



Madeleine Albright

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Madeleine Jana Korbel Albright^[1] (born **Marie Jana Korbelová**; May 15, 1937)^{[2][3]} is an American politician and diplomat. She is the first woman to have become the United States Secretary of State. She was nominated by U.S. President Bill Clinton on December 5, 1996, and was unanimously confirmed by a U.S. Senate vote of 99–0. She was sworn in on January 23, 1997.

Albright currently serves as chair of Albright Stonebridge Group and as a professor of International Relations at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. She holds a PhD from Columbia University and numerous honorary degrees. In May 2012, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by U.S. President Barack Obama.^[4] Secretary Albright also serves as a director on the board of the Council on Foreign Relations.^[5]

Albright is fluent in English, French, Russian, and Czech; she speaks and reads Polish and Serbo-Croatian as well.^[6]

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Madeleine Albright



64th United States Secretary of State

In office

January 23, 1997 – January 20, 2001

President	Bill Clinton
Deputy	Strobe Talbott
Preceded by	Warren Christopher
Succeeded by	Colin Powell

20th United States Ambassador to the United Nations

In office

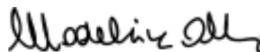
January 27, 1993 – January 21, 1997

President	Bill Clinton
Preceded by	Edward J. Perkins
Succeeded by	Bill Richardson

Personal details

Born	Marie Jana Korbelová May 15, 1937 Prague, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic)
Political party	Democratic

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Spouse(s)	Joseph Albright (1959–1982)
Children	Alice Anne Katherine
Alma mater	Wellesley College Johns Hopkins University Columbia University
Religion	Episcopalianism (Formerly Roman Catholicism)
Signature	

Personal

Early life

Marie Jana Korbelová was born in 1937 in the Smíchov district of Prague, Czechoslovakia^[7] to Czech diplomat Josef Korbel and Anna Spieglová.^[8] At the time of her birth, Czechoslovakia had been independent for fewer than 20 years, having gained independence from Austria-Hungary after World War I. Josef was a supporter of the early Czech democrats Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš.^[9] Madeleine grew up with a younger sister named Katherine (born October 1942)^[10] and a younger brother named John.^[11]

At the time of her birth, Josef was serving as press-attaché at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Belgrade. However, the signing of the Munich Agreement in September 1938 and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia at the hands of Adolf Hitler forced the family into exile because of their links with Beneš.^[12] In 1941, Josef and Anna had converted from Judaism to Catholicism.^[8] In an interview in January, 1997, Madeleine Albright, who was raised in Roman Catholicism and now is an Episcopalian, said her father and mother never talked to her or her two siblings about their Jewish background.^[13]

Life in the United Kingdom

Albright spent the war years in Britain, while her father worked for Beneš's Czechoslovak government-in-exile. They first lived on Kensington Park Road in Notting Hill, London, where they endured the worst of the Blitz, but later moved to Beaconsfield, then Walton-on-Thames, on the outskirts of London.^[14] She lived in Walton-on-Thames throughout the Second World War, and later reminisced about the constant presence of a large metal table in the house, to protect the family from the recurring threat of Nazi bomb attacks.^[15]

While in England, a young Albright appeared as a refugee child in a film designed to promote sympathy for all war refugees in London.^[16]

Albright was raised Catholic, but converted to Episcopalianism at the time of her marriage in 1959. She did not learn until adulthood that her parents were originally Jewish and that many of her Jewish relatives in Czechoslovakia had perished in the Holocaust, including three of her grandparents.^{[17][18]}

Return to Czechoslovakia

After the defeat of the Nazis in the European Theatre of World War II and the collapse of Nazi Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Albright and family moved back to Prague, where they were given a luxurious apartment in the Hradčany district (which later caused controversy, as it had belonged to an ethnic German Bohemian industrialist family forced out by the Beneš decrees – see "Controversies"). Korbel was named Czechoslovakian Ambassador to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the family moved to

Belgrade. Communists governed Yugoslavia, and Korbel was concerned his daughter would be indoctrinated with Marxist ideology in a Yugoslav school, so she was taught by a governess and later sent to the Prealpina Institut pour Jeunes Filles in Chexbres, on Lake Geneva in Switzerland.^[19] She learned to speak French while in Switzerland and changed her name from "Marie Jana" to "Madeleine".^[20]

However, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia took over the government in 1948, with support from the Soviet Union, and as an opponent of communism, Korbel was forced to resign from his position.^[21] He later obtained a position on a United Nations delegation to Kashmir, and sent his family to the United States, by way of London, to wait for him when he arrived to deliver his report to the U.N. Headquarters, then in Lake Success, New York.^[21]

Life in the United States

The family emigrated from the United Kingdom on the SS America, departing Southampton on November 5, 1948 and arriving at Ellis Island, New York on November 11, 1948.^{[22][23]} The family initially settled in Great Neck on Long Island.^[24] Korbel applied for political asylum, arguing that as an opponent of communism, he was now under threat in Prague.^[25] With the help of Philip Mosely, a professor of Russian at Columbia University in New York City, Korbel obtained a position on the staff of the political science department at the University of Denver in Colorado.^[26] He became dean of the university's school of international relations – renamed the Josef Korbel School of International Studies in 2008 – and later taught future U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.^[9]

Albright spent her teen years in Denver, and in 1955 graduated from the Kent Denver School in Cherry Hills Village, a suburb of Denver, where she founded the school's international relations club and was its first president.^[27] She attended Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, on a full scholarship, majoring in political science, and graduated in 1959.^[28] Her senior thesis was written on former Czechoslovakian Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger.^[29] She became a U.S. citizen in 1957, and joined the College Democrats of America.^[30]

While home in Denver from Wellesley, Albright worked as an intern for *The Denver Post*, where she met Joseph Medill Patterson Albright, the nephew of Alicia Patterson, owner of *Newsday* and wife of philanthropist Harry Frank Guggenheim.^[31] The couple were married in Wellesley in 1959, shortly after her graduation.^[28] They lived first in Rolla, Missouri, while he served his military service at nearby Fort Leonard Wood. During this time, she worked at *The Rolla Daily News*.^[32]

In January 1960, the couple moved to his hometown of Chicago, Illinois, where he worked at the *Chicago Sun-Times* as a journalist, and Albright worked as a picture editor for *Encyclopædia Britannica*.^[33] The following year, Joseph Albright began work at *Newsday* in New York City, and the couple moved to Garden City on Long Island.^[34] That year, she gave birth to twin daughters, Alice Patterson Albright and Anne Korbel Albright. The twins were born six weeks premature and required a long hospital stay, so as a distraction, Albright began Russian classes at Hofstra University in Village of Hempstead, New York.^[34]

In 1962, the family moved to Georgetown, and Albright began studying international relations and continued studying Russian at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, a division of Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C..^[35] However, in 1963 Alicia Patterson died, and the family returned to Long Island with the notion of Joseph taking over the family business.^[36] Albright gave birth to another daughter, Katherine Medill Albright, in 1967, and continued her studies at Columbia University's Department of Public

Law and Government^[37] (later renamed as the political science department, which is located within the School of International and Public Affairs). She earned a certificate in Russian, a Master of Arts and a PhD, writing her Master's thesis on the Soviet diplomatic corps and her doctoral dissertation on the role of journalists in the Prague Spring of 1968.^[38] She also took a graduate course given by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who would later be her boss at the U.S. National Security Council.^[39]

Career

Early career

Albright returned to Washington, D.C. in 1968, and commuted to Columbia for her PhD degree, which she received in 1975.^[40] She began fund-raising for her daughters' school, involvement which led to several positions on education boards.^[41] She was eventually invited to organize a fund-raising dinner for the 1972 presidential campaign of U.S. Senator Ed Muskie of Maine.^[42] This association with Muskie led to a position as his chief legislative assistant in 1976.^[43] However, after the 1976 U.S. presidential election of Jimmy Carter, Albright's former professor Brzezinski was named National Security Advisor, and recruited Albright from Muskie in 1978 to work in the West Wing as the National Security Council's congressional liaison.^[43] Following Carter's loss in 1980 to Ronald Reagan, Albright moved on to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where she was given a grant for a research project.^[44] She chose to write on the dissident journalists involved in Poland's Solidarity movement, then in its infancy but gaining international attention.^[44] She traveled to Poland for her research, interviewing dissidents in Gdańsk, Warsaw and Kraków.^[45] Upon her return to Washington, her husband announced his intention to divorce her for another woman.^[46]

Albright joined the academic staff at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in 1982, specializing in Eastern European studies.^[47] She also directed the university's program on women in global politics.^[48] She served as a major Democratic Party foreign policy advisor, briefing Vice-Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 and Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis in 1988 (both campaigns ended in defeat).^[49] In 1992, Bill Clinton returned the White House to the Democratic Party, and Albright was employed to handle the transition to a new administration at the National Security Council.^[50] In January 1993, Clinton nominated her to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, her first diplomatic posting.^[51]

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

Albright was appointed Ambassador to the United Nations shortly after Clinton was inaugurated, presenting her credentials on February 9, 1993. During her tenure at the U.N., she had a rocky relationship with the U.N. Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whom she criticized as "disengaged" and "neglect[ful]" of genocide in Rwanda.^[52] Albright wrote:

My deepest regret from my years in public service is the failure of the United States and the international community to act sooner to halt these crimes.^[53]

In *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Roméo Dallaire claims that in 1994, in Albright's role as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N., she avoided describing the killings in Rwanda as "genocide" until overwhelmed by the evidence for it;^[54] this is now how she describes these massacres in her memoirs.^{[52][55]} She was instructed

to support a reduction or withdrawal (something which never happened) of the U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda but was later given more flexibility.^[55] Albright later remarked in PBS documentary *Ghosts of Rwanda* that

it was a very, very difficult time, and the situation was unclear. You know, in retrospect, it all looks very clear. But when you were [there] at the time, it was unclear about what was happening in Rwanda."^[56]

Also in 1996, after Cuban military pilots shot down two small civilian aircraft flown by the Cuban-American exile group Brothers to the Rescue over international waters, she announced, "This is not *cojones*. This is cowardice."^[57] The line endeared her to President Clinton, who said it was "probably the most effective one-liner in the whole administration's foreign policy."^[58]

Secretary of State

When Albright took office as the 64th U.S. Secretary of State on January 23, 1997, she became the first female U.S. Secretary of State and the highest-ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government at the time of her appointment.^[59] Not being a natural-born citizen of the U.S., she was not eligible as a U.S. Presidential successor and was excluded from nuclear contingency plans. In her position as Secretary of State, Albright reinforced the United States' alliances; advocated democracy and human rights; and promoted U.S. trade and business, labor, and environmental standards abroad.

During her tenure, Albright considerably influenced American policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Middle East. According to Albright's memoirs, she once argued with Colin Powell for the use of military force by asking, "What's the point of you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?"^[60]

As Secretary of State she represented the U.S. at the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997. She boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the Chinese-appointed Hong Kong Legislative Council, which replaced the elected one, along with the British contingents.^[61]



Albright with Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Yasser Arafat at the Wye River Memorandum, 1998

According to several accounts, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Prudence Bushnell repeatedly asked Washington for additional security at the embassy in Nairobi, including in an April 1998 letter directly to Albright. Bushnell was ignored.^[62] She later stated that when she spoke to Albright about the letter, she told her that it had not been shown to her.^[63] In *Against All Enemies*, Richard Clarke writes about an exchange with Albright several months after the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed in August 1998. "What do you think will happen if you lose another embassy?" Clarke asked. "The Republicans in Congress will go after you." "First of all, I didn't lose these two embassies," Albright shot back. "I inherited them in the shape they were."^[64]

In 1998, at the NATO summit, Albright articulated what would become known as the "three Ds" of NATO, "which is no diminution of NATO, no discrimination and no duplication – because I think that we don't need any of those three "Ds" to happen."^[65]

Also in 1998, both Bill Clinton and Albright insisted that an attack on Saddam Hussein could be stopped only if Hussein reversed his decision to halt arms inspections. "Iraq has a simple choice. Reverse course or face the consequences," Albright said.^[66]

In 2000, Albright became one of the highest level Western diplomats ever to meet Kim Jong-il, the then-leader of communist North Korea, during an official state visit to that country.^[67]

In one of her last acts as Secretary of State, Albright on January 8, 2001, paid a farewell call on Kofi Annan and said that the U.S. would continue to press Iraq to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction as a condition of lifting economic sanctions, even after the end of the Clinton administration on January 20, 2001.^[68]

In 2001, Albright received the U.S. Senator H. John Heinz III Award for Greatest Public Service by an Elected or Appointed Official, an award given out annually by the Jefferson Awards Foundation.^[69]

Post-2001 career

Following Albright's term as Secretary of State, many speculated that she might pursue a career in Czech politics. Czech President Václav Havel talked openly about the possibility of Albright succeeding him after he retired in 2002. Albright was reportedly flattered by suggestions that she should run for office, but denied ever seriously considering it.^[70] She was the second recipient of the Hanno R. Ellenbogen Citizenship Award presented by the Prague Society for International Cooperation.

In 2001, Albright was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.^[71] The same year, she founded the Albright Group, an international strategy consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., which is now Albright Stonebridge Group.^[72] Affiliated with the firm is Albright Capital Management, which was founded in 2005 to engage in private fund management related to emerging markets.^[73]

Albright serves on the Council on Foreign Relations Board of directors and on the International Advisory Committee of the Brookings Doha Center.^[74] She is also currently the Mortara Distinguished Professor of Diplomacy at the Georgetown University Walsh School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C.

In 2003, she accepted a position on the Board of Directors of the New York Stock Exchange. In 2005, Albright declined to run for re-election to the board in the aftermath of the Richard Grasso compensation scandal, in which Grasso, the chairman of the NYSE Board of Directors, had been granted \$187.5 million in compensation, with little governance by the board on which Albright sat. During the tenure of the interim chairman, John S. Reed, Albright served as chairwoman of the NYSE board's nominating and governance committee. Shortly after the appointment of the NYSE board's permanent chairman in 2005, Albright submitted her resignation.^[75]

On October 25, 2005, Albright guest starred on the television drama *Gilmore Girls* as herself.^[76]

On January 5, 2006, she participated in a meeting at the White House of former Secretaries of Defense and



With NATO officers during NATO Ceremony of Accession of New Members, 1999



Madeleine Albright at World Economic Forum

State to discuss U.S. foreign policy with George W. Bush administration officials. On May 5, 2006, she was again invited to the White House to meet with former Secretaries and Bush administration officials to discuss Iraq.

Albright serves as chairperson of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and as president of the Truman Scholarship Foundation (<http://www.truman.gov/>). She is also the co-chair of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (<http://www.undp.org/legalempowerment>) and was the chairwoman of the Council of Women World Leaders *Women's Ministerial Initiative* up until November 16, 2007, succeeded by Margot Wallström.

In an interview given to *Newsweek International* published July 24, 2006, Albright gave her opinion on current U.S. foreign policy. Albright said: "I hope I'm wrong, but I'm afraid that Iraq is going to turn out to be the greatest disaster in American foreign policy – worse than Vietnam."^[77]

In September 2006, she received the Menschen in Europa Award, with Václav Havel, for furthering the cause of international understanding.^[78]

Albright has mentioned her physical fitness and exercise regimen in several interviews. She has said she is capable of leg pressing 400 pounds.^{[79][80]} Albright was listed as one of the fifty best-dressed over 50s by the *Guardian* in March 2013.^[81]

At the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on November 13, 2007, Albright declared that she with William Cohen would co-chair a new "Genocide Prevention Task Force"^[82] created by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the American Academy of Diplomacy, and the United States Institute for Peace. Their appointment was criticized by Harut Sassounian^[83] and the Armenian National Committee of America, as both Albright and Cohen had spoken against a Congressional resolution on the Armenian genocide.^[84]

Albright endorsed and supported Hillary Clinton in her 2008 presidential campaign. Albright has been a close friend of Clinton and serves as her top informal advisor on foreign policy matters. On December 1, 2008, then-President-elect Barack Obama nominated then-Senator Clinton for Albright's former post of Secretary of State.

In September 2009, Albright opened an exhibition of her personal jewelry collection at the Museum of Art and Design in New York City, which ran until January 2010. The collection highlighted the many pins she wore while serving at the United Nations and State Department, including the famous pin showing a snake and apple she wore after the Iraqi press called her "an unparalleled serpent", and several jeweled insect bugs she wore to meet the Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov after it was discovered the Russian secret service had attempted to bug the State Department.^[85] In 2009 Albright also published the book *Read My Pins: Stories from a Diplomat's Jewel Box* about her pins.

In August 2012, when speaking at an Obama campaign event in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, Albright was asked the question "How long will you blame that previous administration for all of your problems?", to which she replied "Forever".^{[86][87]}



Albright speaks during the third night of the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry greets Albright, February 6, 2013

Albright serves as chairwoman of the Albright Stonebridge Group^[88] and the advisory council for The Hague Institute for Global Justice, which was founded in 2011 in The Hague.^[89] She also serves as an Honorary Chair for the World Justice Project.^[90] The World Justice Project works to lead a global, multidisciplinary effort to strengthen the Rule of Law for the development of communities of opportunity and equity.^[91]

Investments

Madeleine Albright is a co-investor with Jacob Rothschild, 4th Baron Rothschild and George Soros, in a \$350 million investment vehicle called Helios Towers Africa, which intends to buy or build thousands of mobile phone towers in Africa.^{[92][93]}

Controversies

Sanctions against Iraq

On May 12, 1996, Albright defended UN sanctions against Iraq on a *60 Minutes* segment in which Lesley Stahl asked her "We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?" and Albright replied "we think the price is worth it."^[94] Albright later criticized Stahl's segment as "amount[ing] to Iraqi propaganda"; said that her question was a loaded question;^{[95][96]} wrote "I had fallen into a trap and said something I did not mean";^[97] and regretted coming "across as cold-blooded and cruel".^[94] Sanctions critics took Albright's failure to reframe the question as confirmation of the statistic.^{[97][98][99]} The segment won an Emmy Award.^{[100][101]}

Art ownership controversy

Following the *Washington Post's* profile of Albright by Michael Dobbs, an Austrian man, Philipp Harmer, launched legal action against Albright, claiming her father, Josef Korbel, had illegally taken possession of artwork which belonged to his great-grandfather, Karl Nebrich.^[102] Nebrich, a German-speaking Prague industrialist, was forced to abandon some of his possessions when ethnic Germans were expelled from the country after World War II under the Beneš decrees. His apartment, at 11 Hradčanská Street in Prague, was subsequently given to Korbel and his family, which they occupied before also being forced to flee to America. Harmer felt Korbel stole his great-grandfather's artwork, which was left in the apartment. The matter was handled by Albright's brother, John Korbel.^[102]

Allegations of hate speech against Serbs

In late October 2012, during a book signing in the Prague bookstore *Palác Knih Luxor*, Albright was visited by a group of activists from the Czech organization "Přátelé Srbů na Kosovu". She was filmed saying "Disgusting Serbs, get out!" to the Czech group, which had brought war photos to the signing, some of which showed Serbian victims of the Kosovo War in 1999. The protesters were expelled from the event when police arrived. Two videos of the incident were later posted by the group on their YouTube channel.^{[103][104]} Filmmaker Emir Kusturica expressed thanks to Czech director Václav Dvořák for organizing and participating in the demonstration. Together with other protesters, Dvořák also reported Albright to the police, stating that she was spreading ethnic hatred and disrespect to the victims of the war.^{[105][106]}

Albright's involvement in the NATO bombing of Serbia was the main cause of the demonstration – a sensitive topic which became even more controversial when it was revealed that her investment firm, Albright Capital

Management, was preparing to bid in the proposed privatization of Kosovo's state-owned telecom and postal company, Post and Telecom of Kosovo. In an article published by the New York-based magazine *Bloomberg Businessweek*, it was estimated that the deal could be as large as €600 million. Serbia opposed the sale, and intended to file a lawsuit to block it, alleging that the rights of former Serbian employees were not respected.^[107]

Clinton campaign comment

Albright supported Hillary Clinton during her 2016 presidential campaign. Appearing at a campaign event on February 6, 2016, she said, "There's a special place in hell for women who don't help each other." The remark was seen as shaming of women who were not supporting Clinton's campaign.^[108]

Honorary degrees

Albright holds honorary degrees from Brandeis University (1996), the University of Washington (2002), Smith College (2003), Washington University in St. Louis (2003),^[109] University of Winnipeg (2005), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2007),^[110] Knox College (2008),^[111] and Tufts University (2015).^[112]

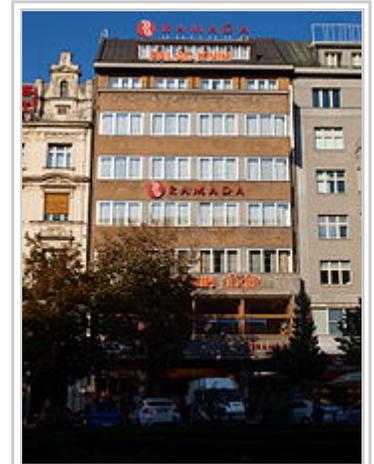
Books

- *Madam Secretary* (2003) – Albright's memoir, published after her retirement
- *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (2006)
- *Memo to the President Elect: How We Can Restore America's Reputation and Leadership* (2008)
- *Read My Pins* (2009)^[113]
- *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948* (2012);^[114] Reviewed by Paul Wilson in *The New York Review of Books*, 7 June 2012, pages 35–37.

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- 2007 commencement speech, Wellesley College (<http://www.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/Commencement/2007/MAlbright.html>)
- HarperCollins profile (http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/30642/Madeleine_Albright/index.aspx?WT.mc_id=WMadeleineAlbright) (her publisher)
- Audio recording (<http://chiasmus.uchicago.edu/events/albright.shtml>) of Albright's talk, "The Mighty and the Almighty," as part of the University of Chicago World Beyond the Headlines (<http://internationalstudies.uchicago.edu/wbh.shtml>) series.
- Madeleine Albright (<http://www.makers.com/madeleine-albright>) Video produced by *Makers: Women Who Make America*



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