

Topic Page: [Kennan, George F. \(George Frost\), 1904–2005](#)

Definition: **Kennan, George F(rost) (1904–2005)** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

US diplomat and scholar. He was ambassador to the USSR 1952–53 and to Yugoslavia 1961–63. He was regarded as a leading authority on Soviet politics.

Kennan was educated at Princeton University. He held diplomatic posts in several parts of the world 1927–45, and lectured at many universities, including Chicago; Princeton; and Oxford, England.

His publications include *American Diplomacy 1900–50* (1952), *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917–45* (1960), *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (1961), *Memoirs 1925–1950* (1967), and *Memoirs 1950–63* (1972).



Image from: [Defining the Cold War in Modern American Lives: Individuals and Issues in American History Since 1945](#)

Summary Article: **Kennan, George Frost**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1904–2005, U.S. diplomat and historian, b. Milwaukee, Wis., grad. Princeton, 1925. A brilliant strategist and among the most influential and intellectual Americans in the 20th-century Foreign Service, he served from 1927 in various diplomatic posts in Europe, including Geneva, Hamburg, Riga, Berlin, Prague, Lisbon, and Moscow. Kennan was perhaps the first senior U.S. diplomat to recognize the dangers inherent in the Soviet system and its aims. From his post in Moscow he sent his “Long Telegram” (1946), which with his 1947 *Foreign Policy* article (published under the pseudonym X) was pivotal in the establishment of the U.S. cold war policy of Soviet “containment” (rather than military confrontation) that ultimately won that conflict.

In 1947 he became chairman of the policy-planning staff of the State Dept., and contributed to the development of the Marshall Plan. He also was influential in the development of what became the Central Intelligence Agency's clandestine service. Later (1949–50) he was one of the chief advisers to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, but increasingly he disagreed with those in the government who emphasized the military aspects of containment, believing that Soviet expansion should be contained more through political and economic means. Kennan was appointed ambassador to the USSR in 1952, but was recalled at the demand of the Soviet government because of comments he made on the isolation of diplomats in Moscow and on the campaign that Soviet propagandists were conducting against the United States.

Retiring from the diplomatic service in 1953, he joined the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, N.J., and from 1956 until 1974 was a professor at its school of historical studies. In the late 1950s he became an advocate of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Western Europe and of Soviet forces from the satellite countries. From 1961 to 1963 he served as U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, and in the mid-1960s he opposed U.S. involvement in Vietnam, regarding the conflict there as peripheral to U.S. interests. In general, he opposed the militarization and aggressiveness that tended to characterize American foreign policy at the time, and during the 1970s and 80s he frequently expressed his fear of the dangers of nuclear weaponry. Kennan was also a pioneer in his concern for the ravaging of the

environment and the perils of overpopulation. His more than 20 noteworthy books include *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* (1951), *Soviet-American Relations, 1917–1920* (2 vol., 1956–58; Vol. I, Pulitzer Prize), *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (1961), *Nuclear Delusion* (1982), and *At a Century's Ending* (1996).

See George F. Kennan and the Origins of Containment, 1944-1946: The Kennan-Lukacs Correspondence (1997) and.

Lukacs, J. , ed., *Through the History of the Cold War: The Correspondence of George F. Kennan and John Lukacs* (2010);.

Costigliola, F. , ed., *The Kennan Diaries* (2014);.

his memoirs (2 vol., 1967-72; Vol. I, Pulitzer Prize) and the autobiographical *Sketches from a Life* (1989);.

biographies by J. Lukacs (2007) and J. L. Gaddis (2011);.

Thompson, N. , *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (2009).

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