocentrism in the American command and its unwillingness to

rely on allies. Noble's account provides ample room for reflection. Those who write military history often refer to the "fog of war." Successful military leaders have the ability -- in the middle of confusion -- to make decisions based on very limited knowledge. The American Embassy in Seoul was shrouded in the same fog, and the book provides an interesting case study of leadership and decision-making in a diplomatic setting under stress.-30-