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Kurt O. Wyss-Labasque. PARADISE BIRD IN THE GOLDEN CAGE

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Kurt O. Wyss-Labasque. *PARADISE BIRD IN THE GOLDEN CAGE* (Paradiesvogel im goldenen Kaefig) 334 pages, bound Swiss francs 39.00 / Euros 29.80 ISBN 978-3-7273-1307-6.

Ambassador Kurt O. Wyss began his diplomatic career in 1972, profiting in Geneva of the experiences of the well known American diplomat Georg.F. Kennan. The Swiss writer Friedrich Duerrenmatt once said: 'Who writes will always get the own chaos and the one of the world in order'.

As diplomatic trainee, Wyss made his first diplomatic experience in then socialist Poland where he made his first experiences at the Swiss Embassy in socialist Varsaw where his job was to study the relations with the then communist states in Eastern Europe.

Later on, as Swiss diplomat, Wyss spent a number of years in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Still in Bern, State Secretary Albert Weitnauer told him: 'Try to find what sticks behind the smile of the Indonesians: In Indonesia, even the Swiss watches tick differently!'

Mexico followed with the occupation of the Swiss Embassy, and an economic crisis. Wyss describes his posting in Mexico as not too happy, even though he found Mexico to be a fascinating country.

His assignment was in the then Political Department (today Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) where Wyss finally had to be rescued by the Foreign Minister to escape problems with his superior.

In 1987, Wyss was offered to be transferred to Panmunjom as head of the Swiss Delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) which still exists. For family reasons, this transfer was however not realized. Instead, a short mission to Jordan followed where he also met Yasser Arafat.

Wyss was then nominated as the first Swiss Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore. He and his family thoroughly enjoyed this post. As a side accreditation, he was also competent for the small State of Brunei Darussalam where he and his wife met the Feudal Prince Sultan Haji Hassan al-Bolkial.

The Wyss' were then transferred to Damascus, Syria where President Hafez-al-Assad was already the ruler. His main function in Syria was to watch the Syrian-Israeli relations.

Back in Bern, Wyss was assigned a job which he would never have wished but in which he was very successful: He had to create a Diplo-

matic Inspection post in Bern. The long existing Consular Inspection was combined with the new diplomatic inspection team which was then called Diplomatic and Consular Inspectorate.

This 323-page book is most interesting for German language readers, and highly recommended to them.

About the Author:

Kurt O. Wyss-Labasque (*1939) grew up in Burgdorf, Switzerland. He studied in Bern and London. He promoted English and joined the Diplomatic Service of the Swiss Confederation. Since Wyss retired, he and his French wife basically live in France.

Fred Jenny