



Clark Clifford: The Wise Man of Washington

John Acacia

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One of the most renowned Washington insiders of the twentieth century, Clark Clifford (1906–1998) was a top advisor to four Democratic presidents. As a powerful corporate attorney, he advised Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Jimmy Carter. As special counsel to Truman, Clifford helped to articulate the Truman Doctrine, grant recognition to Israel, create the Marshall Plan, and build the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). After winning the 1960 Democratic presidential nomination, Kennedy asked Clifford to analyze the problems he would face in taking over the executive branch and later appointed him chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. Johnson named Clifford secretary of defense in 1968, but their warm relationship was strained when Clifford concluded that there was no plan for victory in the Vietnam War and that the United States was in a "bottomless pit." Even Carter, who kept his distance from Washington insiders, turned to Clifford for help. In *Clark Clifford: The Wise Man of Washington*, John Acacia chronicles Clifford's rise from midwestern lawyer to Washington power broker and presidential confidant. He covers the breadth and span of Clifford's involvement in numerous pivotal moments of American history, providing a window to the inner workings of the executive office. Drawing from a wealth of sources, the author reveals Clifford's role as one of the most trusted advisors in American history and as a primary architect of cold war foreign policy.

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