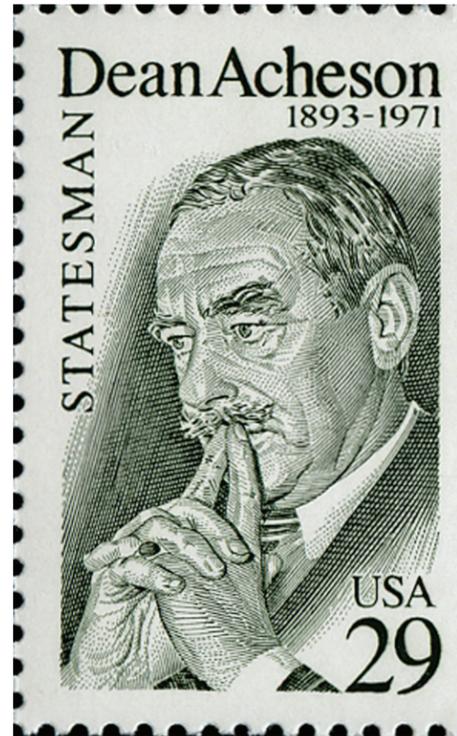


Dean Acheson

Secretary of State (1893–1971)



Acheson was born in Middletown, Connecticut, and attended the Groton School and Yale College (1912–15), where he joined Scroll and Key Society. After Harvard Law School, he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis from 1919 to 1921. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT appointed him Undersecretary of the Treasury in 1933, where he proved to be a conservative in economic matters. Acheson resigned over Roosevelt's plan to leave the gold standard, but did not publicly attack him.

In 1940, Roosevelt brought Acheson back into government as a senior official of the State Department, where he developed much of the economic warfare program waged by the United States against the Axis Powers. Acheson was the Under Secretary of State from 1941–47 before serving as Secretary of State from 1949–1953. He played a central role in defining American foreign policy during the Cold War and he helped create many important programs and institutions, including Lend Lease, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

His most famous decision was convincing Truman in June 1950 to intervene in the Korean War. Acheson was instrumental in framing U.S. policy toward Vietnam, persuading Truman to dispatch aid and advisors to French forces in Indochina. He retired as Secretary of State in January 1953, saying, "I will undoubtedly have to seek what is happily known as gainful employment, which I am glad to say does not describe holding public office."

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy called upon Acheson for advice, bringing him into the executive committee, a strategic advisory group. In 1968, he finally counseled President Lyndon B. Johnson to negotiate for peace with North Vietnam. He reconciled with his old foe Richard Nixon and was an important adviser to him during his presidency.

In 1964, Acheson received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and in 1970, he won the Pulitzer Prize for History for his memoirs, *Present at the Creation*, his third book.

In 1971, Acheson died at his farm in Sandy Spring, Maryland at the age of 78. He was a member of the Century for five decades, having been proposed by Judge LEARNED HAND in 1937. He was survived by a son DAVID C. ACHESON, and a daughter, Mary, married to WILLIAM P. BUNDY.