

UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY: FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO TODAY

Introduction by George P. Shultz

In a short space, this history of some of America's most crucial moments from 1776 to the Covid-19 pandemic shows us that America's diplomats were there every step of the way. With some notable exceptions, the diplomats were generally not the architects of the policies they were defending—that was the province of the presidents and the Congress. But the diplomats made things happen. If you wanted France to support American independence in 1776, you sent Benjamin Franklin to Paris. If you worried about the British playing their favorite game of balance of power politics in North America, you sent Charles Francis Adams as Minister to the Court of St. James's.

Diplomats have also been creative in designing grand strategy for our country. Think of George Kennan, who advised presidents and secretaries of state from his post in Moscow on the sources of Soviet conduct and, as director of the secretary of state's policy planning staff, recommended the strategy of containment that succeeded, as he said it could, in bringing change to the Russian people. This history includes the story of how the Foreign Service, like the nation it is part of, is overcoming the darker legacies of the past to ensure gender and racial equality within its own ranks.

I am glad that the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training produced this exhibit. Seeing the pictures of people who shaped the nation we know today and reading the lively text about what they did are a great way to remind us of what diplomats have done throughout our history.

This exhibit and the companion book were produced by ADST as part of an Una Chapman Cox Foundation program to educate the public about American diplomacy and the Foreign Service. The exhibit will be housed at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia, and is available digitally for broader use. The original 1995 exhibit, drafted by Henry B. Ryan, was made possible by a grant from Mrs. Jefferson Patterson. This current edition was updated by History Associates, Inc., with guidance and text contributed by ADST's review panel: Max Paul Friedman (chair), Brent Glass, Alison Mann, Alan McPherson, David Nickles, and Thomas W. Zeiler. Design by D|G Studios, Inc.

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) is a nonprofit NGO dedicated to strengthening understanding of diplomacy through diplomatic oral histories and books. For further information, contact info@ADST.org.

CREATING THE YOUNG REPUBLIC

From 1775 to 1781, the Continental Congress exercised control over American foreign relations. Diplomacy proved essential to the success of the colonies in the Revolutionary War. Congress sent Benjamin Franklin to France in 1776 as part of a three-man commission to negotiate a trade and military alliance and encourage French support in the war against Great Britain. Franklin's personal diplomacy won widespread sympathy for the revolutionaries. As a result, French forces played a major role in the Revolutionary War, which coincided with a greater Anglo-French conflict.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

In London, depicted by David Martin in 1767

Robert Livingston, John Jay, and Benjamin Franklin succeeded in key diplomatic missions on behalf of the young republic.

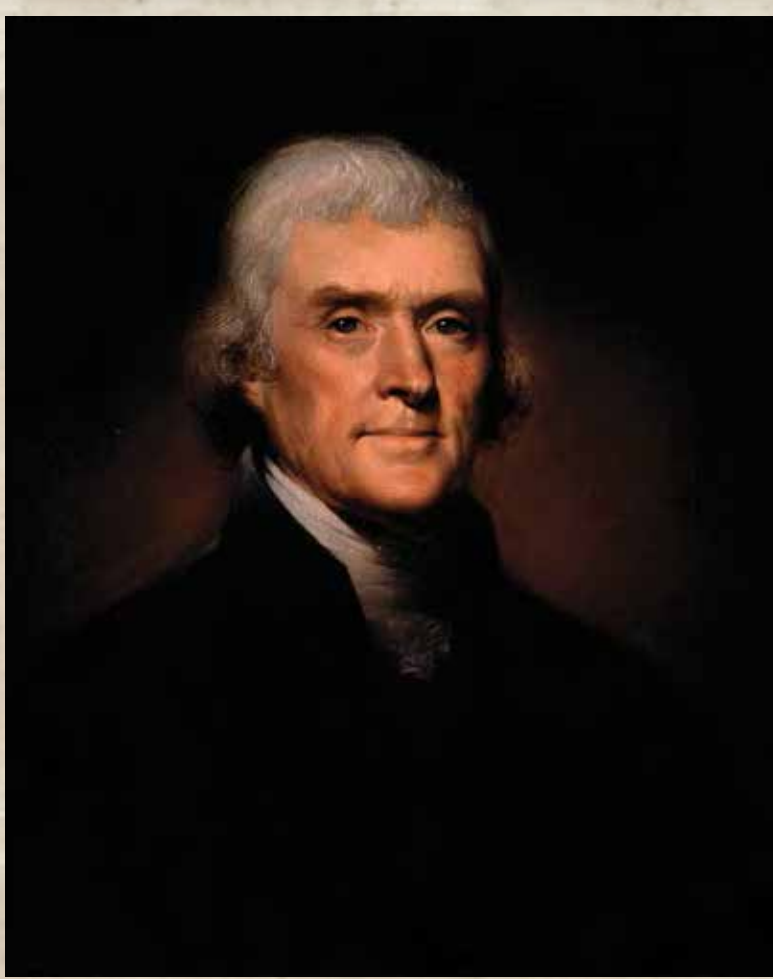
In 1790, Thomas Jefferson was appointed Secretary of State, becoming the first in a long line that continues today. Individual portraits throughout this exhibit portray the secretaries of state from the first to the present.



ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON
1781 – 1783



JOHN JAY
1784 – 1789



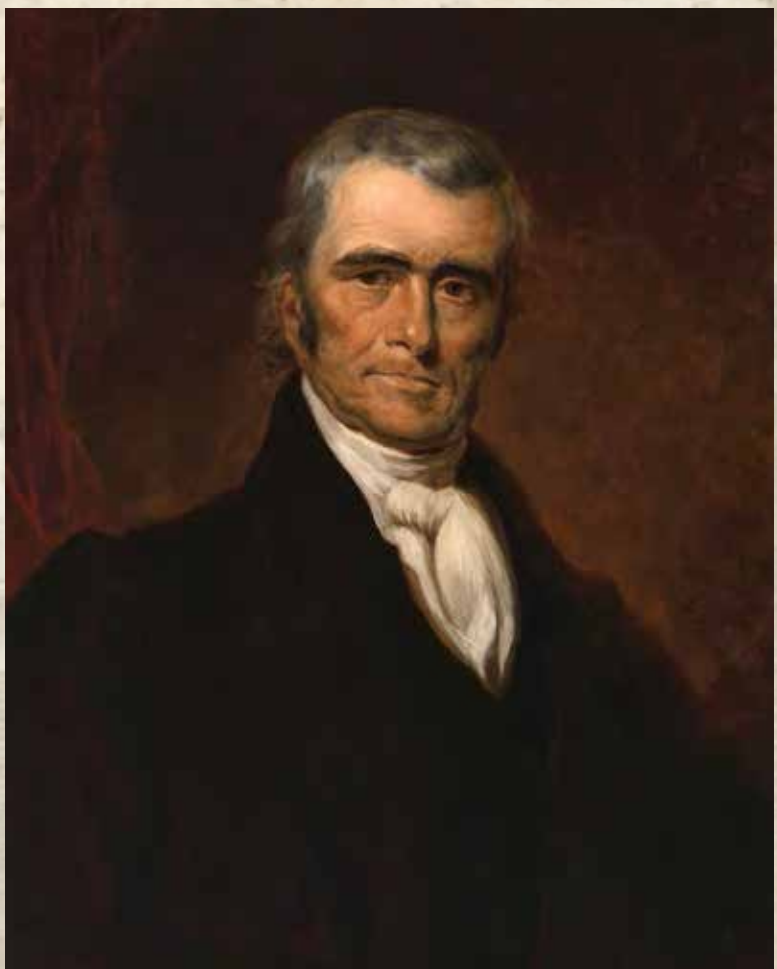
THOMAS JEFFERSON
1790 – 1793



EDMUND RANDOLPH
1794 – 1795



TIMOTHY PICKERING
1795 – 1800



JOHN MARSHALL
1800 – 1801



JAMES MADISON
1801 – 1809



ROBERT SMITH
1809–1811

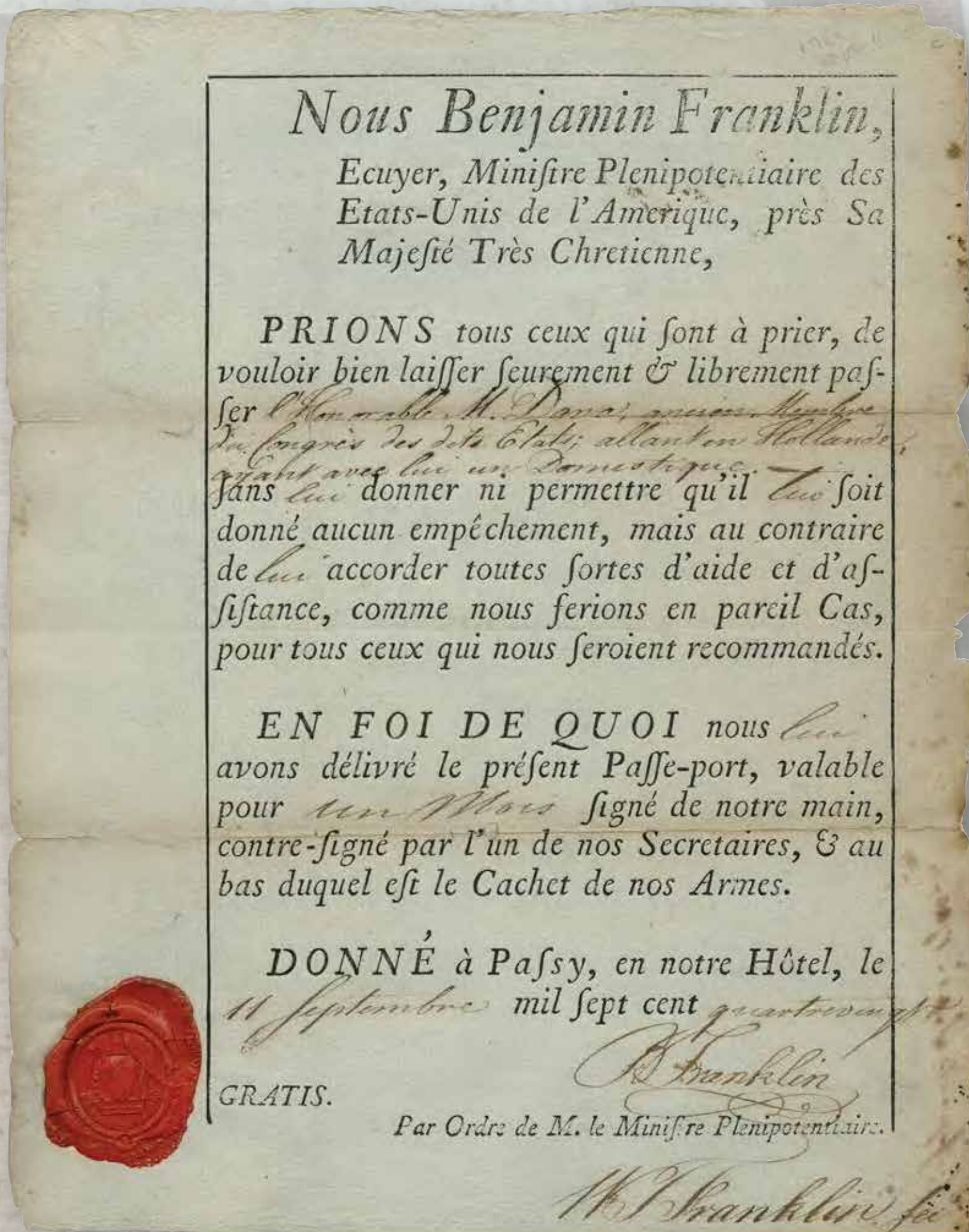


John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and other U.S. commissioners at the signing of the Treaty of Paris that recognized American independence in 1783. Benjamin West's painting is unfinished because the British delegation refused to pose after the ceremony.

This painting depicts the reception in Paris of Benjamin Franklin, newly appointed American commissioner to the French Court with orders to negotiate a treaty with France.



FRANKLIN'S RECEPTION AT THE COURT OF FRANCE, 1778.
REPRODUCED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



As American minister to France, Benjamin Franklin modeled the first U.S. passport on the design of French passports. The creation of passports for Americans enabled them to travel internationally with the assurance that the U.S. government would protect their interests.

PROTECTING THE YOUNG REPUBLIC

On January 10, 1781, the U.S. Continental Congress established the Department of Foreign Affairs, which would be directed by a secretary for foreign affairs. Critics held that the powers of the department were not clearly defined and that its secretary had limited freedom of action.

In response, the new Constitution in 1789 made changes by giving the president of the United States the power to make treaties and appoint ambassadors with the advice and consent of the Senate. This reorganization created a divided authority over the conduct of foreign affairs between the legislative and executive branches. On September 15, 1789, Congress passed an act that changed the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of State as it added new domestic duties to the agency such as keeping records of laws and safeguarding the Seal of the United States.

The Department of State’s foreign responsibilities largely consisted of defending the existence and independence of the new nation, especially against encroachments by European powers, and negotiating its territorial expansion.

In spite of considerable diplomatic activity, problems with European powers, such as the impressment of U.S. sailors and the British blockade of U.S. trade, eventually led to the War of 1812. While the United States enjoyed victories, mainly at sea, it suffered serious defeats including the burning of the city of Washington. The major U.S. land victory, the Battle of New Orleans, occurred after the peace was signed. Nevertheless, diplomats negotiating the peace made notable gains from a weak position.

The treaty that ended the war not only went far to satisfy U.S. grievances, it also ended any serious U.S. designs to expand into British-held Canada, considered by some to have been a major cause of the war.



In this painting by Allyn Cox on the ceiling of the U.S. Capitol, British forces under Major General Robert Ross take the city of Washington on August 24, 1814.



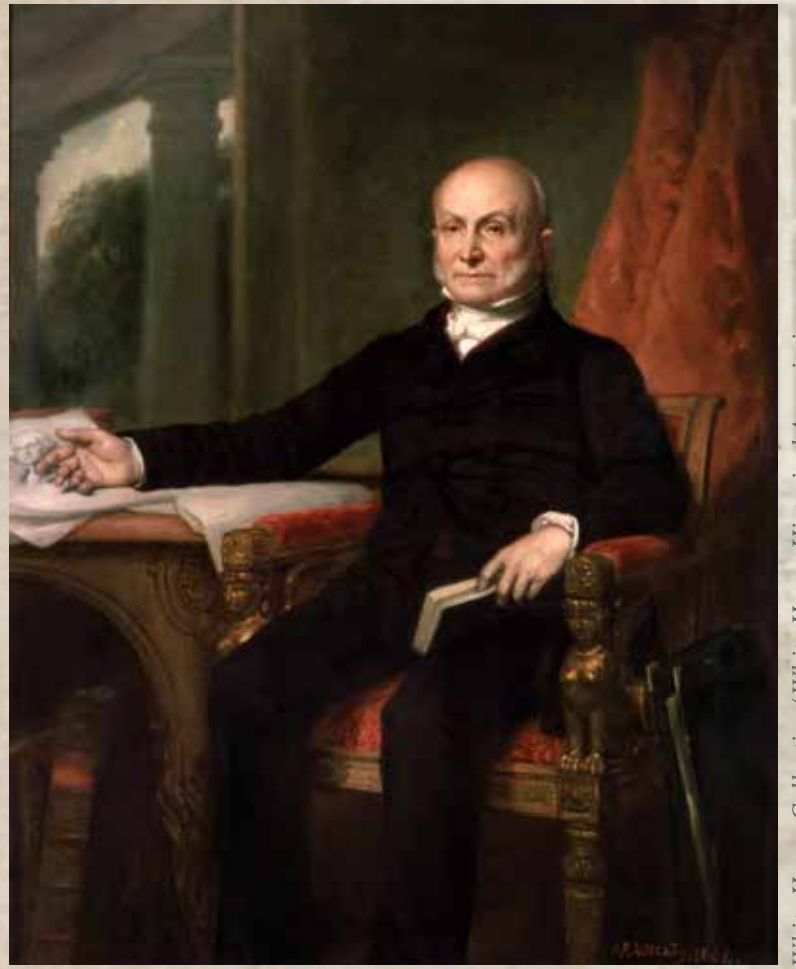
British General John Burgoyne addresses chiefs during the American Revolution. Diplomatic attempts to resolve British involvement with Native American tribes and British and French interference with U.S. shipping, as well as U.S. interest in acquiring Canadian territory, helped precipitate the outbreak of war in 1812.



The signing of the Treaty of Ghent with Great Britain, December 24, 1814, concluded the War of 1812. U.S. delegates included John Quincy Adams, Albert Gallatin, Christopher Hughes, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, and Jonathan Russell.



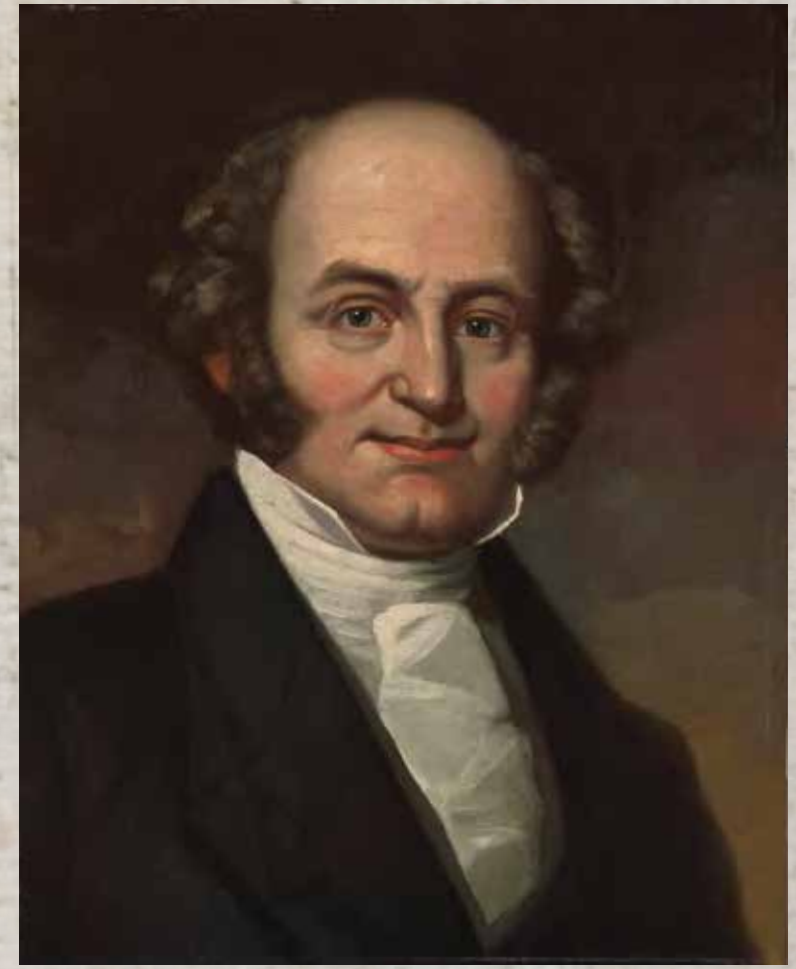
JAMES MONROE
1811 – 1817



JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
1817 – 1825



HENRY CLAY
1825 – 1829



MARTIN VAN BUREN
1829 – 1831

PROTECTING THE YOUNG REPUBLIC



In this painting, President James Monroe discusses with his advisors the policy later known as the Monroe Doctrine. From left to right, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford, Attorney General William Wirt, President Monroe (standing), Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Secretary of the Navy Samuel Southard, and Postmaster General John McLean.



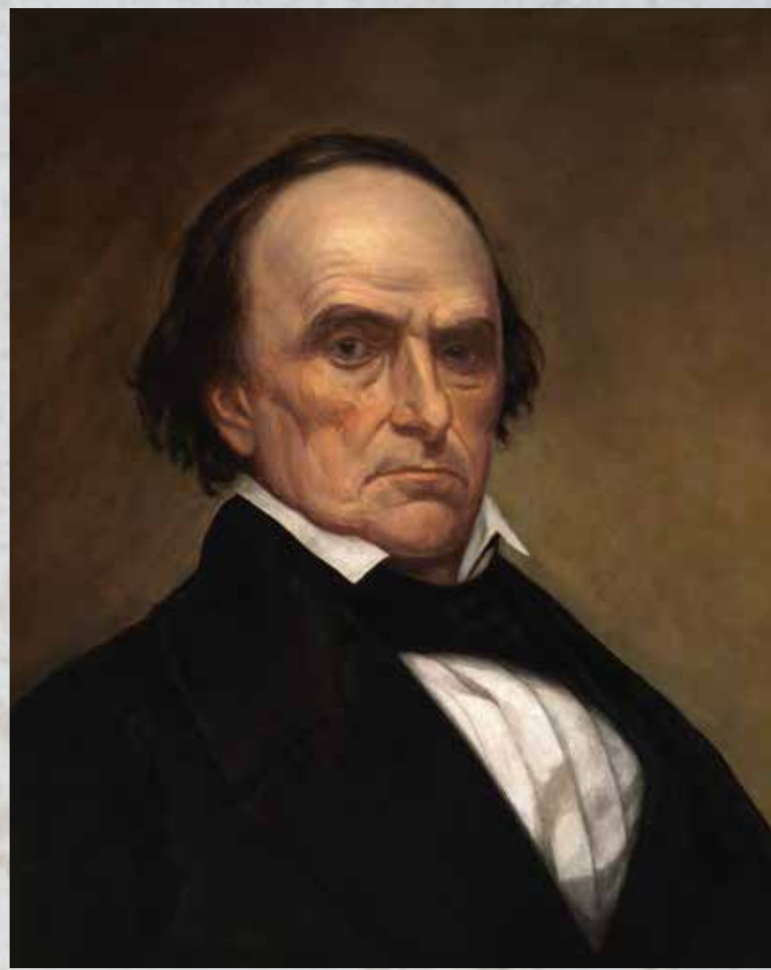
EDWARD LIVINGSTON
1831 – 1833



LOUIS McLANE
1833 – 1834



JOHN FORSYTH
1834 – 1841



DANIEL WEBSTER
1841 – 1843

U.S. diplomacy facilitated the country’s expansion and formulated its stance toward European ambitions in the hemisphere. Talks in Paris over shipping rights in New Orleans led James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston to negotiate the Louisiana Purchase for \$15 million in 1803, which vastly expanded U.S. territory.

In 1823, a principle expounded by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams to President James Monroe—the Monroe Doctrine—became part of the foundation of U.S. diplomacy. Immediately following the independence of most Latin American republics, the doctrine stated that the United States would look unfavorably upon any effort by European nations to subject nations in the Western Hemisphere to their political systems. This early assertion of American primacy, made without consulting Latin American powers, was sometimes welcomed as protective and sometimes denounced as intrusive.

The diplomatic service grew slowly in this period, but consular and commercial services expanded rapidly. In 1790, the United States had only two ministers plenipotentiary, one in London and one in Paris. By 1830, there were fifteen. Consuls, commercial agents, and consular agents helped expand commerce and protect ships and crews. Consular posts grew in number from 10 in 1790 to 141 in 1830.



After the signing of the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled west, conducting diplomacy with Native American tribes. These medals were given by the expedition as symbols of goodwill.

Gateway Arch National Park/National Park Service

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR UNIFORMS



Photocourtesy of the Society of the Cincinnati Museum at Independence House, Washington, D.C.

U.S. diplomats designed their own uniforms until 1817, when the State Department formally prescribed an official uniform for ministers. The design was based on a uniform worn by U.S. delegates to the Conference of Ghent in 1814 that ended the War of 1812. In 1853, Secretary of State William L. Marcy issued a circular recommending that U.S. diplomats wear “the simple dress of an American citizen.” However, many foreign governments preferred that accredited diplomats wear a uniform at formal occasions. So, the practice was left to the discretion and needs of the diplomat.

In some cases, uniforms became quite elaborate. A consular uniform was prescribed in 1815, and a circular in 1838 reaffirmed that it should be worn for “visits of ceremony...and on all proper occasions.” In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order directing that no person in the diplomatic or consular service should wear a uniform or official costume not previously authorized by Congress. Since Congress never acted, uniforms are no longer worn by U.S. diplomats.

HELPING THE NATION EXPAND

During the nineteenth century, much of U.S. diplomacy focused on territorial expansion. Major land acquisitions followed the Louisiana Purchase.

Western Florida: The southern portions of the present states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama were taken over by the United States from Spain between 1810 and 1813.

Florida: After years of diplomatic wrangling with Spain, the United States annexed Florida in 1819.

Hawaii: From a position of strength, U.S. diplomats negotiated a series of treaties with Hawaii begining with a trade treaty in 1842, rights to an island naval base in 1887, and the outright annexation of Hawaii in 1898, following the coup against Queen Liliuokalani in 1893.

Texas: Negotiations with Texas led to its incorporation into the United States in 1845, triggering a controversial war with Mexico that was opposed by Abraham Lincoln and nearly half of the Senate.

Oregon: Following contentious diplomacy with Great Britain over the northern U.S. border, a large area of the present Pacific Northwest was recognized as part of the United States in an 1846 treaty.

California: As part of the negotiations that ended the war with Mexico in 1848, Mexico ceded to the U.S. what is now California and additional territory that makes up the American West and Southwest today.

Southern Arizona and New Mexico: Between 1853 and 1854, U.S. diplomats negotiated the Gadsden Purchase, buying what is now the southern rim of Arizona and New Mexico from Mexico.

Alaska: The United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867 for \$7.2 million.

NICHOLAS TRIST
1800 – 1874



Nicholas Trist was Thomas Jefferson’s grandson-in-law and, in the 1820s, his personal secretary. Trist served as U.S. consul in Havana, Cuba (1833–1841), and as chief clerk for the Department of State (1845–1847). President Polk dispatched him to negotiate the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in which Mexico ceded about half its territory. Although this treaty resulted in the United States extending “from sea to shining sea,” Trist later said Americans should be “ashamed” of having taken the land by force.



JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN
1844 – 1845



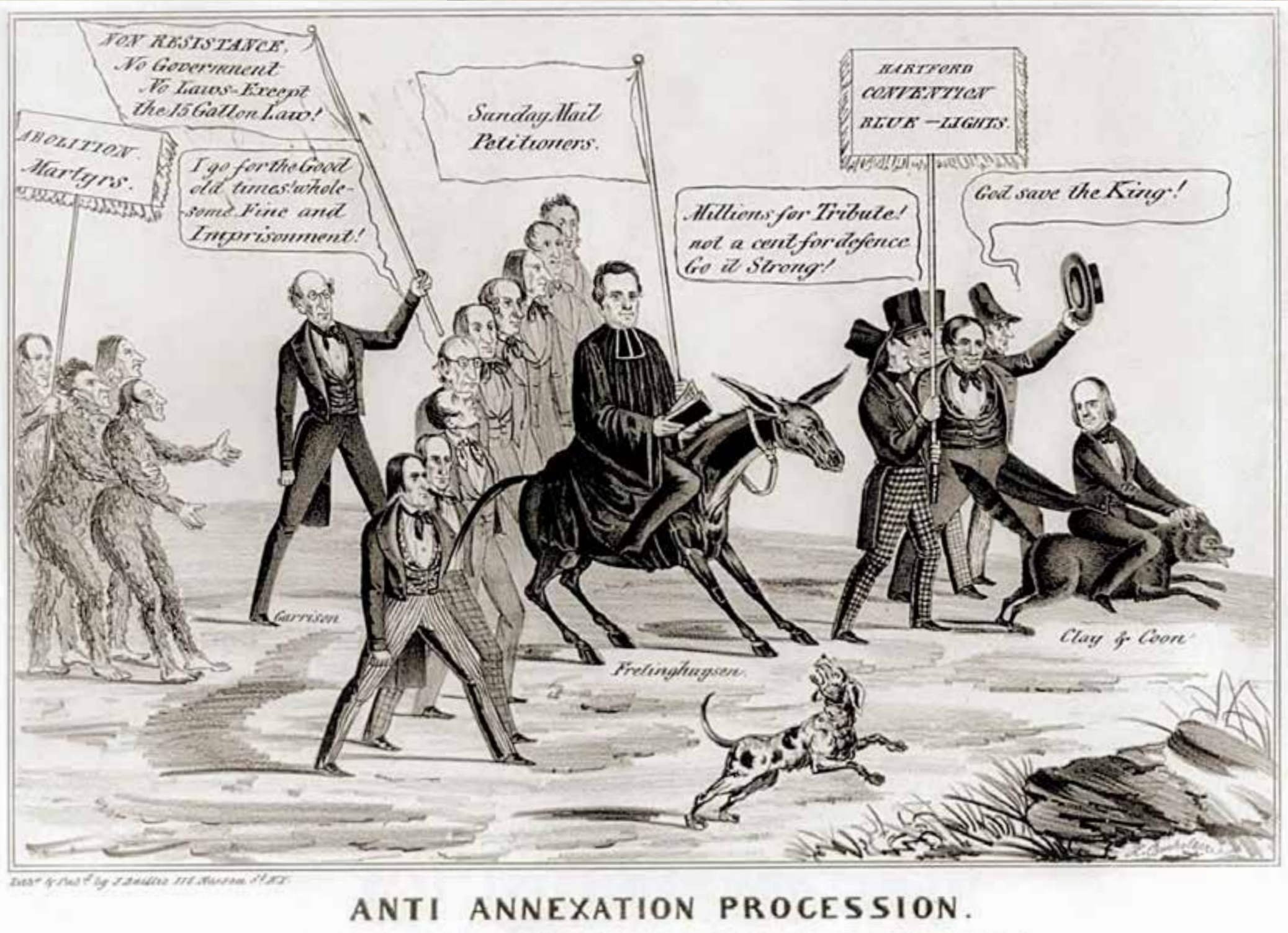
ABEL PARKER UPSHUR
1843 – 1844



JOHN MIDDLETON CLAYTON
1849 – 1850



JAMES BUCHANAN
1845 – 1849



This satirical look at the opposition to U.S. annexation of Texas in 1844 criticizes Whig presidential candidate Henry Clay and others who warned about the extension of slavery into new lands. Opponents of the subsequent war with Mexico included Congressman Abraham Lincoln, who doubted the veracity of President Polk’s claims of self-defense, and later President Ulysses S. Grant, who called it a “wicked war.” It was America’s most controversial foreign war until Vietnam.

HELPING PRESERVE THE UNION

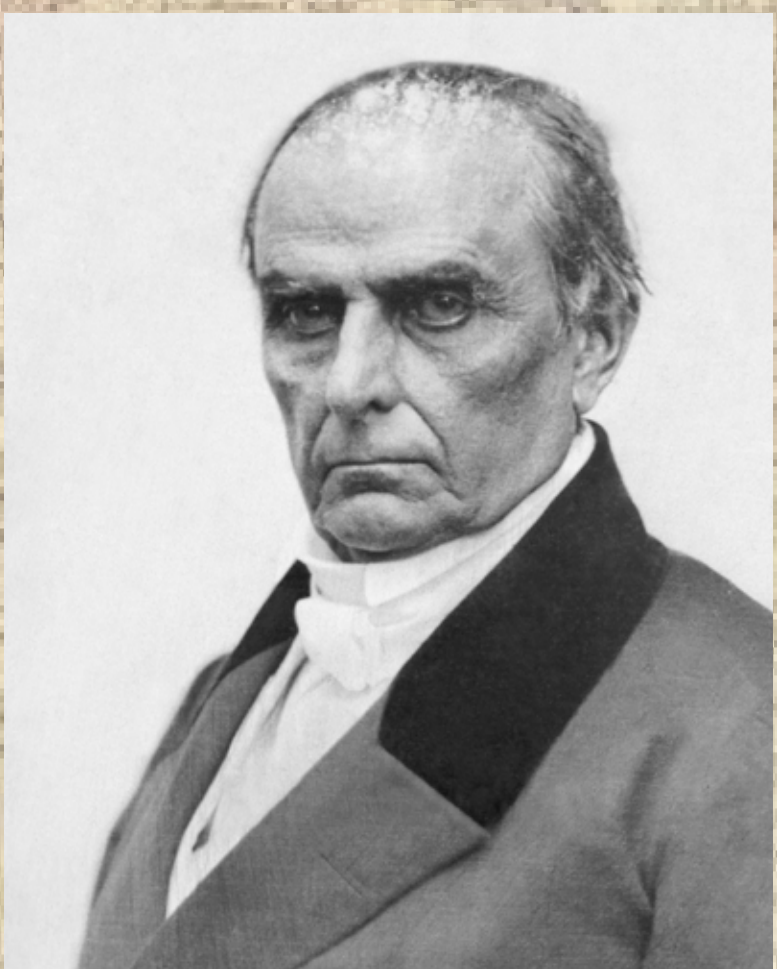
During the Civil War, the major task of U.S. diplomats was to keep European powers from providing aid and support to the Confederacy. Ambassador Charles Francis Adams's efforts in London in this regard have become legendary. U.S. diplomatic objectives included preventing European nations from entering the war or supplying the South, and easing irritations caused by the Union blockade of southern ports.

“The most important duty of the diplomatic representatives of the United States in Europe will be to counteract by all proper means the efforts of the agents of that projected Confederacy.”

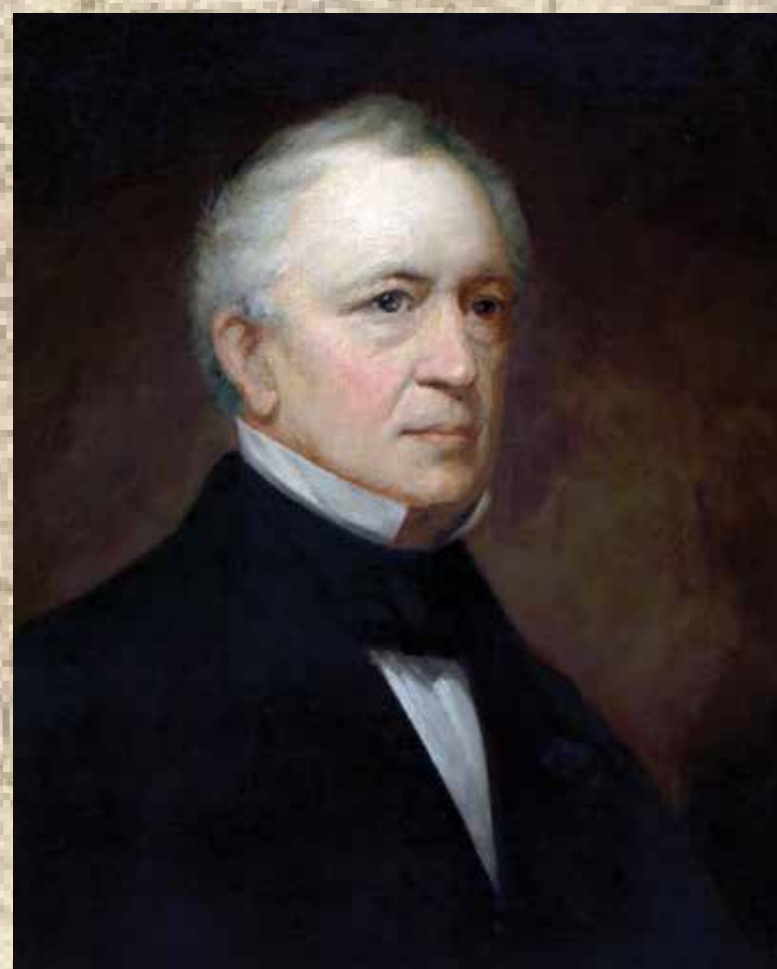
William H. Seward
United States Secretary of State
March 26, 1861



Charles Francis Adams, the U.S. minister to Great Britain during the Civil War, constantly protested the Confederates' purchase of British-built ships. “None of our generals, not Grant himself,” wrote poet James Russell Lowell, minister to Great Britain 20 years later, “did us better or more trying service than he in his forlorn outpost of London.”



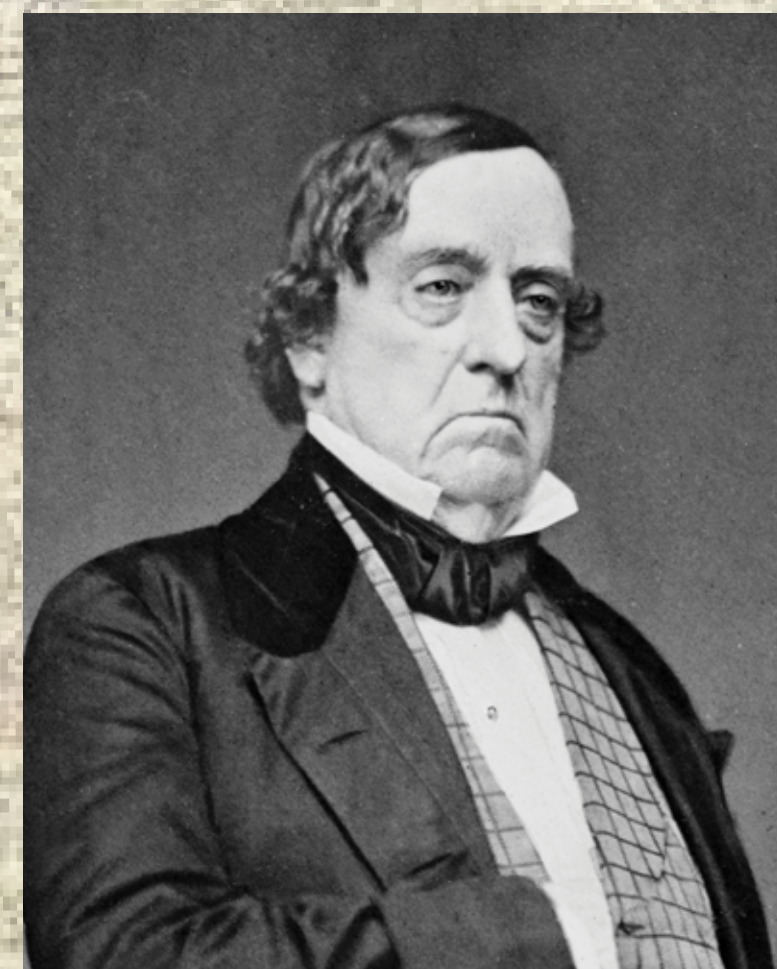
DANIEL WEBSTER
1850 – 1852



EDWARD EVERETT
1852 – 1853



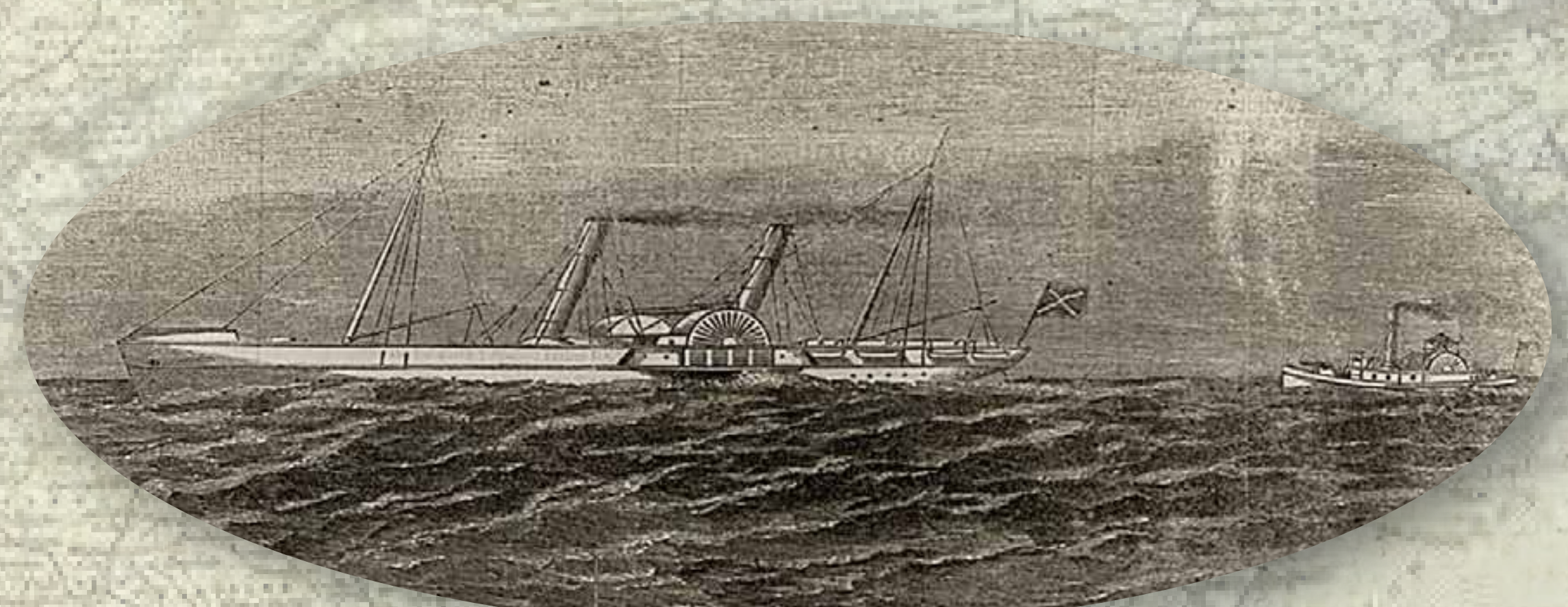
WILLIAM LEARNED MARCY
1853 – 1857



LEWIS CASS
1857 – 1860



The *Wivern* was one of two ironclads built for the Confederacy by the Laird Company in Great Britain but was never delivered because of U.S. diplomatic protests. The working plans for the Laird ships included twin gun turrets, 4.5 inch-thick iron plating, and a bow reinforced with wrought iron for ramming enemy ships.



A blockade runner is captured by a Union steamer off the coast of Wilmington, North Carolina, during the Civil War in October of 1864.



DANIEL E. SICKLES
1825–1914

Daniel E. Sickles was appointed minister to Spain in 1869, the culmination of a flamboyant public career. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Sickles raised a brigade of volunteers in New York City and maintained them at his own expense until they were taken into the Army.

He led the “Excelsior Brigade” into battle and rose to the rank of major general and the command of the Third Corps of the Army of the Potomac. In the spring of 1865, Sickles conducted a diplomatic mission to Colombia to arrange for the passage of U.S. troops through Panama. His appointment as minister to Spain was a reward for his early support of Grant’s campaign for the presidency.



Since 1789, the State Department has occupied 17 buildings located in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. In November 1866, facing a shortage of space following the Civil War, the department took over the newly erected Washington City Orphan Asylum on the southeast corner of 14th and S Streets, NW. The building was rented for nine years for \$15,000 per year.

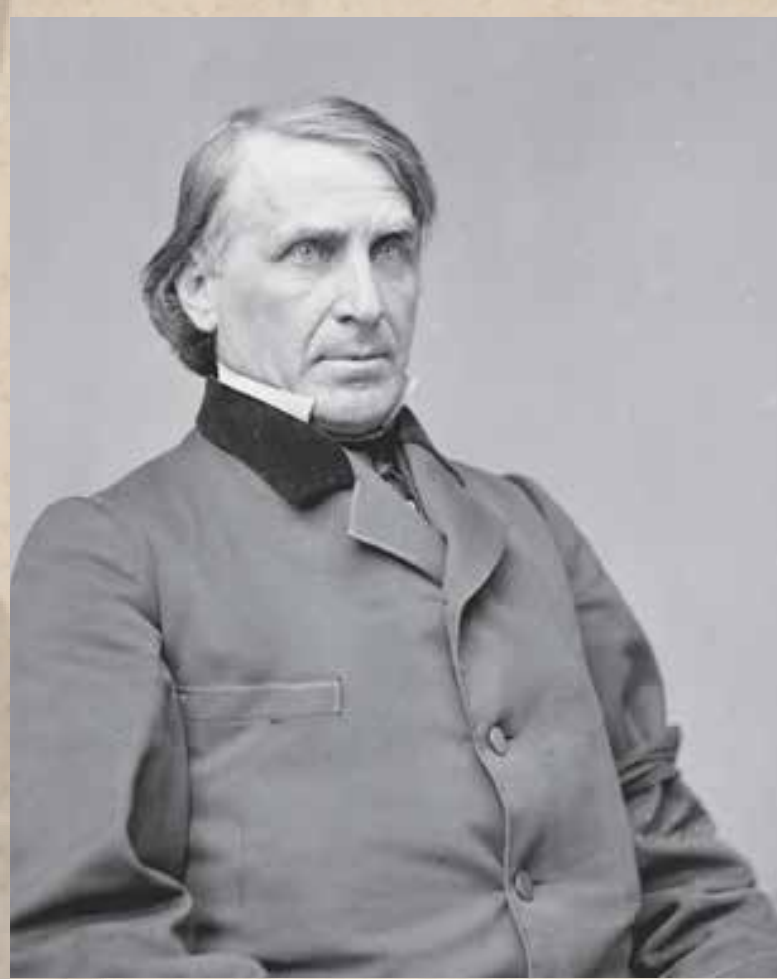
DIPLOMATIC GROWTH DURING YEARS OF SECURITY



JEREMIAH SULLIVAN
BLACK
1860 – 1861



WILLIAM HENRY
SEWARD
1861 – 1869



ELIHU BENJAMIN
WASHBURNE
1869



HAMILTON FISH
1869 – 1877



EBENEZER DON CARLOS BASSETT

The United States' first African-American diplomat, Bassett served as minister resident and consul general in Haiti from 1869 to 1877

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-357

An absence of external challenges after the Civil War reduced diplomatic activity; however, this period of peace led to increasing professionalism in foreign affairs.

The number of diplomatic posts grew slowly.

While there were only 36 diplomatic posts in 1870, the number of consulates increased rapidly, reaching 318 that same year. The professional Civil Service, established in 1883, staffed the State Department office in Washington, D.C.

This period saw a major expansion of U.S. trade, territory, and overseas involvement, especially in Asia and Latin America. The first restrictions on immigration targeted Chinese laborers for exclusion. The mass forced migration of Native Americans to reservations was completed, sometimes in violation of treaties negotiated by other federal agencies.

Following U.S. victory in the War of 1898, U.S. diplomats concluded treaties with Spain that gave the United States a naval base at Guantánamo in Cuba (retained to

date); the right to intervene in Cuban affairs (the Platt Amendment); and control over the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Cuban and Filipino rebels' disappointment at not gaining full independence led to further military interventions. 1898 was also the year in which the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands.



John Gast's 1872 painting "American Progress" portrays a romanticized picture of westward expansion in the United States. In it, the goddess of progress leads settlers west while driving away Native Americans.



This painting by Japanese artist Yoshikazu depicts a procession of American officials in Yokohama, 1861, soon after the establishment of U.S. relations with Japan.



The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was among the first efforts to systematically organize and restrict the movement of individuals into the United States. Anyone of Chinese descent wishing to enter the country required a "proto-visa" approved by a U.S. consul.

DIPLOMATIC GROWTH DURING YEARS OF SECURITY

After years of negotiations between the U.S. and Colombia, when the Colombian Senate insisted on retaining sovereignty over any canal route through its territory, the United States helped Panama break away from Colombia. The U.S. concluded a treaty with Panama in 1903 to build and control the Panama Canal, thus increasing U.S. involvement in both Latin America and the Pacific. Secretary of State John Hay and the department played a prominent role in the canal project.

Despite the expansion of trade and annexation of overseas territories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, isolationism grew. Some xenophobic Americans even regarded their representatives abroad as subversive, “working our ruin,” as one congressman said, “by creating a desire for foreign customs and foreign follies.” These suspicions had roots that extended before the Civil War and would return later in the McCarthy period.



FRANCIS BRET HARTE
1836–1902

A number of distinguished U.S. authors, including James Russell Lowell, Washington Irving, Stephen Vincent Benét, James Fenimore Cooper, Bret Harte, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, held diplomatic or consular posts.

Harte, the author of “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” “The Outcasts of Poker Flat,” and “Tennessee’s Partner,” classic stories of the American West from the gold rush and frontier mining camp days, went to Washington in 1876 to seek employment as an overseas consul. He hoped to earn enough to support himself and his family and still have time to write.

Harte was sent to Crefeld, Germany, in 1878, thinking he was to be the consul but discovered he was only a commercial agent in a larger consular district. As there were no travel or dependent allowances for consular employees, his family remained behind and never joined him during his consular career. He suffered continually from the damp climate of Crefeld and was delighted when he was appointed as consul in Glasgow, Scotland, an important post with a large export trade, in 1880. Harte sent the State Department extensive reports on a variety of subjects from Glasgow and also frequently traveled to London to lecture and write. Finally, in 1885, he was replaced for his “inattention to duty,” according to some. Harte lived in London for the next 17 years, until his death in 1902.



WILLIAM MAXWELL
EVARTS
1877 – 1881



JAMES GILLESPIE BLAINE
1881



FREDERICK THEODORE
FRELINGHUYSEN
1881 – 1885



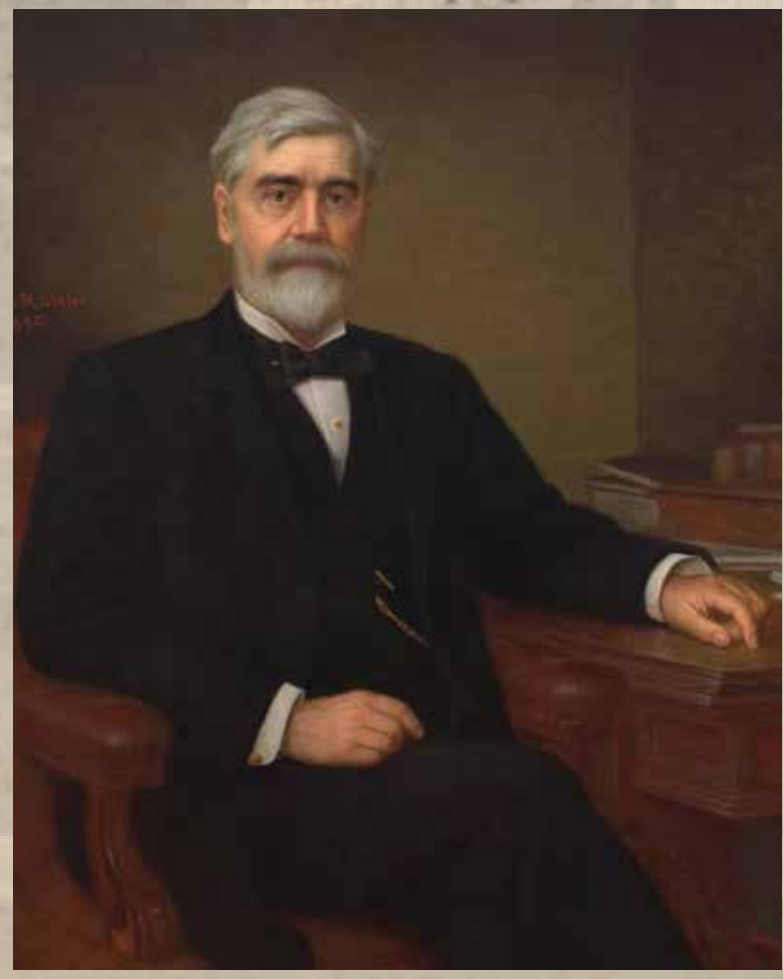
THOMAS FRANCIS BAYARD
1885 – 1889



JAMES GILLESPIE BLAINE
1889–1892



JOHN WATSON FOSTER
1892 – 1893



WALTER QUINTIN GRESHAM
1893 – 1895



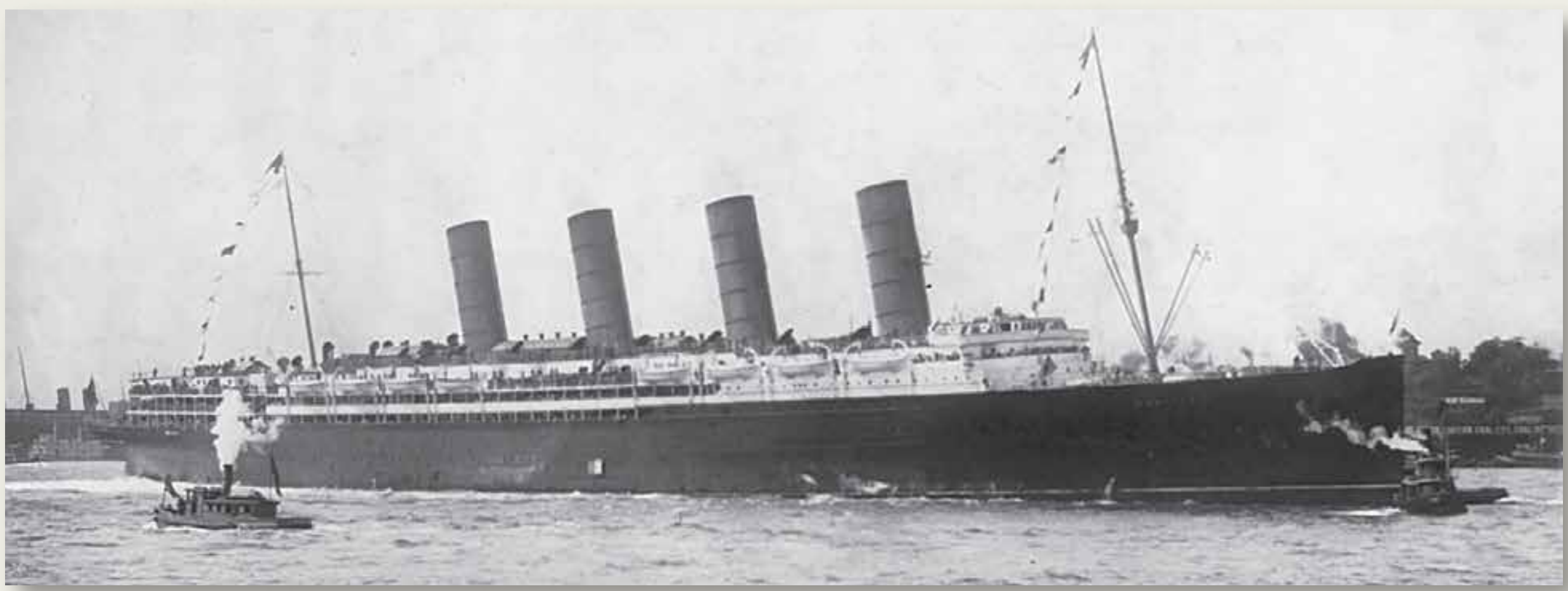
RICHARD OLNEY
1895 – 1897



Gatun Lock Construction, Panama Canal, March 12, 1912

AMBIVALENT INTERNATIONALISTS

From the nation's beginning, George Washington warned against “entangling alliances,” and in part the Monroe Doctrine declared the U.S. would stay out of European affairs. Yet, the State Department under President Woodrow Wilson's direction became deeply involved in foreign entanglements prior to the U.S. entering into World War I.



The British RMS *Lusitania* left New York harbor for England in May 1915 and never arrived. A German submarine sunk it off the British Isles with 128 Americans among the 1,200 killed. During the ensuing crisis Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigned rather than face the risk of war. Intense diplomatic activity was required to prevent U.S. entry into World War I immediately after the incident.

As in 1812, rights of neutral shipping became a vital issue and a subject of U.S. negotiations with both sides in that conflict. The sinking of the *Lusitania* by the Germans in 1915 nearly brought the United States into the war. The authorization of massive loans to the Allies gave the U.S. an interest in their victory. In 1917, following Germany's failed efforts to persuade Mexico to attack the U.S. and its resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, the U.S. finally entered the war on the Allied side. The war called for tighter security measures and the State Department expanded the use of telegraphic codes and ciphers, and introduced “confidential” and “secret” classification labels.



U.S. troops arrive in Vladivostok, Russia in August 1918.

Colonel Edward House, a White House advisor to President Wilson, exercised some of the authority of the secretary of state during Wilson's administration, directing much of U.S. diplomacy during World War I and the postwar period. In his actions, he set an example that would be followed by Harry Hopkins in Franklin Roosevelt's administration, Henry Kissinger in Nixon's presidency, and Zbigniew Brzezinski in Carter's administration. Together, President Wilson and House, and to a lesser extent Secretary of State Robert Lansing, steered the country toward taking an active role in international peace efforts while deflecting demands for self determination from colonized or occupied peoples in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. They helped create the League of Nations, though the United States failed to join it following the Senate's refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

Subsequently, U.S. diplomacy initiated more than 20 disarmament conferences in the 1920s and 1930s, including the 1921 Washington Naval Conference, opened by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes.

Despite strong isolationist sentiment, the era between the two world wars saw a substantial expansion of U.S. involvement in world affairs—especially in economic matters—under Secretaries of State Frank B. Kellogg and Cordell Hull.

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, payment of Allied war debts and German reparations were central causes of financial and diplomatic crises and subjects of lengthy negotiations. The 1924 Dawes Plan and the 1929 Young Plan ameliorated tensions by renegotiating and reducing German reparations and Allied war debts. Only Finland paid its debts in full.



After Germany signed the Armistice ending World War I in November 1918, President Wilson journeyed to Europe—first for a tour of the Allied capitals and then for six months of peace treaty negotiations in Versailles, near Paris—constituting the longest absence by a sitting U.S. president.

The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 1919



JOHN SHERMAN
1897 – 1898



WILLIAM RUFUS DAY
1898



JOHN HAY
1898 – 1905



ELIHU ROOT
1905 – 1909

AMBIVALENT INTERNATIONALISTS

The United States sent troops and ships to protect U.S. lives and property during Unrest in China in the 1920s, as it had during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. In 1928, it negotiated “most favored nation” trading status with China. The treaty recognized the Nationalist government, with which the United States developed close ties.

U.S. diplomacy facilitated by Ambassador Dwight Morrow carried out sensitive negotiations with Mexico regarding oil rights, within the framework of the Bucareli Agreement of 1923.

Secretary Hull was chiefly responsible for the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of 1934, which gave the executive branch broad authority to negotiate mutual reductions in tariffs. Following this act, between 1934 and 1951, the average tariff fell from 46.7 percent to 12.5 percent on all dutiable imports, and from 18.4 percent to 5.6 percent on all other imports.

In addition to carrying out trade negotiations, the U.S. also conducted many military interventions abroad in the first third of the twentieth century. The United States sent troops to Russia from 1918 until 1920, following the establishment of the Bolshevik regime, which it refused to recognize until 1933. The United States also intervened at various times with armed forces to collect debts, oppose revolutions, and promote U.S. economic interests in Cuba, Panama, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Increasing foreign involvement prompted major changes in the way that the State Department operated abroad. In 1924, the Rogers Act created a career Foreign Service combining the diplomatic and consular services. In that year, career officers led only 30 percent of diplomatic missions, a figure that rose to 55 percent during World War II and ranged between 63 percent and 80 percent more recently. In 1926, the Foreign Service Buildings Act permitted the department to build embassies and consulates abroad.

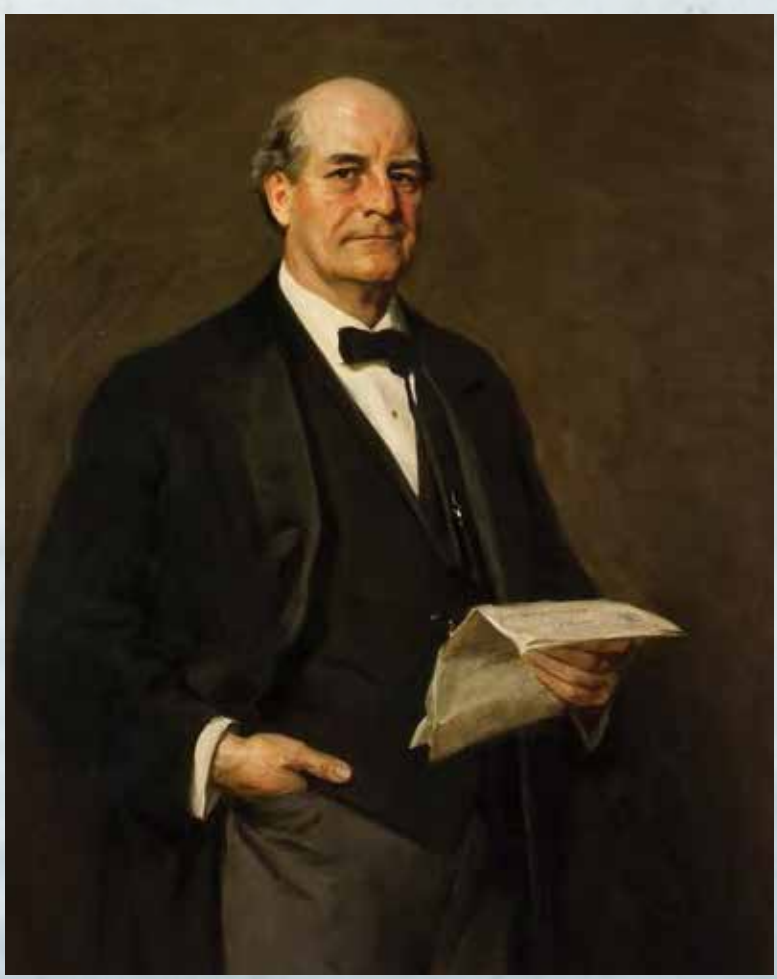
This cartoon illustrated the spirit of isolationism that swept over the United States after the end of World War I, which led to a reassessment of immigration policy. Among other considerations, many Americans feared immigrants would facilitate the spread of Bolshevism from Europe to the U.S. In the 1920s, after decades of almost unlimited immigration, the United States began to restrict the flow of immigrants to its shores.



U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Dwight Morrow (center) introduces his friend, J. Reuben Clark (left), to Mexico's President Pascual Ortiz Rubio (right) during a Fourth of July celebration.



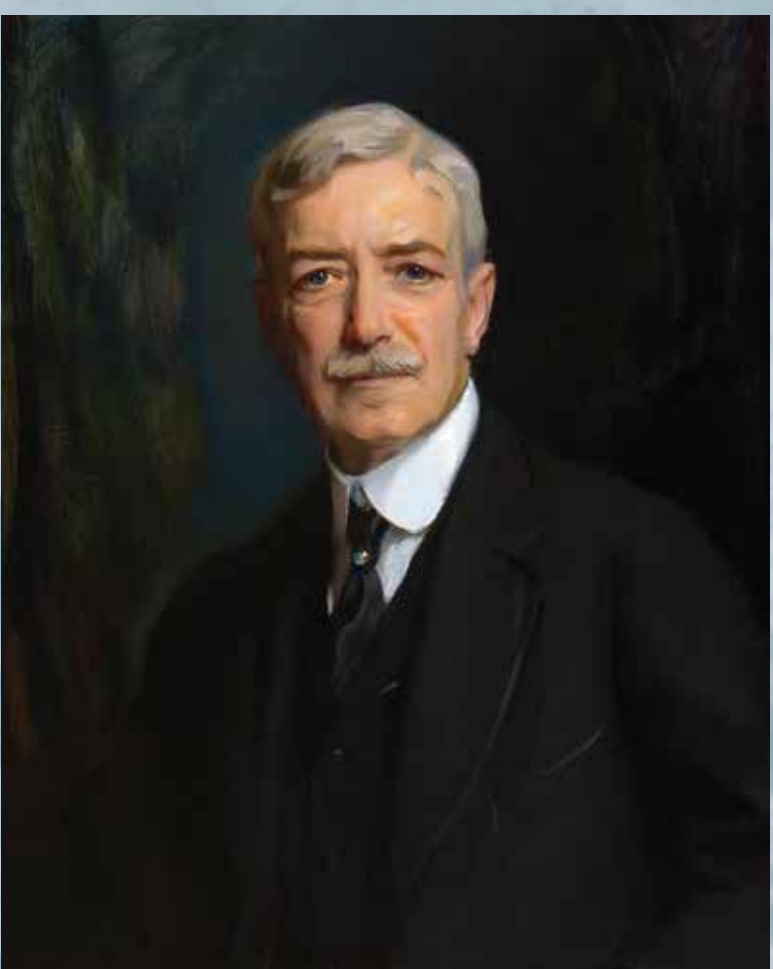
ROBERT BACON
1909



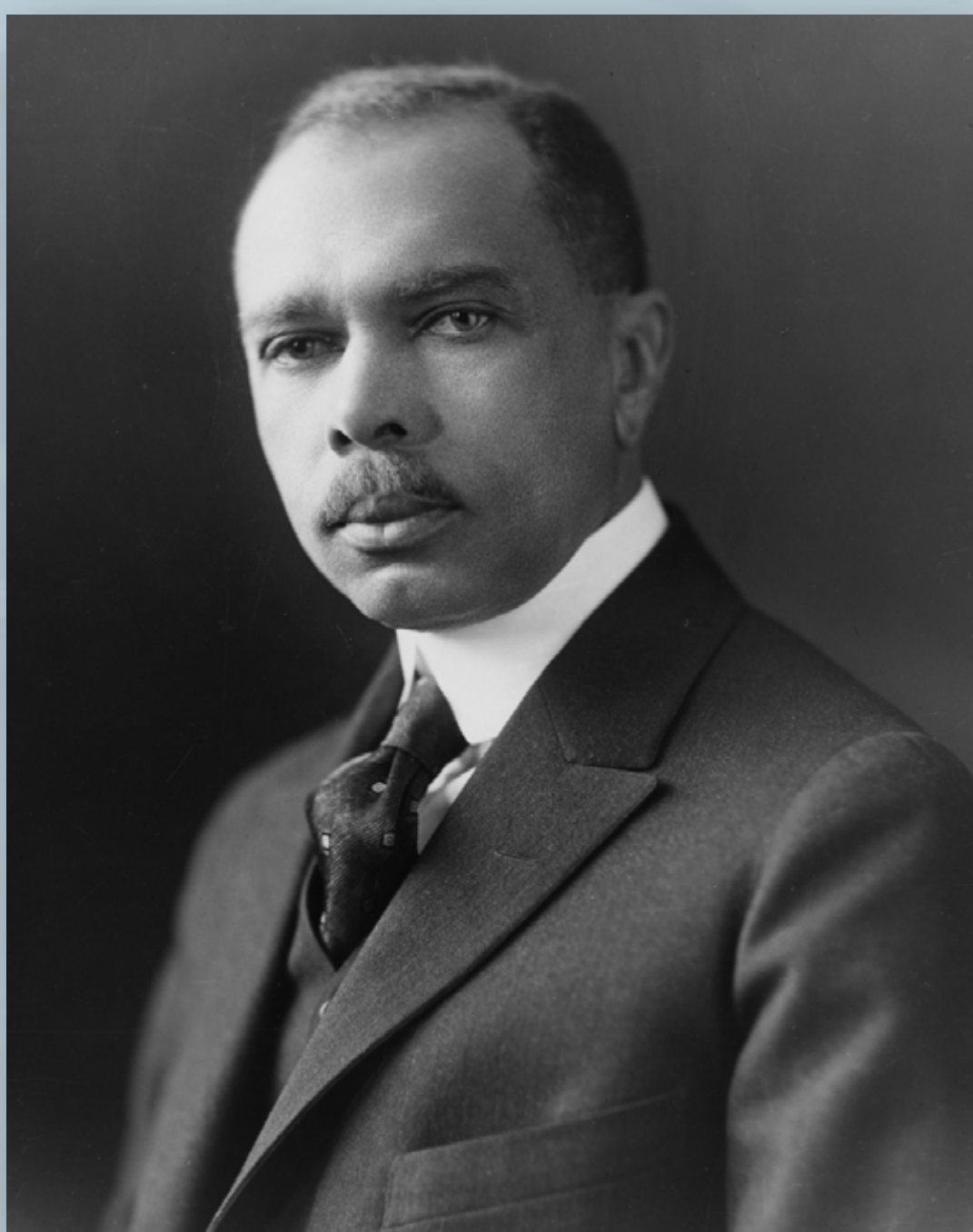
WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN
1913 – 1915



PHILANDER CHASE KNOX
1909 – 1913



ROBERT LANSING
1915 – 1920



JAMES WELDON JOHNSON
1871 – 1938

Attorney, activist, novelist, songwriter, and diplomat, James Weldon Johnson was the first African American to pass the bar in Florida. He served as U.S. consul in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela (1906–1909), and Corinto, Nicaragua (1909–1913). He was famous for writing the song “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (then known as the “Negro National Anthem”) and for a novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. As general secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1920, he led an investigation criticizing the U.S. occupation of Haiti, which led to Senate hearings, and published a book called *Self-Determining Haiti*.



ALVEY A. ADEE
1842 – 1924

Alvey A. Adey dedicated his life to serving the U.S. government in the Department of State. He began his diplomatic career as a private secretary at the Legation in Spain in 1869. He became a clerk in the department in 1876 and chief of the Diplomatic Bureau two years later. Adey was appointed third assistant secretary of state in 1882, second assistant secretary of state in 1886, and first assistant secretary of state just before his death in 1924.

Adey approved or drafted almost all outgoing State Department correspondence. He was a stickler for correct style and usage. In times of crisis, he would sleep on a cot in his office. Deaf, reclusive, and unmarried, his entire life centered on the operation of the department, advising presidents and secretaries of both parties and briefing diplomatic and consular officers. A longtime resident of Washington is said to have remarked as Adey bicycled past him, “There goes our State Department now.”

FIGHTING AND WORKING WITH DICTATORS

Led by Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, United States diplomacy vigorously but unsuccessfully attempted to lead an international effort against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Wary of the rise of Fascist-style governments in Europe and Japan, President Roosevelt took steps to oppose them, even while the United States remained neutral. Finally, after Pearl Harbor, he joined an alliance in an all-out war effort to defeat them.

In the 1930s, the Good Neighbor Policy improved ties with Latin America by eschewing military intervention in hemispheric affairs and by agreeing to reciprocally lower trade barriers. The new spirit helped Washington conclude defense arrangements with most Latin American countries, whether democratic or authoritarian. The ensuing 1947 Rio Treaty stated that an armed attack “against an American State” was an attack against all, and the Bogotá Conference the following year created the Organization of American States.

Avoiding the U.S. neutrality laws by a technicality, President Roosevelt provided loans and military supplies beginning in 1937 to China, then at war with Japan, while Secretary Hull negotiated with the Japanese for several years in an attempt to end their aggression in Asia. Eventually Washington embargoed the export of oil, scrap metal, and other materials, which Japan had been importing from the United States. Negotiations continued, however, until the attack on Pearl Harbor.



President Franklin Roosevelt (seated second from left), and Secretary Cordell Hull (seated right) meet with representatives from 26 nations at the White House. U.S. diplomats worked to keep the Allies united in the fight against the Axis.



USS Arizona sinks during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

RUTH SHIPLEY
1885 – 1966



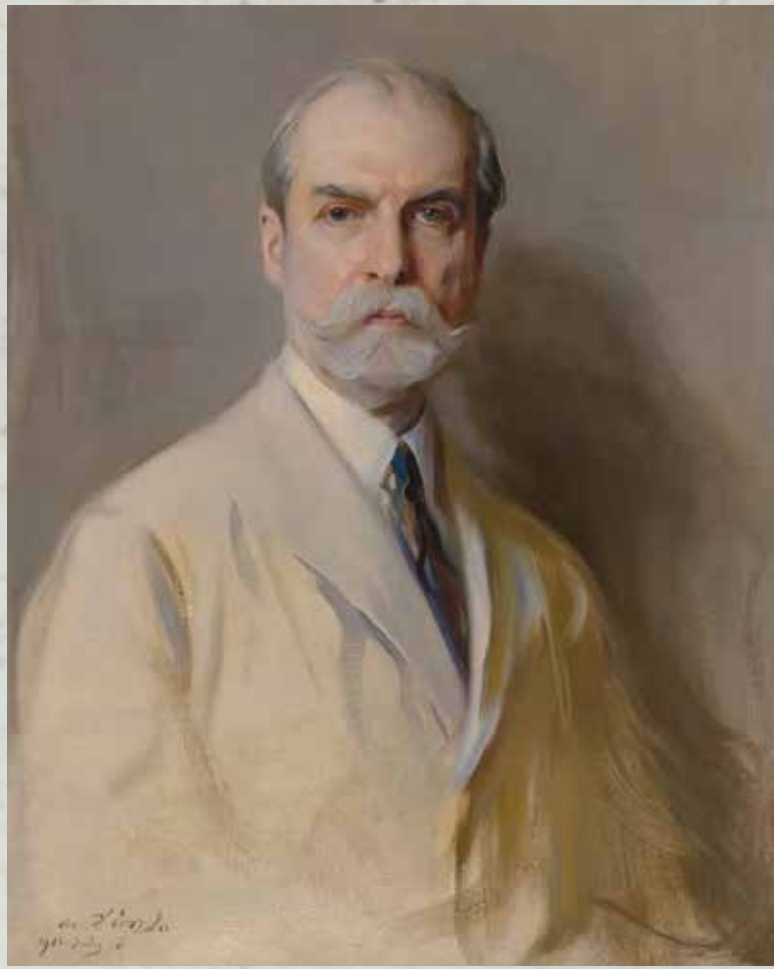
Praised by President Franklin Roosevelt as “a wonderful ogre,” Ruth Shipley, chief of the Passport Division from 1928 to 1955, personally reviewed every application and denied passports to prominent Americans suspected of having communist ties, including playwright Arthur Miller and Nobel Prize-winning scientist Linus Pauling.



BAINBRIDGE COLBY
1920–1921



FRANK BILLINGS KELLOGG
1925–1929



CHARLES EVANS HUGHES
1921–1925



HENRY LEWIS STIMSON
1929–1933

FIGHTING AND WORKING WITH DICTATORS



The United Nations was born at the San Francisco Opera House in June 1945, when delegates from 50 nations approved its charter.



In February 1945 after the Yalta Conference, FDR met aboard the cruiser *Quincy* in Egypt with King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, marking the beginning of the long U.S.-Saudi partnership. The two leaders exchanged divergent views on the future of Palestine.



Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-25812

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
1884 – 1962

Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, not only took an active role as first lady, traveling widely, writing a daily newspaper column, and advocating for the poor and disadvantaged, but also served her country as a diplomat. President Truman appointed her as a delegate to the United Nations, where she served in 1946–1953 and again in 1961–1962. She chaired the UN Human Rights Commission and succeeded in getting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

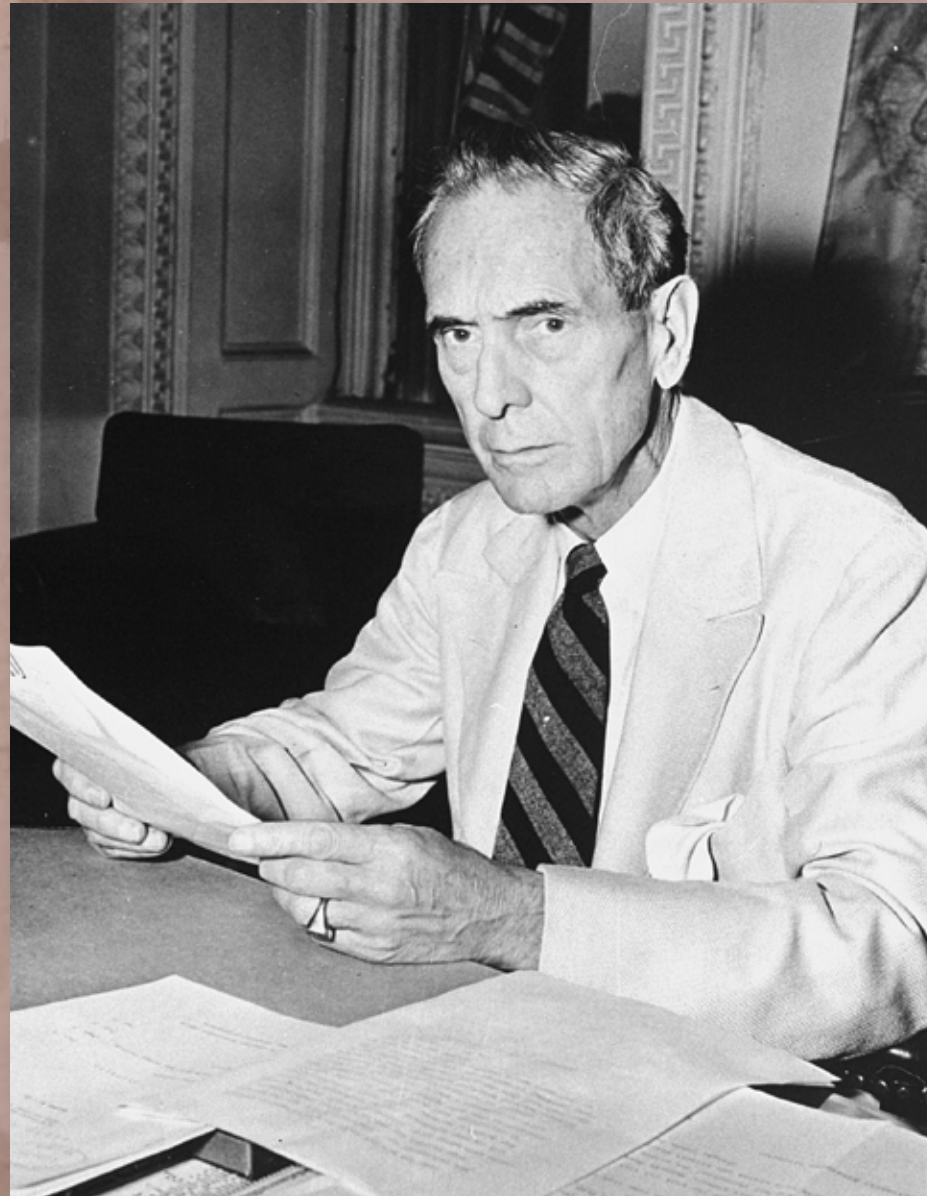
President Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, and State Department negotiators undertook a series of agreements with the British to assist them after they went to war with the Axis powers in 1939. These included the cash-and-carry provision of war supplies, Lend-Lease, a swap of destroyers for the use of British bases in the Caribbean, U.S. Navy escorts for ships carrying British goods, and the pronouncement of war aims and principles of allied nations in the Atlantic Charter in August 1941.

During most of World War II, White House and military staff formulated the bulk of foreign policy, as presidential aides Harry Hopkins and Admiral William Leahy, together with the military service chiefs, became President Roosevelt’s principal advisers. The State Department played a more limited role, including at the major allied conferences at Teheran and Yalta.

“The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, and consequently they agree that... each of them... will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking... such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force...”

The North Atlantic Treaty
Washington, D.C.
4th April 1949

President Truman returned the department to the fore at the final wartime summit meeting at Potsdam. Much of the diplomacy at these meetings related to the emerging confrontation between the Western powers and the Soviet Union over the fate of Eastern Europe and Germany. State Department officials, along with those from the Treasury Department and other agencies, played a significant part in the meetings that established major postwar economic and political institutions. They helped formulate and guide U.S. policy at the Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, and San Francisco conferences, where the foundations were laid for the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations.



BRECKINRIDGE LONG
1881 – 1958

The only direct interaction most foreigners will ever have with a U.S. official is when they request a visa. The official’s decision affects the country’s reputation; facilitates tourism, trade, economic development, and educational exchange; and provides the first line of defense against those few who would try to harm the United States. Consular officers and their superiors have a great deal of discretion and responsibility in deciding individual cases within the law.

Breckinridge Long was Third Assistant Secretary of State (1917–1920), Ambassador to Italy (1933–1936), and Assistant Secretary of State (1940–1944). During the war, Long spearheaded the State Department’s opposition to the admission of Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler, ordering consuls to withhold visas on the grounds that the refugees posed a security risk to the United States. He dismissed his critics as “Communists, extreme radicals, Jewish professional agitators, [and] refugee enthusiasts,” and helped ensure that the quota for German and Austrian immigrants went unfilled in most years. President Roosevelt eventually overruled him but not until 1944, when most of the applicants had perished in the Holocaust.



RALPH BUNCHE
1904 – 1971

The son of a barber and grandson of a slave, Ralph Bunche was a prizewinning scholar and varsity athlete who earned a Ph.D. at Harvard and participated in the development of the United Nations as a State Department official and advisor before his long career working with the international body. He served the State Department as associate chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs (1943) and as adviser to the U.S. Delegation for the “Charter Conference” of the UN (1945), but he declined President Truman’s offer of the position of assistant secretary because of his opposition to segregation in Washington, D.C. Bunche served the UN in a number of posts, including head of the Department of Trusteeship, principal secretary to the UN Special Committee on Palestine, undersecretary for Special Political Affairs, and undersecretary-general. He was awarded the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for mediating armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Bunche remained active in the civil rights movement throughout his lifetime.

LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT



CORDELL HULL
1933 – 1944



EDWARD REILLY STETTINIUS, JR.
1944 – 1945



JAMES FRANCIS BYRNES
1945 – 1947



GEORGE CATLETT MARSHALL
1947 – 1949



LOY W. HENDERSON
1892 – 1986

Loy W. Henderson, known as “Mr. Foreign Service,” began his 39 years of service as vice consul in Dublin in 1922. During his career, he played a prominent rôle in historic events in Eastern Europe, in the Middle East, and in the State Department’s management operations.

Henderson served as minister to Iraq, 1943–1945; ambassador to India and minister to Nepal, 1948–1951; and ambassador to Iran, 1951–1954. As deputy under secretary for administration in 1955, he was instrumental in the construction of the main State Department building. Later, he was chiefly responsible for implementing the Wriston Report’s proposals, integrating the department’s Civil Service officers into the Foreign Service, and for the policy of accrediting ambassadors and fully staffed embassies to all the newly independent countries in Africa.

Henderson was among the first group of officers to achieve the rank of career ambassador—the highest in the Foreign Service. To commemorate his service, the department dedicated the “Loy Henderson Conference Room” in 1976.



George F. Kennan appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 30, 1967.

Powerful secretaries George Marshall and Dean Acheson returned the State Department to a preeminent place in foreign policymaking. Various bureaus, including the Policy Planning staff headed by George Kennan, took the lead in formulating landmark postwar policies that included the Truman Doctrine, a promise to fight communism worldwide, and the Marshall Plan, a massive foreign aid program for European reconstruction. Writing under the pseudonym “X” in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Kennan put forth the principles of containment that guided U.S. relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe throughout the Cold War, although he later opposed military intervention in Vietnam and Iraq. The State Department provided leadership in the development of NATO.

Despite its newly energized leadership role, the State Department faced serious problems in the 1940s and 1950s. Following the testing of the Soviet atomic bomb and the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, Senator Joseph McCarthy and others in Congress raised charges of treason and subversion within the ranks of the department and especially the Foreign Service—an episode climaxed by the Alger Hiss case. McCarthy claimed to have a list of up to 200 names of communists who had “infested” the department, but he never produced the list. Hiss was eventually convicted of perjury.

Organizations besides the State Department assumed specialized foreign affairs tasks, as U.S. influence and responsibilities around the world grew to proportions never before imagined. These included the National Security Council (NSC), the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), the Agency for International Development (AID), the United States Information Agency (USIA), the Peace Corps, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), and many others.

Secretaries of state and ambassadors sometimes had difficulty maintaining control over various embassy elements. President John F. Kennedy began the tradition of reinforcing ambassadorial leadership at posts abroad by writing a personal letter to each ambassador outlining his or her responsibilities and authorities.

The Foreign Service Act of 1946 thoroughly overhauled the management and administration of the Foreign Service and created the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to provide language, area, and professional training for foreign affairs personnel. In 1993, FSI moved to a permanent site designed for its special purposes at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, ending many years of teaching in makeshift, leased quarters.

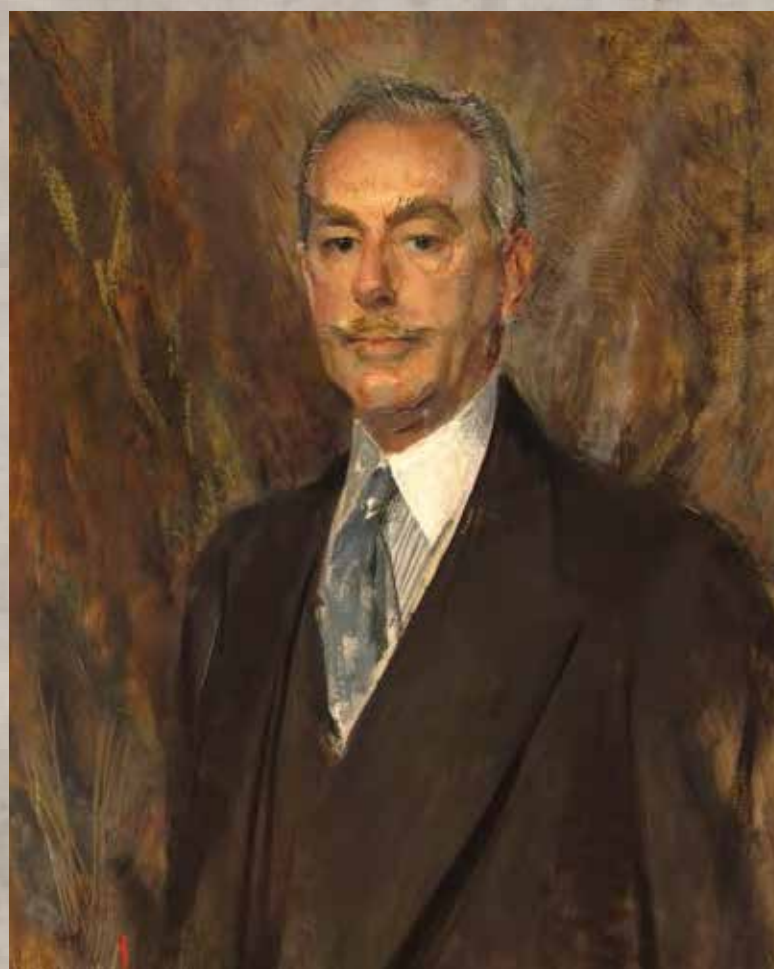
The State Department grew rapidly after World War II, opening a record number of missions abroad, increasing its domestic and foreign services, and moving to new quarters in 1947, which were greatly expanded between 1957 and 1961. In 1957 a major overhaul of the personnel system, as proposed by Henry M. Wriston, led to the integration of many Civil Service employees into the Foreign Service, doubling its membership to 3,436 officers.

Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1954, probably discussing the Senate Select Committee to Study Censure Charges.



President Dwight D. Eisenhower speaks to the world on Voice of America’s fifteenth anniversary in February 1957.

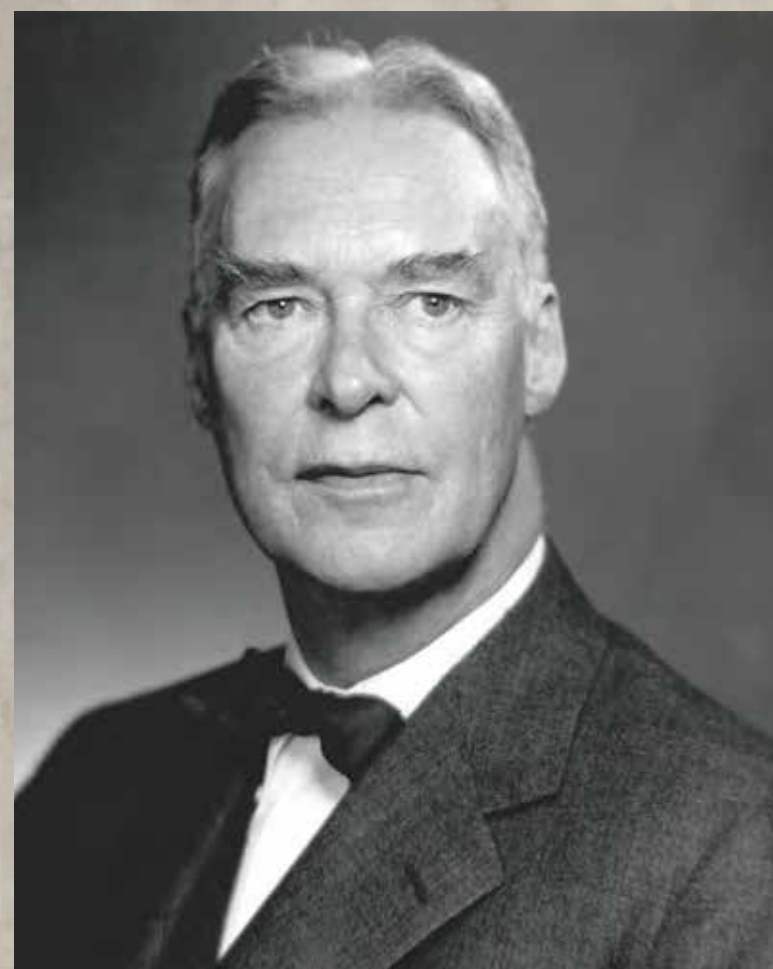
YEARS OF CONFRONTATION



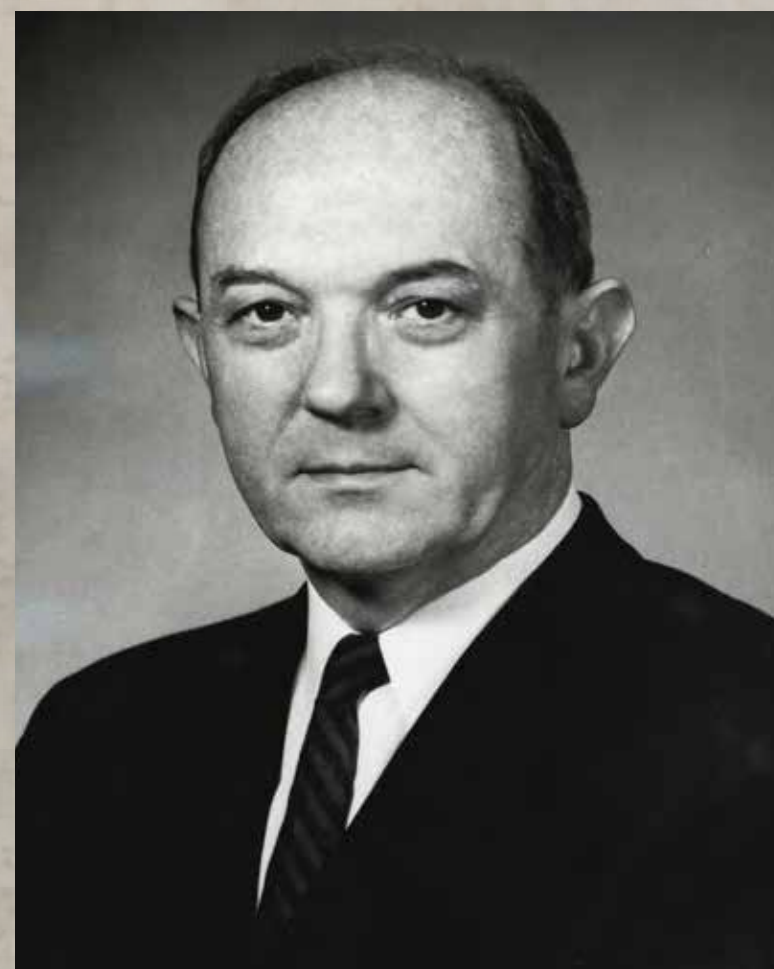
DEAN GOODERHAM
ACHESON
1949 – 1953



JOHN FOSTER DULLES
1953 – 1959



CHRISTIAN ARCHIBALD
HERTER
1959 – 1961



DEAN RUSK
1961 – 1969

Under presidential direction, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the new foreign affairs agencies—especially the CIA, AID, and USIA—made vigorous efforts to implement the policy of containment. An alliance system that included the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Rio Treaty, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and the Australia, New Zealand, and U.S. Treaty (ANZUS) negotiated to check the spread of communism around the world. The U.S. launched massive economic aid programs in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. Information programs, radio broadcasts, and cultural and academic exchanges were expanded and given worldwide scope. Counterinsurgency became a major concern, especially in the 1960s, and all Foreign Service personnel received training in the subject.

Rival superpowers confronted each other more than once. In 1948, the West mounted an airlift in response to the Soviet blockade of Berlin. In 1962, the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba led the two countries to the brink of nuclear war. President Kennedy declared an embargo on further shipments and resolved the crisis through negotiation and compromise.

Several times, the Cold War turned hot, though Soviets and Americans never directly fought each other on the ground. U.S. and Allied troops engaged in full-scale warfare in Korea from 1950 to 1953, and in Vietnam from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. U.S. diplomats led UN opposition to the invasion of South Korea by North Korea. They also encouraged Allied support and eventually negotiated the settlement.

Officers from all foreign affairs agencies were assigned to Vietnam—both in Saigon and the provinces—to guide the government of South Vietnam in an increasingly unpopular war

against the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam. U.S. embassies faced worldwide protests.

U.S. diplomats and military personnel played advisory roles in conflicts in many countries—Greece, the Philippines, Cuba, Guatemala, Zaire, Bolivia, Cambodia, Laos, Chile, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Grenada—often given the difficult task of opposing leftist nationalism while advocating for human rights.

Despite confrontations and tensions in this period, president after president directed U.S. diplomats to press for arms control, enabling such advances as the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963, SALT I and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 1972, and the Ford-Brezhnev agreement in 1974, which led to SALT II and a series of nuclear nonproliferation agreements.

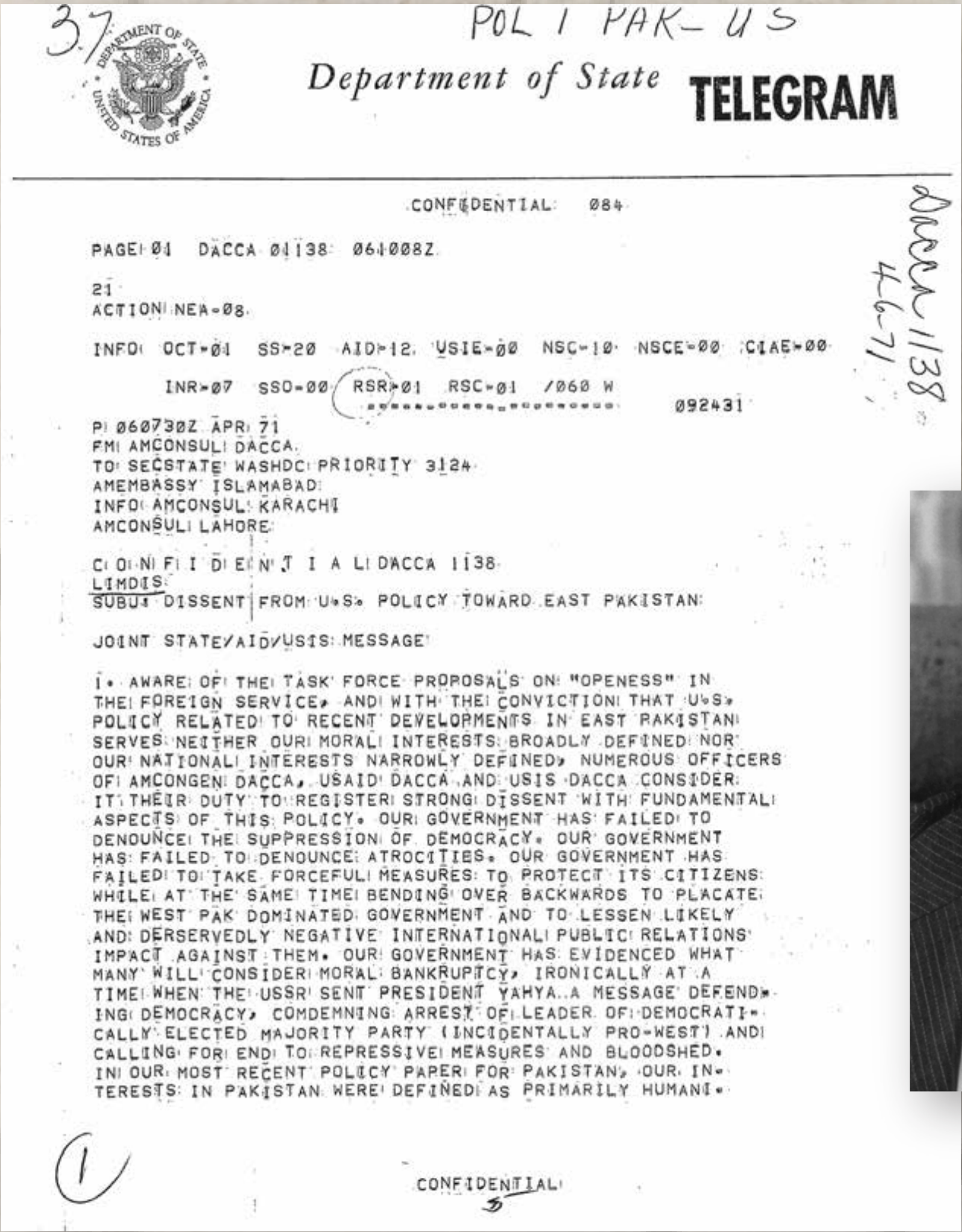
Resumption of bilateral relations with China became one of the most outstanding diplomatic events of the era, culminating with President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972.

President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon pose with Chinese and American officials on the Great Wall of China. President Nixon reopened relations with China in 1972.



Photo by Shuman Rauloff/Woodrow Wilson Center, Office of Foreign Affairs

The Republic of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, immediately following the termination of Britain's mandate. Overruling his State Department advisors, President Harry S. Truman recognized Israel's independence within eleven minutes. The problem of rival Palestinian and Israeli land claims would become a central concern of the State Department for decades.



ARCHER BLOOD
1973–2004

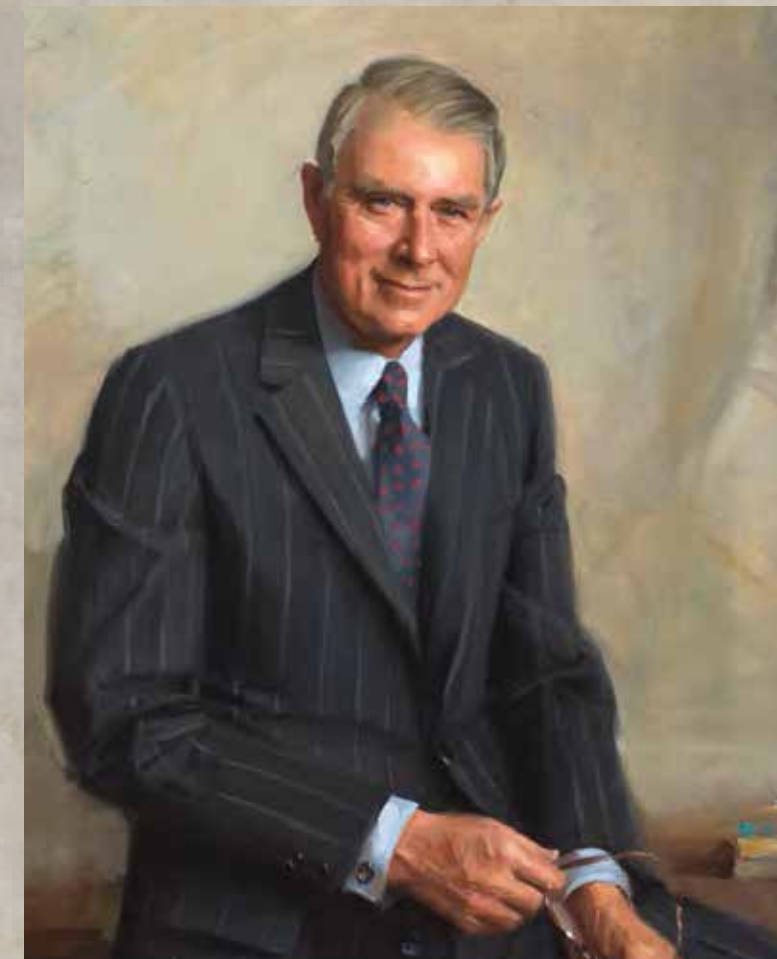
YEARS OF CONFRONTATION



WILLIAM PIERCE ROGERS
1969 – 1973



HENRY ALFRED KISSINGER
1973 – 1977



CYRUS ROBERTS VANCE
1977 – 1980



EDMUND SIXTUS MUSKIE
1980 – 1981



Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, President Jimmy Carter, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Camp David Accords in 1978, leading to a peace treaty between the two countries the following year.



When FSO Elinor Constable was summoned to the executive director's office in 1972, she was startled to be told that since she was engaged to be married, she must resign from the State Department. She recalled in her ADST Oral History, "I said, 'You can't force me to resign. If you want me out of the Foreign Service, you have to fire me.'" She demanded to see the regulation requiring female FSOs to resign when they married. In truth, there was none—it was just a custom. Constable's protest, the work of the Women's Action Organization, and growing pressure from a younger generation of women entering the workforce ended the practice and brought about other institutional change. Constable later served as ambassador to Kenya (1986–89) and assistant secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

Throughout the postwar years, U.S. diplomats have been active in the Middle East as landmark events have occurred: the recognition of Israel in 1948; the CIA support for the overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953; oil-for-security deals with the Persian Gulf monarchies; the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace accord; the 1979–1981 hostage crisis in Tehran; 1983 terrorist bombings of the U.S. embassy and Marine barracks in Lebanon that killed more than 300; Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the resulting Gulf War in 1991; the Israeli-PLO Oslo peace agreement in 1994; the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003; the Arab Spring demonstrations of 2011; a nuclear arms control deal with Iran in 2015; and conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

U.S. mediation in conflicts around the world became a prominent feature of the post–World War II period. The United States played a mediating role in the Somali-Ethiopian conflict in 1977; in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa in the 1970s and early 1980s; and in Ulster and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

In 1975, Congress created the position of Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs in the Office of the Deputy Secretary. In 1977, President Carter elevated its status and appointed Assistant Secretary Patricia Derian to lead the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Since then, human rights concerns have been part of the department's responsibilities, from annual reporting to bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

This period, especially the 1970s, witnessed major changes in personnel policies regarding female officers, spouses, and families in the foreign affairs agencies. Efforts were made to increase recruitment of women and minorities and to assure fairness in the promotion process. A 1972 directive stated that Foreign Service spouses could no longer be required to perform uncompensated services, nor could any comments about them be included in an officer's efficiency reports. As of 1972, female Foreign Service officers could no longer be required to resign from the service if they married. In 1978, the State Department established the Family Liaison Office (FLO) to assist families from all foreign affairs agencies at home and abroad.



President John F. Kennedy meets with Willis, Ambassador-designate to Ceylon in the Oval Office.

FRANCES E. WILLIS
1899 – 1983

Frances E. Willis was only the third ever female career Foreign Service officer and the first to be appointed ambassador as well as the first to attain the rank of career ambassador. During her 37-year career, Willis served as the first U.S. ambassador to Switzerland, 1953–57; ambassador to Norway, 1957–61; and ambassador to Ceylon, 1961–64.

Known for being straightforward, reliable, and effective, Willis said she thought she had done the most for other women in the Foreign Service by being a competent officer throughout her career.



Patricia Derian (left) with President Carter, Virginia McCarthy, and Eleanor Holmes Norton (right).

PATRICIA DERIAN
1929 – 2016

Patricia Derian was a civil rights activist tapped by President Carter to be the first assistant secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Her initial reply was, "I don't want to come here if you want a magnolia to make it look good," she recounted in her ADST Oral History, but Carter "told me to go do my job."

Derian worked to institutionalize attention to human rights in U.S. foreign policy and helped save lives and free political prisoners from Argentina to South Korea.

THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

The collapse of Soviet-backed communism following the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989 created entirely new conditions for U.S. diplomats. In this new era, confrontation and containment of the Soviet Union ceased to be the organizing principle of U.S. diplomacy. Suddenly U.S. diplomats became engaged in helping the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union develop viable democracies and free-market economies.

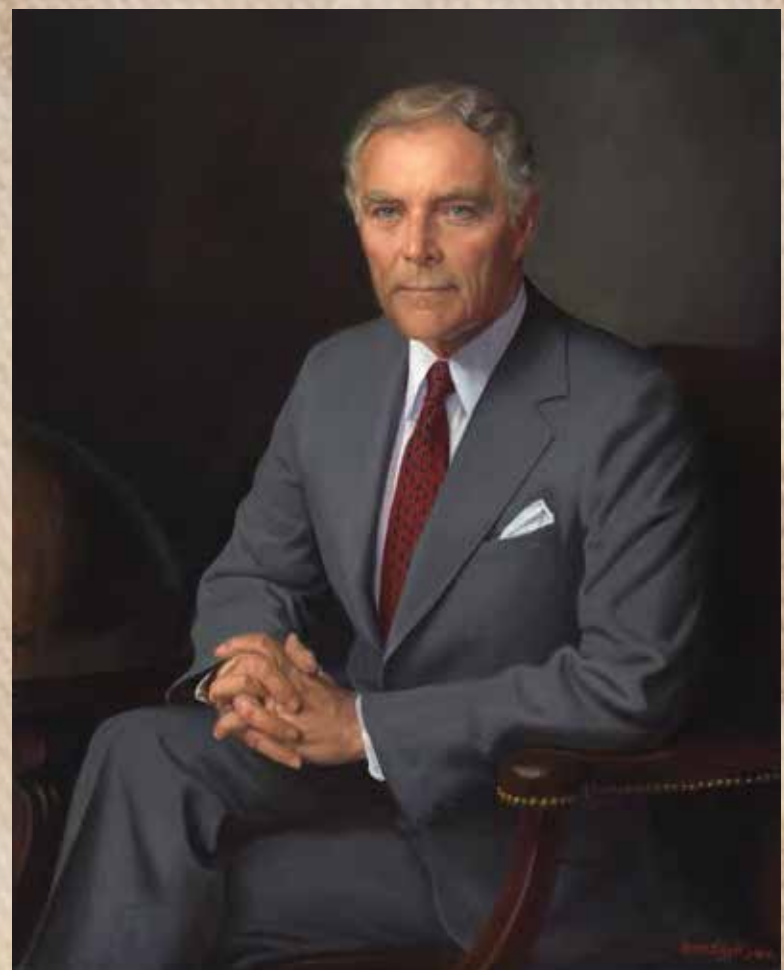
The United States was called upon to respond worldwide to conflicts stemming from ethnic, religious, and regional rivalries, notably in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Rwanda, and Sudan. Policymakers were asked to reexamine the U.S. relationship to the United Nations and other international organizations. NATO's role was recast as it fired its first shots in anger—not against Warsaw Pact forces, but in Bosnia for humanitarian reasons. The media became more influential than ever before, forcing U.S. policy to focus on these crises.

TERENCE A. TODMAN
1926 – 2014



Career Ambassador Terence A. Todman retired in 1993 after 41 years in the Foreign Service. Born in the Virgin Islands, he brought to his State Department service an impressive ability with languages, enormous energy, and an uncanny sense of when to take major risks. Todman's career included a remarkable 24 years as ambassador to six countries: Chad, 1969–72; Guinea, 1972–75; Costa Rica, 1975–77; Spain, 1978–83; Denmark, 1983–89; and Argentina, 1989–93. He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, 1977–78.

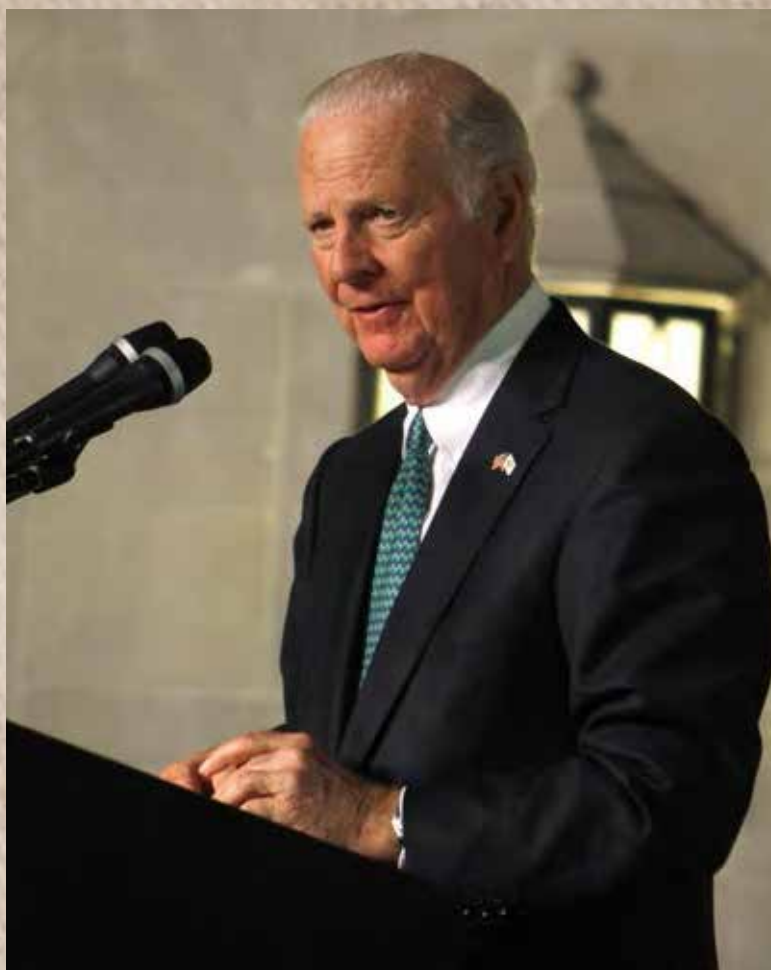
Todman was honored by Congress for his contributions to U.S. foreign affairs at a ceremony in Statuary Hall in November 1993. He was recognized as serving the nation “with dignity, honor, and true professionalism.”



ALEXANDER MEIGS HAIG, JR.
1981 – 1982



GEORGE PRATT SHULTZ
1982 – 1989



JAMES ADDISON BAKER III
1989 – 1992



LAWRENCE SIDNEY
EAGLEBURGER
1992 – 1993



WARREN MINOR
CHRISTOPHER
1993 – 1997



MADELEINE ALBRIGHT
1997 – 2001

Assistant Secretary of State
for Public Affairs and
Spokesman Hodding Carter
III (March 1977–1980)
conducts a “noon briefing.”



A Somali thanks Special
Envoy Ambassador
Robert Oakley and the
American Corps of Engineers
in 1993 for completing the
bridge that reestablished the
road link from Baidoa to
Mogadishu, which was cut
off for six months.

In these images, the first two female
American Foreign Service Association
presidents, Susan Rockwell Johnson
(2009–2013) and the Honorable Barbara J.
Stephenson (2015–2019), stand near the
memorial plaques honoring Foreign Service
personnel who lost their lives in the line of
duty. Begun in 1933 by AFSA, these plaques
now bear around 250 names.



THE WORLD AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

The attacks of September 11 transformed American diplomacy. As the War on Terror began, diplomats worked with foreign leaders and the United Nations to build multilateral coalitions. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared, “It’s a new kind of war. It will be political, economic, diplomatic, military.”

Following the removal of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 and Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, U.S. diplomats worked to help Afghans and Iraqis rebuild and strengthen their political institutions. The revelation that American intelligence on Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program was wrong devalued U.S. credibility and created challenges for building trust with allies and civilians. Still, diplomats remained on the ground in both conflicts, using aid to promote civilian governance, education, and equality.

In addition to its global counterterrorism efforts, the U.S. also employed soft power to fight disease, poverty, and hunger, especially in Africa. Accounting for inflation, total U.S. spending on all foreign aid increased from \$21 billion to nearly \$50 billion between 2001 and 2017. While Iraq and Afghanistan received a substantial portion of these funds, aid was distributed all over the globe. In 2003, President George W. Bush announced the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a \$15 billion commitment to fight the disease. The U.S. also worked to contain other international threats. Diplomats sought to curb Russian aggression in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as North Korean missile testing and human rights abuses.

The State Department embarked upon several internal transformations itself. In 2006, Secretary Condoleezza Rice instituted the Transformational Diplomacy program, restructuring the department by emphasizing regional initiatives and moving diplomats to where they were most needed. Later, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton initiated the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)—a practice continued by Secretary John Kerry. Both Secretary Clinton and Secretary Kerry prioritized civilian leadership in addressing security, human rights, and climate change.

ANNE T. SMEDINGHOFF
1987–2013



Anne T. Smedinghoff anticipated that a post in Kabul would require “great sacrifice,” yet volunteered anyway. She valued the chance to help the Afghan people and their country recover from decades of war.

Upon volunteering for a dangerous post in Afghanistan in 2012, Foreign Service officer Anne T. Smedinghoff wrote, “I take seriously the word ‘service’ in our job title, and want to be sent where I am needed most.” She adapted well to the posting in Kabul and served as the control officer on Secretary John Kerry’s visit to the city in March 2013. Less than a month later, on April 6, Smedinghoff was delivering books to a school in Qalat, Afghanistan, when a suicide bomber seriously wounded her. She died that afternoon.

To honor her sacrifice and service, the Smedinghoff family created a memorial fund at Johns Hopkins University.



Secretary of State Colin Powell thanks the staff at a treatment facility in Haiti in 2004. The PEPFAR program aims to end HIV/AIDS and improve patient survival rates.



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meets doctors aiding in relief efforts after an earthquake in Pakistan in 2005. Relief efforts have been an integral aspect of the department’s work abroad.

Secretary Rice looks on as President Bush shakes hands with Afghan President Hamid Karzai following the dedication of the new U.S. Embassy in Kabul in March 2006.



Former ambassador Ryan Crocker endured threats throughout his career. While he served as ambassador to Syria in 1998, a mob attacked his Damascus residence. For his service in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, Crocker was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

DIPLOMATS ON THE FRONT LINES



Throughout her career, Slater worked to improve IT infrastructure at multiple U.S. embassies. In recognition of her service, she won the State Department's Thomas Morrison Award for IT Excellence in 1996 and the Heroes of U.S. Diplomacy recognition in 2019.

ELIZABETH M. SLATER

August 6, 1998, was Elizabeth “Lizzie” Slater’s first day as an information technology specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The second day, terrorists bombed the complex. Sitting a mere 50 feet from the detonation, Slater was buried under rubble, suffering facial and head injuries.

Despite sustaining these injuries, Slater remained in Dar es Salaam to help organize the embassy’s reopening. She also served in Kabul, Baghdad, and Nairobi. In 2019, she became dean of the School of Applied Information Technology at the Foreign Service Institute.

Diplomats in the War on Terror increasingly found themselves facing a new kind of enemy, decentralized networks of nonstate actors. To minimize such dangers, the State Department built fortress-style embassies, classified more assignments as “unaccompanied,” and placed restrictions on where diplomats could go. These new measures offered protection but created new challenges by limiting diplomats’ interactions with local civilians and forcing many diplomats either to decline assignments or leave their families behind.

These trying circumstances encouraged collaboration between diplomats and the military. Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) attempted to restore order in parts of Afghanistan. In 2003, the White House created the Iraq Stabilization Group, a joint effort of the State, Defense, and Treasury Departments. Headed by Condoleezza Rice, then national security advisor, this group included committees on counterterrorism, economic development, political affairs, and media relations.

Despite the collaboration between departments, military agencies have often eclipsed the State Department in planning, strategy, and presence. Some analysts have suggested this imbalance has proved detrimental to America’s grand strategy. Critics of this trend, including former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and ambassador Richard Holbrooke, expressed concerns that the State Department’s input and expertise were overshadowed, underfunded, and ignored.

Despite these obstacles, U.S. diplomats have continued their work worldwide, displaying bravery and resolve in the face of threats. In addition to efforts headed by USAID, American diplomats have partnered with the United Nations, other countries, and private organizations to confront international challenges such as climate change and disease prevention. One of these efforts, Our Cities, Our Climate, works to recognize and encourage action against climate change. Another program, Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS), builds on PEPFAR to promote gender equality, education, and disease prevention. In 2010, U.S. diplomats were also part of a multinational response to the Haiti earthquake. These efforts have contributed to security, stability, and empowerment abroad.



Diplomats, like members of the armed services, often face threats and unexpected dangers. Here, military and civilian families prepare to depart Turkey in 2003 following a State Department authorization to evacuate.



Daniel Gedacht of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad arrives in Tal Afar, Iraq. Diplomats often rely on military personnel for security and strategic support.



Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas M. Countryman inspects the removal of landmines in Afghanistan. Diplomats have worked countless hours to help mitigate violence.



Many embassies, including the one seen here in Sierra Leone, use design and geography to improve safety. Some embassies are set on hills or have moat-like perimeters. This increases security but also isolation.

DIPLOMACY IN A DIGITAL AGE

Technology and social media have created new opportunities and challenges for diplomats. When democratic movements swept across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, the State Department worked to ensure that reformers and dissidents had access to technology and networks. As protesters rallied in the streets, the Obama administration used diplomacy to secure UN Security Council resolutions in support. Although democracy's path in the region has not been smooth, the protests highlighted the importance of both technology and international cooperation for democratic movements.

However, state and nonstate actors have also used technology as a weapon to destabilize democracy, weaken economies, and threaten individual privacy. In 2010, a WikiLeaks document dump revealed the names of private citizens and exposed sensitive diplomatic efforts. Continued nonstate actors' threats against diplomats' privacy proved the need for increased diplomatic discretion and security.

In response, the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the National Security Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency have cooperated to combat the new threats of cyber warfare. In 2011, the State Department established the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues, which manages diplomatic efforts to protect networks and preserve cyberspace stability. Shortly after the new office launched, Russia employed sophisticated cyber warfare attacks against Ukraine. Later, in 2016, Russia trained hackers and bots against the United States. China has also targeted U.S. networks. In response to the new, digital cold war, Congress granted the State Department \$120 million to counter Russian interference in elections.

Cyberattacks can undermine democracy, reveal private information, and disrupt the economy. They can also threaten State Department efforts to manage trade and facilitate new agreements with other countries. For the State Department, the Internet is a double-edged sword, creating both new diplomatic tools and grave national security threats.



Ambassador Kenney poses for a selfie with some youth in the Philippines.

AMBASSADOR KRISTIE KENNEY

One of many officials to use social media at the State Department, Ambassador Kristie Kenney used technology as a diplomatic tool during her tenures in Thailand and the Philippines. A career Foreign Service officer, Kenney's other postings included serving as U.S. ambassador to Ecuador and as Counselor of the State Department.

Kenney found that social media outreach served as a force multiplier, allowing her to connect with people across the countries where she served, letting her hear from people who might not normally meet the ambassador. She felt it added transparency and a human face to the title of ambassador.



Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland responds to questions submitted through Twitter. In 2006, the State Department began using social media to inform wider audiences of department initiatives.



State Department staff provides technical support during a broadcast of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's Google+ Hangout.

The Arab Spring compelled the State Department to confront a new political landscape as entrenched regimes fell. Here protesters in Egypt celebrate the overthrow of former President Hosni Mubarak.



Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Michael A. Hammer responds to #AskMike questions. Individual diplomats, along with the State Department, have taken to social media platforms to promote diplomatic initiatives while continuing personal outreach.

COLIN LUTHER POWELL
2001 – 2005



CONDOLEEZZA RICE
2005 – 2009



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
2009 – 2013



JOHN FORBES KERRY
2013 – 2017



REX WAYNE TILLERSON
2017 – 2018



MICHAEL RICHARD POMPEO,
2018 –

