

DIPLOMATIC MEMOIRS

Bohlen, Charles, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (1972)

Although dated, this memoir by one of the great figures in postwar U.S. diplomacy is a classic in its field. Bohlen, a career diplomat, was one of the earliest American specialists in Soviet affairs and served as ambassador to Moscow, Manila, and Paris. His book is valuable both for its descriptions and analyses of the activities of an American ambassador assigned to key countries and for its recollections of the evolution of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union from the closing years of World War II (when Bohlen interpreted for FDR at the Yalta Conference) through the depths of the Cold War

Cohen, Herman J., *Intervening in Africa: Superpower Peacemaking in a Troubled Continent* (2000).

An academic who became a diplomat late in his career, Ambassador Cohen is one of the few authentic experts on Africa in the U.S. Foreign Service. He served only briefly as an ambassador (to Senegal and The Gambia). As assistant secretary for African Affairs and the “Africa man” on the National Security Council staff, Cohen played a leading role in guiding U.S. policy through the post-Cold War transition on the continent. In this book, he looks at seven civil wars in Africa in which American diplomatic intervention played a major role: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sudan, Angola, Liberia, Rwanda, and Somalia. It’s excellent reading for students interested in the way the United States has dealt with challenging African issues.

Cross, Charles Tenney, *Born A Foreigner: A Memoir of the American Presence in Asia* (2002)

Born in China to a missionary family, “Chuck” Cross was one of the last authentic “Old China Hands.” He spent most of his career in places on the periphery of the Chinese People’s Republic: Indonesia, British Malaya, Hong Kong, Singapore (where he was U.S. ambassador) and twice in Taiwan, initially on his first diplomatic assignment, then, three decades later as “quasi-ambassador.” Assigned to London during the Vietnam War, he tried to bring about better British understanding of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. In this engaging personal memoir he spells out vividly his many adventures on the periphery of China and his impressions of the transformation of East Asia that took place over those years.

Davidow, Jeffrey, *The Bear and the Porcupine* (2007)

Davidow was American ambassador to Mexico from 1998 to 2002 and witnessed the end of seventy-one years of one party rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). His unusually candid (un)diplomatic memoir vividly portrays the Mexican and American politicians and diplomats who played principal roles in bilateral relations during those important years. The ambassador deals incisively with the transforming of Mexican politics and the way this affected U.S.-Mexican ties. He has a lot to say in particular about the two countries' handling of the critical issue of Mexican migration to the United States. The title suggests that relations with a porcupine (Mexico) can be really prickly for a bear (the U.S.).

Davies, John Paton Jr., *China Hand* (2012)

A career Foreign Service officer and China specialist, Davies served with distinction during World War II at American diplomatic missions in China and India, and later in Moscow as the Cold War began. His contacts with Chinese Communist leaders and his conviction, honestly reported to Washington, that they were likely eventually to win control of the country led to his ouster from the Foreign Service on trumped-up charges by John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's secretary of state. This posthumous autobiography, written before his death in 1999, is especially valuable for its detailed accounts of his meetings with the men who would eventually become the leaders of Communist China and independent India and Pakistan.

Dean, John Gunther, *Battle Zones* (2009).

Dean is an unusual figure in Cold War U.S. diplomacy: he spent almost his entire career overseas (including as ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia, India, Denmark, and Lebanon) and virtually none in Washington. His action-packed memoir is full of dramatic events, not least his evacuation at short notice of Embassy Phnom Penh as the Khmer Rouge approached. It is particularly strong on U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, where Dean served in South Vietnam and Laos as well as in his Bangkok and Phnom Penh ambassadorial jobs. He loved to be in the thick of things and tries to get his readers to appreciate what it's like to serve in dangerous places as an action-oriented Cold Warrior.

Djerejian, Edward P., *Danger and Opportunity: An American Ambassador's Journey Through the Middle East* (2008).

Djerejian, one of the most talented of the State Department's Arabist specialists, served as ambassador to Syria and Israel and as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. In his

book, he tries to explain what has gone wrong with U.S. policy in the region and offers ideas about how it should be changed. Djerejian is one of those successful diplomats equally effective in managing relations at Washington and dealing with foreign governments as a senior embassy official. He has written a provocative book that remains valuable reading despite the many changes in the Middle East that have occurred since its publication.

Farrand, Robert W., *Reconstruction and Peace Building in the Balkans* (2011).

Farrand has written a careful autobiographical account of how a U.S. Foreign Service officer whose previous experience had focused on conventional diplomacy successfully managed bitter ethnic disputes in a city in former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s. Although perhaps too detailed for some tastes – Farrand really gets down into the weeds – it is an important case study of civilian stabilization in a postconflict environment that should be valuable to scholars of the Balkans and students of postconflict resolution alike.

Grove, Brandon H. Jr., *Behind Embassy Walls* (2005).

In this very candid memoir, Ambassador Grove describes the many twists and turns in a Foreign Service career that included assignments in Africa, South Asia, the Near East, and both East and West Berlin, as well as senior postings in Washington. Grove served as ambassador to Zaire and in the tricky job as consul general in Jerusalem. He is especially good on the way a professional diplomat must handle “great men,” in his case a rambunctious Attorney General Robert Kennedy and a couple of highly idiosyncratic politically-appointed ambassadors. His description of the impact of diplomatic life on an officer’s family shows us another, often neglected side of Foreign Service life.

Hillenbrand, Martin, *Fragments of our Time: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (1998).

After postings in Africa and Asia, Hillenbrand spent the better part of his career in Europe, where he became one of the U.S. government’s leading experts on Germany, eventually serving there, and in Hungary, as ambassador. In Washington, he held the key policymaking position of assistant secretary for European Affairs. Written by a genuine professional authority, this book is especially valuable for readers interested in the way the United States dealt with the multiple challenges it faced in Europe at the height of the Cold War.

Holdridge, John H., *Crossing the Divide: An Insider's Account of the Normalization of U.S.-China Relations* (1997).

Holdridge was “present at the creation” of modern U.S.-Chinese ties. He accompanied Henry Kissinger to Beijing on his historic 1971 journey and was later assigned there as deputy chief of mission. He was also ambassador to Indonesia and Singapore and served as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. *Crossing the Divide* is must reading for those who are looking for an authoritative study of how the ice was broken in Washington's ties with the People's Republic of China. It is also a good read for readers interested in learning how an active area specialist deals with diplomatic challenges.

Hull, Edmund J., *High Value Target: Countering Al Qaeda in Yemen* (2011).

Hull, who served extensively in posts in the Middle East, has written a fine account of what a talented ambassador experienced in a region can accomplish under trying circumstances to win Washington's support for a program he advocated, scrounge the needed resources, and provide strong leadership to his embassy staff to assure that he accomplished what he set out to do. The book's focus on the increasing importance of the struggle against Islamic extremist terrorism in U.S diplomacy makes it particularly valuable. *High Value Target* won the American Academy of Diplomacy's Dillon award for the best study of U.S. diplomacy written in 2011.

Hume, Cameron, *Mission to Algiers* (2006).

Hume provides a detailed (some would say too detailed) play-by-play account of his years as U.S. ambassador to Algeria, 1997-2000, as the Algerian government grappled with an Islamic insurgency. His narrative focuses on his role in U.S. efforts to promote democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy. An instructive book for readers interested in the way an active ambassador can influence Washington policymakers.

Jenkins, Kempton, *Cold War Saga* (2010)

Jenkins, a career Foreign Service office, served in several European posts during the Cold War. His recollections of his experiences in Germany, the embassy in Moscow, and several assignments in Washington offer useful behind-the-scenes looks at how the U.S. dealt with Soviet threats to Berlin and other aggressive Kremlin moves in those years. In his account of his five-year stint at the U.S. Information Agency, he provides detailed insider information about Washington's cultural diplomacy in the Johnson and Nixon administrations.

Kaiser, Philip M, *Journeying Far and Wide* (1992)

Kaiser began his government career in the Department of Labor and initially became involved in diplomacy through his role in the Labor Attaché program. An active Democrat, he was appointed ambassador to Senegal and Mauretania in the Kennedy administration and later served as deputy chief of the U.S. embassy in London and as ambassador to Hungary and then Austria in the Carter administration. His free-wheeling memoir is useful for readers interested in the way the United States supports free labor movements overseas, and, more generally, about how a political appointee handles ambassadorial responsibilities.

Keeley, Robert V., *The Colonels' Coup and the American Embassy: A Diplomat's View of the Breakdown of Democracy in Cold War Greece* (2011)

Keeley, a career Foreign Service officer who later became ambassador to Greece, was a relatively junior political officer at the American Embassy in Athens when the so-called "Colonels' Coup" took place in 1967. He strongly objected to Washington's acceptance of the surprise coup and the repressive right-wing authoritarian regime that followed. This is his insider's account of how U.S. policy was formulated, debated, and implemented, much to his dissatisfaction, during the critical years 1966-1969. Aside from its important findings, Keeley's book also provides insights on how a courageous FSO sought against the odds to influence an important policy debate.

Kennan, George, *Memoirs* (two volumes, 1967, 1972)

This is the classic autobiographical account of the diplomatic activities of one of America's greatest 20th century Foreign Service officers and Soviet specialists. Although Kennan's memoirs were published forty and more years ago, they remain an invaluable source on U.S. diplomacy toward Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union from the 1930s to the 1960s and the key role Kennan often played in formulating and implementing it. (NOTE: Readers interested in Kennan's career should also consult Yale Professor John Lewis Gaddis's long biography, *Kennan: An American Life*, published in 2011.)

Lyman, Princeton, *Partner to History: The U.S. Role in South Africa's Transition to Democracy* (2002)

U.S. ambassador to South Africa during the transition from the apartheid regime to majority rule, Princeton Lyman is ideally situated to relate how Washington policymakers and the American embassy in Pretoria used U.S. influence, economic assistance, and political support to help end

apartheid without sparking civil war. The book offers candid assessments both of U.S. policy deliberations and the roles of leading South African and American players in this historic development.

Meyer, Armin, *Quiet Diplomacy: From Cairo to Tokyo in the Twilight of Imperialism* (2004)

A career Foreign Service officer who held ambassadorial assignments in Beirut, Teheran, and Tokyo, Meyer offers valuable accounts of his many, highly varied contributions to U.S. diplomacy in the Cold War years. His description and analysis of U.S.-Japanese relations during the Nixon administration, which included Okinawa's reversion to Japanese administration, the contentious extension of the bilateral Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and the "China Shock" the Japanese experienced when Nixon opened the door to the Communist government in Beijing, provide an insider's view of a particularly challenging time in U.S.-Japan relations.

Miller, Robert H., *Vietnam and Beyond: A Diplomat's Cold War Education* (2002)

Miller spent nearly a third of his forty-year Foreign Service career on America's unsuccessful Vietnam venture, from 1962 to the end of the war. His account provides informative observations of the personalities and contending roles and positions of the major civil and military dramatis personae who led the U.S. effort as well as many of the key South Vietnamese players in the war. On the personal level, Miller reveals how one diplomat's thinking on Vietnam evolved as America's frustrations grew. It offers perceptive views on how we became involved in what was to become a major failure in U.S. foreign policy.

Newsom, David, *Witness to a Changing World* (2008)

As under secretary of state for political affairs, David Newsom held the most senior position ordinarily available to a career U.S. Foreign Service officer. On the way there he served as ambassador to Libya, Indonesia, and the Philippines, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, and a host of other posts beginning with a junior position at the embassy in Karachi, Pakistan, soon after the partition of British India. Although his account of his diplomatic years seems at times superficial, perhaps necessarily so given the scope of his career, it provides readers with a good sense of the evolution of U.S. policy in the Cold War years and the important contribution a talented professional made to its development and implementation.

Ortiz, Frank, *Ambassador Ortiz: Lessons from a Life of Service* (2005)

Ortiz, one of the first Hispanic Foreign Service officers to win a prominent role in U.S. diplomacy, spent most of his long career dealing with the problems of the Western Hemisphere, where he served as ambassador to Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, and several Caribbean countries. His book spells out the role he played in advancing U.S. interests, usually in a conservative direction, especially during his assignments in Argentina and Guatemala. It is a good read for those interested in the way U.S. Latin American policy was made and implemented during years when policymakers often sharply disagreed on the right approach to the region.

Perkins, Edward, *Mr. Ambassador: Warrior for Peace* (2006)

The son of poor blacks in the segregated Old South, Perkins defied the odds to become a highly successful Foreign Service officer. He was ambassador to Liberia, Australia, and South Africa, where he served for three years as the struggle against apartheid moved toward its climax. (The assignment of a black American as ambassador did not make the Afrikaner-led South African government particular happy.) The most valuable part of the book deals with his activities as ambassador in Pretoria and the role he played in helping to devise and implement America's South Africa policy.

Platt, Nicholas, *China Boys* (2010)

Although Nick Platt later served as ambassador to the Philippines, Pakistan, and Zambia, he focuses in this fascinating book on the role he played in China and on the making of U.S. China policy. Platt accompanied President Richard Nixon on his historic 1972 visit to the People's Republic and later served at the U.S. mission in Beijing. It was Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who first referred to Platt as a "China Boy" whence the title of his book. In Washington, Platt held several positions that dealt with Sino-U.S. relations. Before he retired to become president of the prestigious Asia Society, he had long been recognized as one of the most authoritative specialists on China in the U.S. government. His book reflects the evolution of the way the United States dealt with China from Nixon's breakthrough to the end of the century and will be valuable to readers interested in that major focus of American foreign policy.

Richmond, Yale, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey* (2008)

Richmond's book explores the importance of cultural and ideological communication between the United States and other countries in promoting international cooperation and freedom. As a Foreign Service officer, Richmond handled press, educational, and cultural affairs in Germany,

Laos, Austria, Poland, and, most significantly, the Soviet Union. His book includes engaging accounts that illustrate in a lively and personal way what public diplomacy entails and how it can be effectively carried out through exchange programs and by savvy FSOs assigned to embassies abroad.

Simpson, Howard R., *Bush Hat, Black Tie: Adventures of a Foreign Service Officer* (1999)

Filmmaker George Stevens, Jr., the founder of the American Film Institute, once said: “When it comes to recounting his adventures on four continents, Howard Simpson is the David Niven of Foreign Service officers.” In *Bush Hat, Black Tie*, his fifteenth book, Simpson offers a lively narrative of his experiences as a witness to the end of the colonial era and as a frontline practitioner of public diplomacy during the Cold War, when he served in such widely diverse posts as Saigon, Lagos, Canberra, Algiers, Paris, and Marseilles.

Spain, James W., *In Those Days: A Diplomat Remembers* (1998)

This blunt and often humorous autobiography takes us from Spain’s childhood in Chicago to his four ambassadorships – to Tanzania, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and, as deputy U.S. permanent representative, at the United Nations. His account includes a rich variety of footnotes to history, some of them lighthearted, others more touching and serious. They include tales of his encounters with the many different kinds of people a Foreign Service officer meets in the course of a career. Among them are not only difficult visiting American congressmen and African and Asian heads of state but also colorful Pashtun tribesmen he encountered during an early assignment to Pakistan. In the process the reader will learn a good deal about the conduct of U.S. foreign relations as carried out by a skillful and perceptive diplomat who fully enjoyed taking on the many challenges that came his way.

Tuthill, John, *Some Thoughts to Some Men: Serving in the Foreign Service* (1996)

Tuthill’s memoir focuses on his years as minister for economic affairs at the American Embassy in Paris (1956-59), ambassador to the Organization for European Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1960-62), and ambassador to Brazil (1966-69). The section on Brazil includes discussions of the terrorist threat to the country the role there of the Central Intelligence Agency. Tuthill concludes with some thoughts about the good and bad aspects of a Foreign Service career.

Wilkowski, Jean, *Abroad for Her Country: Tales of a Pioneer Woman Ambassador in the U.S. Foreign Service* (2008)

Ambassador Wilkowski's book (the pun in its title is intended) provides an insightful and moving account of the successful career of a woman Foreign Service officer in an era when females were only beginning to make their way to senior levels in American diplomacy. She entered the Service in 1944 and served in nine countries on three continents, eventually rising to become ambassador to Zambia, the first American woman ambassador to an African country. Wilkowski writes with wit, candor, and insight about the way diplomacy is carried out, including its personal dimensions. The book will particularly appeal to readers interested in learning how women first broke into the virtually all male ranks of the American ambassadors club.

Zimmerman, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (1996)

The last U.S. ambassador to undivided Yugoslavia, Zimmerman offers his personal, behind-the-scenes account of what happened to this once powerful country and why. He served in Belgrade from March 1989 to May 1992, when he was recalled. Soon afterwards he resigned from the Foreign Service, where he had served with distinction for over three decades. During his three years as ambassador, the secession of Croatia and Slovenia was internationally recognized and rump Yugoslav launched military actions in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although Zimmerman's interpretation is disputed by some analysts, it is must reading for anyone interested in the Balkan crises of the 1990s. *Origins of a Catastrophe* won the American annual Academy of Diplomacy's Dillon Award for the best book published that year on the conduct of American diplomacy.