

# Allen Dulles

**Allen Welsh Dulles** (/ˈdʌləs/; April 7, 1893 – January 29, 1969) was an American diplomat and lawyer who became the first civilian Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), and its longest-serving director to date. As head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the early Cold War, he oversaw the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the 1954 Guatemalan coup d'état, the Lockheed U-2 aircraft program, the Project MKUltra mind control program and the Bay of Pigs Invasion. He was dismissed by John F. Kennedy over the latter fiasco.

Dulles was one of the members of the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Between his stints of government service, Dulles was a corporate lawyer and partner at Sullivan & Cromwell.

His older brother, John Foster Dulles, was the Secretary of State during the Eisenhower Administration and is the namesake of Dulles Airport.<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Allen Dulles



### Director of Central Intelligence

#### In office

February 26, 1953 – November 29, 1961

**President** Dwight Eisenhower  
John F. Kennedy

**Deputy** Charles P. Cabell

**Preceded by** Walter B. Smith

**Succeeded by** John McCone

### Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

#### In office

August 23, 1951 – February 26, 1953

**President** Harry S. Truman  
Dwight Eisenhower

**Preceded by** William H. Jackson

**Succeeded by** Charles P. Cabell

### Deputy Director of Central Intelligence for Plans

#### In office

January 4, 1951 – August 23, 1951

**President** Harry S. Truman

**Preceded by** Position established

**Succeeded by** Frank Wisner

**See also**

**External links**

## Early life and family

Dulles was born on April 7, 1893, in Watertown, New York,<sup>[2]</sup> one of five children of Presbyterian minister Allen Macy Dulles, and his wife, Edith F. (Foster). He was five years younger than his brother John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower's Secretary of State and chairman and senior partner of Sullivan & Cromwell, and two years older than his sister, diplomat Eleanor Lansing Dulles. His maternal grandfather, John W. Foster, was Secretary of State under Benjamin Harrison, while his uncle by marriage, Robert Lansing was Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson.<sup>[3]</sup> Dulles was uncle to Avery Dulles, a Jesuit priest and cardinal of the Catholic Church, who taught theology at Fordham University from 1988 to 2008.

Personal details	
<b>Born</b>	<span>Allen Welsh Dulles</span> <div>April 7, 1893</div> Watertown, New York, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	<span>January 29, 1969</span> (aged 75) <div>Washington, D.C., U.S.</div>
<b>Resting place</b>	Green Mount Cemetery
<b>Political party</b>	Republican
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	<span>Clover Todd</span> <div>(m.. 1920; her death 1974)</div>
<b>Children</b>	3
<b>Education</b>	Princeton University (BA) <div>George Washington University (LLB)</div>

Dulles graduated from Princeton University, where he participated in the American Whig–Closophic Society,<sup>[4]</sup> and entered the diplomatic service in 1916. In 1920, he married Clover Todd (March 5, 1894 – April 15, 1974). They had three children; two daughters: Clover D. Jebsen, ("Toddy"), and Joan Buresch Dulles Molden, ("Joan Buresch"); and one son, Allen Macy Dulles Jr., who was wounded and permanently disabled in the Korean War and spent the rest of his life in and out of medical care.<sup>[5]</sup> According to his sister, Eleanor, Dulles had "at least a hundred" extramarital affairs, including some during his tenure with the CIA.<sup>[6]</sup>

In 1921, while at the US Embassy in Istanbul, he helped expose the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a forgery. Dulles unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the US State Department to publicly denounce the forgery.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

## Early career

Initially assigned to Vienna, he was transferred to Bern, Switzerland along with the rest of the embassy personnel shortly before the U.S. entered the First World War.<sup>[9]</sup> Later in life Dulles claimed to have been telephoned by Vladimir Lenin, seeking a meeting with the American embassy on April 8, 1917,<sup>[9]</sup> the day before Lenin left Switzerland to travel to Saint Petersburg aboard a German train. After recovering from the 1918 flu pandemic he was assigned to the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, along with his older brother Foster.<sup>[10]</sup> From 1922–6, he served five years as chief of the Near East division of the Department of State.

In 1926, he earned a law degree from George Washington University Law School and took a job at Sullivan & Cromwell, the New York firm where his brother, John Foster Dulles, was a partner. He became a director of the Council on Foreign Relations in 1927, the first new director since the Council's founding in 1921. He was the Council's secretary from 1933 to 1944.<sup>[11]</sup>

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, he served as legal adviser to the delegations on arms limitation at the League of Nations. There he had the opportunity to meet with Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov, and the leaders of Britain and France.<sup>[12]</sup> In 1935 Dulles returned

from a business trip to Germany appalled by the Nazi treatment of German Jews and, despite his brother's objections, led a movement within the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell to close their Berlin office.<sup>[13][14]</sup> As a result of Dulles' efforts, the Berlin office was closed and the firm ceased to conduct business in Nazi Germany.<sup>[15]</sup>

As the Republican Party began to divide into isolationist and interventionist factions, Dulles became an outspoken interventionist, running unsuccessfully in 1938 for the Republican nomination in New York's Sixteenth Congressional District on a platform calling for the strengthening of U.S. defenses.<sup>[15]</sup> Dulles collaborated with Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, on two books, *Can We Be Neutral?* (1936), and *Can America Stay Neutral?* (1939). They concluded that diplomatic, military, and economic isolation, in a traditional sense, were no longer possible in an increasingly interdependent international system.<sup>[16]</sup> Dulles helped a number of German Jews, such as the banker Paul Kemper, escape to the United States from Nazi Germany.<sup>[17]</sup>

## OSS posting to Bern, Switzerland in World War II

Dulles was recruited into the Office of Strategic Services by William J. Donovan in October 1941, after the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe, and on Nov. 12, 1942 he moved to Bern, Switzerland, where he lived at Herrengasse 23 for the duration of World War II.<sup>[18]</sup> As Swiss Director of the OSS,<sup>[2]</sup> Dulles worked on intelligence regarding German plans and activities, and established wide contacts with German émigrés, resistance figures, and anti-Nazi intelligence officers. He was assisted in intelligence-gathering activities by Gero von Schulze-Gaevernitz, a German emigrant. Dulles also received valuable information from Fritz Kolbe, a German diplomat, one whom he described as the best spy of the war. Kolbe supplied secret documents regarding active German spies and plans for the Messerschmitt Me 262 jet fighter.

Although Washington barred Dulles from making firm commitments to the plotters of the 20 July 1944 attempt to assassinate Hitler, the conspirators nonetheless gave him reports on developments in Germany, including sketchy but accurate warnings of plans for Hitler's V-1 and V-2 missiles.<sup>[19]</sup>

Dulles was involved in Operation Sunrise, secret negotiations in March 1945 to arrange a local surrender of German forces in northern Italy. After the war in Europe, Dulles served for six months as the OSS Berlin station chief and later as station chief in Bern. The Office of Strategic Services was dissolved in October 1945 and its functions transferred to the State and War Departments.

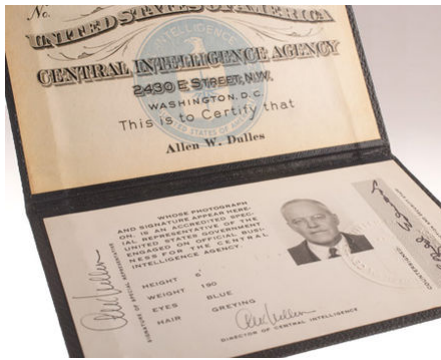
In 1947, Dulles served as a senior staffer on the Herter Committee.<sup>[20]</sup>

In the 1948 Presidential election, Dulles was, together with his brother, an advisor to Republican nominee Thomas E. Dewey. The Dulles brothers and James Forrestal helped form the Office of Policy Coordination. During 1949 he co-authored the Dulles–Jackson–Correa Report, which was sharply critical of the Central Intelligence Agency, which had been established by the National Security Act of 1947. Partly as a result of the report, Truman named a new Director of Central Intelligence, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith.

## CIA career

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DCI Smith recruited Dulles to oversee the agency's covert operations as Deputy Director for Plans, a position he held from January 4, 1951. On August 23, 1951, Dulles was promoted to Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, second in the intelligence hierarchy. In this capacity, in 1952–53 he was one of five members of the State Department Panel of Consultants on Disarmament during the last year of the



CIA ID Card of Allen Dulles

## Truman administration.<sup>[21]</sup>

After the election of Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, Bedell Smith shifted to the Department of State and Dulles became the first civilian Director of Central Intelligence. Dulles played a role in convincing Eisenhower to follow one of the conclusions of the State Department Panel report, that the American public deserved to be informed of the perils of possible nuclear war with the Soviet Union, because even though America held numerical nuclear superiority, the Soviets would still have enough nuclear weapons to severely damage American society regardless of how many more such bombs the United States might possess or how badly those U.S. weapons could destroy the Soviets.<sup>[21]</sup>

The Agency's covert operations were an important part of the Eisenhower administration's new Cold War national security policy known as the "New Look".

At Dulles' request, President Eisenhower demanded that Senator Joseph McCarthy discontinue issuing subpoenas against the CIA. In March 1950, McCarthy had initiated a series of investigations into potential communist subversion of the Agency. Although none of the investigations revealed any wrongdoing, the hearings were potentially damaging, not only to the CIA's reputation but also to the security of sensitive information. Documents made public in 2004 revealed that the CIA, under Dulles' orders, had broken into McCarthy's Senate office and fed disinformation to him in order to discredit him, in order to stop his investigation of communist infiltration of the CIA.<sup>[22]</sup>

In the early 1950s, the United States Air Force conducted a competition for a new photo reconnaissance aircraft. Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's Skunk Works submitted a design number called the CL-282, which married sailplane-like wings to the body of a supersonic interceptor. This aircraft was rejected by the Air Force, but several of the civilians on the review board took notice, and Edwin Land presented a proposal for the aircraft to Dulles. The aircraft became what is known as the U-2 'spy plane', and it was initially operated by CIA pilots. Its introduction into operational service in 1957 greatly enhanced the CIA's ability to monitor Soviet activity through overhead photo surveillance. The aircraft eventually entered service with the Air Force.<sup>[23]</sup> The Soviet Union shot down and captured a U-2 in 1960 during Dulles' term as CIA chief.<sup>[2]</sup>

Dulles is considered one of the essential creators of the modern United States intelligence system and was an indispensable guide to clandestine operations during the Cold War. He established intelligence networks worldwide to check and counter Soviet and eastern European communist advances as well as international communist movements.<sup>[24][17][25]</sup>

## Coup in Iran

In 1953, Dulles was involved, along with Frank Wisner,<sup>[26]</sup> in Operation Ajax, the covert operation that led to the removal of democratically elected prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh,<sup>[27]</sup> and his replacement with Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran. Rumors of a Soviet takeover of the country had surfaced due to the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. British diplomat Christopher Woodhouse had proposed the idea of a coup d'état to President Eisenhower to try to regain British control of the oil company.

## Coup in Guatemala

President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman of Guatemala was removed in 1954 in a CIA-led coup carried out under the code name Operation PBSuccess.<sup>[28]</sup>

Eduardo Galeano described Dulles as a former member of the United Fruit Company's Board of Directors.<sup>[29]</sup> However, in a detailed examination of the connections between the United Fruit Company and the Eisenhower Administration, Immerman makes no mention of Dulles being part of the United Fruit Company's Board, although he does note that Sullivan & Cromwell had represented the company.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Bay of Pigs

Several failed assassination plots utilizing CIA-recruited operatives and anti-Castro Cubans directly against Castro undermined the CIA's credibility. The reputation of the agency and its director declined drastically after the Bay of Pigs Invasion fiasco. President Kennedy reportedly said he wanted to "splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it into the winds." However, following a "rigorous inquiry into the agency's affairs, methods, and problems ... [Kennedy] did not 'splinter' it after all and did not recommend Congressional supervision."<sup>[31]</sup>

## Dismissal

During the Kennedy Administration, Dulles faced increasing criticism.<sup>[2]</sup> In autumn 1961, following the Bay of Pigs incident and Algiers putsch against Charles de Gaulle, Dulles and his entourage, including Deputy Director for Plans Richard M. Bissell Jr. and Deputy Director Charles Cabell, were forced to resign. On November 28, 1961, Kennedy presented Dulles with the National Security Medal at the CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia.<sup>[32]</sup> The next day, November 29, the White House released a resignation letter signed by Dulles.<sup>[33]</sup>



Kennedy presents the National Security Medal to Dulles, November 28, 1961.

## Later life

On November 29, 1963, President Lyndon Baines Johnson appointed Dulles as one of seven commissioners of the Warren Commission to investigate the assassination of the U.S. President John F. Kennedy. The appointment was later criticized by some historians, who have noted that Kennedy had fired him, and he was therefore unlikely to be impartial in passing the judgments charged to the Warren Commission. In the view of journalist and author Stephen Kinzer, Johnson appointed Dulles primarily so that Dulles could "coach" the Commission on how to interview CIA witnesses and what questions to ask, because Johnson and Dulles were both anxious to ensure that the Commission did not discover Kennedy's secret involvement in the administration's illegal plans to assassinate Castro and other foreign leaders.<sup>[34]</sup>

In 1966, Princeton University's American Whig-Clisophic Society awarded Dulles the James Madison Award for Distinguished Public Service.<sup>[35]</sup>

Dulles published the book *The Craft of Intelligence* in 1963<sup>[36]</sup> and edited *Great True Spy Stories* in 1968.

He died on January 29, 1969, of influenza, complicated by pneumonia, at the age of 75, in Georgetown, D.C.<sup>[1][2]</sup> He was buried in Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>[37]</sup>

## Fictional portrayals

- *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973), a Soviet television miniseries in which Vyacheslav Salevich depicts Dulles' role in Operation Sunrise during World War II.
- *The Good Shepherd* (2006), a fictional film in which William Hurt portrays the fictional head of the CIA, Phillip Allen, who appears to be based on Dulles.
- *JFK* (1991), a film that depicts Jim Garrison, a New Orleans District Attorney, as suspecting Dulles as a participant in the cover-up surrounding Kennedy's assassination and attempts to subpoena him.
- *Nick and Jake* (2012), a fictional novel co-written by Tad Richards and Jonathan Richards and published by Arcade Publishing. Allen Dulles is depicted as plotting a coup to overthrow the government of France.<sup>[38]</sup>
- *Liberation* (1970–71), a multinational fictional film series that shows Dulles in a photograph torn apart by Joseph Stalin in *Film IV: The Battle of Berlin*.
- *The Honor of Spies* (2009) in the *Honor Bound series* and also the *Men At War series*, a fictional novel series written by W.E.B. Griffin and his son. Dulles is portrayed as part of the European Head of the OSS and the Swiss Agent in Charge respectively.
- *The Commission* (2003), a fictional film that depicts Dulles, played by Jack Betts, as a participant in the Warren Commission and investigator into the Kennedy assassination.
- *The Company* (2007), an American miniseries based on the novel *The Company: A Novel of the CIA* (2002) by American novelist Robert Littell.
- The *FX* cartoon comedy *Archer* mentions Dulles in a 2012 episode while discussing Operation Gladio,<sup>[39]</sup> as well as in a 2016 episode centered around Project MKUltra.
- *Bridge of Spies* (2015), a movie about the exchange of Rudolf Abel and Francis Gary Powers, depicts a conversation between James B. Donovan (portrayed by Tom Hanks) and Dulles (portrayed by Peter McRobbie).

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## Book reviews

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- *Can America Stay Neutral?* Co-authored with Hamilton Fish Armstrong. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939. OCLC 256170 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/256170>)
- *Germany's Underground*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947. LCCN 47-2566 (<https://lcn.loc.gov/47002566>)
- *The Marshall Plan*. Co-authored by Michael Wala. Providence, RI: Berg, 1993. ISBN 978-0854963508
- *From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942–1945*. Co-authored with Neal H. Peterson. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. ISBN 0271014857
- *The Secret Surrender: The Classic Insider's Account of the Secret Plot to Surrender Northern Italy During WWII*. Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press, 2004. ISBN 1592283683
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## See also

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- [John Foster Dulles](#)

## External links

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- [Allen Dulles \(https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/305/allen-welsh-dulles\)](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/305/allen-welsh-dulles) at Find a Grave
- [Allen Dulles \(https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL2725398A/Allen\\_Dulles\)](https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL2725398A/Allen_Dulles) at Open Library

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## Works available online

- [Works by Allen Dulles \(https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Allen+Dulles%22\)](https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Allen+Dulles%22) at [Internet Archive](#)
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## Archival materials

- [References to Allen Dulles \(https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/advanced-search-view?keyword=Allen+Dulles&label=&sm\\_field\\_document\\_number=&sm\\_field\\_original\\_classification=&ds\\_field\\_publication\\_date\\_op=%3D&ds\\_field\\_publication\\_date%5Bvalue%5D=&ds\\_field\\_publication\\_date%5Bmin%5D=&ds\\_field\\_publication\\_date%5Bmax%5D=&sm\\_field\\_content\\_type=&sm\\_field\\_case\\_number=\)](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/advanced-search-view?keyword=Allen+Dulles&label=&sm_field_document_number=&sm_field_original_classification=&ds_field_publication_date_op=%3D&ds_field_publication_date%5Bvalue%5D=&ds_field_publication_date%5Bmin%5D=&ds_field_publication_date%5Bmax%5D=&sm_field_content_type=&sm_field_case_number=) at [Central Intelligence Agency](#)
- [Personal papers \(http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/736664491\)](http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/736664491) at the [Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library](#) at [Princeton University](#)
- [FBI file on Allen Dulles](#)
- [“The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making” \(https://web.archive.org/web/20060218172640/http://www.blackopradio.com/black252b.ram\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20060218172640/http://www.blackopradio.com/black252b.ram) (RAM). Audio recording of a lecture given by Dulles.

Government offices		
<b>New office</b>	<b><u>Deputy Director of Central Intelligence for Plans</u></b> 1951	Succeeded by <b><u>Frank Wisner</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>William H. Jackson</u></b>	<b><u>Deputy Director of Central Intelligence</u></b> 1951–1953	Succeeded by <b><u>Charles P. Cabell</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Walter B. Smith</u></b>	<b><u>Director of Central Intelligence</u></b> 1953–1961	Succeeded by <b><u>John McCone</u></b>

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