

Robert B. Oakley

Ambassador Robert B. Oakley retired from the United States Foreign Service in September 1991, after 34 years of service. After retirement, he became associated with the United States Institute of Peace. He was named by both Presidents George H.W. Bush and Clinton as Special Envoy for Somalia, serving there from December 1992 until March 1993 and again from October 1993 until March 1994. In 1995, he joined the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University.

Robert Oakley joined the Foreign Service in 1957. He served in the U.S. embassies in Khartoum, Sudan; Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Saigon, Vietnam; Paris, France; Beirut, Lebanon; in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations; as Senior Director for Middle East and South Asia on the staff of the National Security Council and at the Department of State in the Office of United Nations Political Affairs and as Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs. In November 1979, he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Zaire and in August 1982, U.S. Ambassador to Somalia. In September 1984, Ambassador Oakley was appointed Director of the State Department Office of Combating Terrorism. He again joined the National Security Council Staff on January 1, 1987, as Assistant to the President for Middle East and South Asia. He was named as U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan in August 1988.

During his service with the State Department, Robert Oakley received the State Department Meritorious Honor Award, the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, and the State Department Distinguished Honor Award. For his service as Special Envoy to Somalia, he received a second State Department Distinguished Honor Award and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. In 1993 he received the Diplomatic Award for Excellence of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

Ambassador Oakley graduated from Princeton University in 1952 with a B.A. degree in Philosophy and History. He served as a U.S. Naval Intelligence Officer in Japan from 1953 until 1955. Married since 1958 to another Foreign Service officer, Phyllis Elliott Oakley, the Oakleys have two married children and five grandchildren.