

John Kerry

On February 1, 2013, John Forbes Kerry was sworn in as the 68th Secretary of State of the United States, becoming the first sitting Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman to serve as Secretary in over a century. Kerry drew from this experience to provide the State Department with global stewardship on issues ranging from nuclear nonproliferation to radical extremists, to humanitarian challenges and the rising threat of climate change.

In 2013, Kerry became the first Secretary of State to meet with Iran's Foreign Minister since the Iranian revolution of 1979. This meeting was the highest-level U.S. diplomatic contact with Iran in more than six years, and a key moment on the journey towards the eventual signing of the landmark 2015 agreement to prevent Iran from attaining a nuclear weapon.

Faced with the rising threat of global climate change, Kerry was also a key architect of the Paris Climate Accord, signing the historic agreement to reduce carbon emissions in 2016.

Kerry drew upon a lifetime of public service during his tenure as Secretary.

Shortly before he graduated from Yale University, Kerry volunteered for service in the United States Navy. He completed two tours of duty in Vietnam, including serving as a Swift Boat skipper patrolling the rivers of the Mekong Delta. Lt. Kerry returned home from service in Vietnam with a Silver Star, a Bronze Star with Combat V, and three Purple Hearts.

Back in the United States, Kerry felt compelled to speak out against the war in which he had served. Testifying at the invitation of Chairman J. William Fulbright before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he would chair 38 years later, he asked the poignant question, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" He also began a lifelong fight for his fellow veterans as a co-founder of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and later as a Senator who fought to secure veterans' benefits, extension of the G.I. Bill for Higher Education, and improved treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

After receiving his law degree from Boston College Law School in 1976, Kerry went to work as a top prosecutor in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, where he took on organized crime, fought for victims' rights, and created programs for rape counseling. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1982 and was elected to the United States Senate two years later.

In 2009, Kerry became Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, assuming a leadership role on key foreign policy and national security issues facing the United States, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, China, nuclear nonproliferation, and global climate change.

In addition to his 28 years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry also held senior positions on the Finance, Commerce, and Small Business committees. He served as a member of the bipartisan Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, where he worked across party lines to try and reduce the country's debt and strengthen our economy. Prior to his departure from the Senate, Kerry was the seventh-most senior Senator.

A best-selling author of *A Call to Service: My Vision for a Better America* and *This Moment on Earth*, Secretary Kerry announced in 2017 he will be writing a memoir, expected in 2018. He is currently a Distinguished Fellow for Global Affairs at Yale University as well as the inaugural Visiting Distinguished Statesman for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Kerry was the Democratic Party's nominee for President of the United States in 2004. He and his wife Teresa Heinz Kerry have two daughters, three sons, and six grandchildren.