



George F. Kennan: An American Life

By John Lewis Gaddis

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Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Biography

Widely and enthusiastically acclaimed, this is the authorized, definitive biography of one of the most fascinating but troubled figures of the twentieth century by the nation's leading Cold War historian. In the late 1940s, George F. Kennan—then a bright but, relatively obscure American diplomat—wrote the "long telegram" and the "X" article. These two documents laid out United States' strategy for "containing" the Soviet Union—a strategy which Kennan himself questioned in later years. Based on exclusive access to Kennan and his archives, this landmark history illuminates a life that both mirrored and shaped the century it spanned.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Magisterial . . . [Kennan] bids fair to be as close to the final word as possible on one of the most important, complex, moving, challenging, and exasperating American public servants . . . We can be grateful to John Lewis Gaddis for bringing Kennan back to us, thoughtful, human, self-centered, contradictory, inspirational--a permanent spur as consciences are wont to be. Masterfully researched, exhaustively documented, Gaddis' moving work gives us a figure with whom, however one might differ on details, it was a privilege to be a contemporary." --Henry A. Kissinger, *New York Times Book Review*

"[A] first-rate biography . . . Kennan's life maps right onto twentieth-century political history, and no one is better qualified than Gaddis to lead the way through it . . . Gaddis has written with care and elegance, and he has produced a biography whose fineness is worthy of its subject." --*New Yorker*

"Mr. Gaddis has mastered the sources that came his way over the decades. The resulting biography is engaging and lucid." --*Economist*

"George Kennan was, in his accomplishments, a man touched with greatness, but in his character, a conflicted and flawed one. The recognition of this paradox by John Lewis Gaddis lends depth and pathos to this admirably judicious and illuminating biography." --*American Prospect*

"No one is better suited than Gaddis to write this authorized biography of George F. Kennan . . . In addition to the intimacies of the work, Gaddis offers critical analyses of Kennan's key roles as diplomat, policy maker, and scholar of Russian history. Unsurpassed in his strategic vision during the cold war, Kennan is credited with being responsible for much of America's eventual victory, and therein lies the impetus behind this remarkable biography. Adroitly managed, Gaddis's work is a major contribution to Kennan's legacy and the history of American foreign policy." --*Publishers Weekly*

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About the Author

John Lewis Gaddis is the Robert A. Lovett Professor of History at Yale University. His previous books include *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*; *Strategies of Containment*; *The Long Peace*; *We Now Know*; *The Landscape of History*; *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*; and *The Cold War: A New History*. Professor Gaddis teaches courses on Cold War history, grand strategy, international studies,

and biography; has won two Yale undergraduate teaching awards; was a 2005 recipient of the National Humanities Medal; and is the winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Biography for *George F. Kennan*.

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