

## **ABRAHAM D. SOFAER**

**George P. Shultz Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy and  
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Abraham Sofaer, who served as legal adviser to the US Department of State from 1985 to 1990, was appointed the first George P. Shultz Distinguished Scholar and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution in 1994.

Named in honor of former U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz, the appointment is awarded to a senior scholar of international prominence whose broad vision, knowledge, and skill can be brought to bear on the problems presented by a radically transformed global environment.

Sofaer's work has focused on separation of powers issues in the American system of government, including the power over war, and on issues related to international law, terrorism, diplomacy, national security, the Middle East conflict, and water resources. He teaches a course on transnational law at the Stanford Law School. During his distinguished career, Sofaer has been a prosecutor, legal educator, judge, government official, and attorney in private practice. His most recent book is *The Best Defense? Legitimacy and Preventive Force* (Hoover Institution Press, 2010).

In 1985, then-Secretary of State Shultz asked Sofaer to become legal adviser to the US Department of State, a position in which he served until 1990. He was principal negotiator in various interstate matters that were successfully resolved, including the dispute between Egypt and Israel over Taba, the claim against Iraq for its attack on the USS Stark, and the claims against Chile for the assassination of diplomat Orlando Letelier. He received the Distinguished Service Award in 1989, the highest state department award given to a non-civil servant.

In 1979, Sofaer was appointed US district judge in the Southern District of New York, where he served until 1985. He published numerous opinions and handled several high-profile cases, including the libel action against *Time* magazine by Israeli general Ariel Sharon.

From 1969 to 1979, Sofaer was a professor of law at Columbia University School of Law, during which time he wrote *War, Foreign Affairs, and Constitutional Power*, an authoritative historical account of the constitutional powers of Congress and the president to control or affect the use of force. As a New York state administrative judge in 1975-1976, he handled the first major environmental action involving PCBs, specifically their discharge by General Electric into the Hudson River.

From 1967 to 1969, he was assistant US attorney in the Southern District of New York.

He was a clerk to Judge J. Skelly Wright on the US Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, and to the Honorable William J. Brennan Jr., associate justice of the US Supreme Court from 1965 to 1967. After leaving the Department of State, Sofaer practiced law at Hughes, Hubbard and Reed in Washington, DC, from 1990 to 1994.

A veteran of the US Air Force, Sofaer received an LL.B. degree from New York University School of Law in 1965, where he was editor-in-chief of the law review and a Root-Tilden scholar. He holds a B.A. in history from Yeshiva College (1962). Sofaer was awarded the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, in 1980 by Yeshiva University.

Sofaer is a founding trustee of the National Museum of Jazz in Harlem, which received \$1 million seed funding from Congress in 2000. He is also a member of the boards of the Koret Foundation and the Koret Israel Economic Development Fund, among other organizations.