



Dean Acheson

April 11, 1893 - October 12, 1971

Sandy Spring, Maryland

Dean Gooderham Acheson, the lawyer and statesman who as Harry Truman's secretary of state helped design the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and NATO, died of a stroke at his farm in Sandy Spring, Maryland, on October 12, 1971. He was seventy-eight.

He was born on April 11, 1893, in Middletown, Connecticut, the son of an Episcopal bishop, and educated at Groton, Yale and Harvard Law. He clerked for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, practiced at Covington & Burling in Washington, and entered government under Franklin Roosevelt as under secretary of the treasury, resigning in a dispute over gold policy. During the war he returned as assistant secretary of state for economic affairs.

As under secretary and then secretary of state from 1949 to 1953 he stood at the center of early Cold War policy: aid to Greece and Turkey, the European Recovery Program, the North Atlantic alliance, and the decision to resist North Korea's invasion of the South. Republicans led by Senator Joseph McCarthy attacked him over the "loss" of China and the presence of alleged security risks in the department; he answered with a cold precision that made him both admired and hated.

Out of office he advised Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, sat on the executive committee during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and late in life urged a harder line in Vietnam before counseling de-escalation. His memoir *Present at the Creation* won the Pulitzer Prize for History in 1970. He was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown, a few miles from the State Department offices where he had helped invent the postwar order.

Services

Died in Sandy Spring, MD, October 12, 1971, aged 78. Portrait: U.S. Department of State photograph (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

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