

The Embassy in Grosvenor Square

*American Ambassadors to the
United Kingdom, 1938–2008*

Alison R. Holmes and J. Simon Rofe



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Also by Alison R. Holmes

'Transatlantic Diplomacy and "Global" States', in Alan Dobson and Steve Marsh (eds.), *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012).

The Third Way: Globalisation's Legacy (Leicester: Troubador, 2009).

Also by J. Simon Rofe

International History and International Relations, with Andrew Williams and Amelia Hadfield (Oxford: Routledge, 2012).

'Lord Lothian's Ambassadorship to Washington August 1939–December 1940', in Michael Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John Young (eds.), *British Embassy in Washington between 1939 and 1977* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009).

Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission (New York: Palgrave, 2007).

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United Kingdom, 1938–2008

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*For my family who gave me a compass for the journey,
for Duncan who makes the journey an adventure – arh*

My family; and the joy of having one – jsr

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Preface

The volume explores the role played by the American Embassy in London, and the US Ambassador to the Court of St James's, not only in the bilateral Anglo-American relationship, but also in wider international relations over the seventy years that the Embassy has been in Grosvenor Square. The volume covers the period from 1938 through to 2008, effectively covering the lifespan of what has often been termed 'the special relationship' from its birth in the Second World War and into the aftermath of war through the challenges of the Cold War and its aftermath to the present day. The thematic issues of this period include not only debates about the 'specialness' of the relationship in the post-war context, but also the impact of the development and demise of the 'Cold War'; the ongoing impact of the European Project and EU integration, the influence of nuclear weapons and NATO, as well as wider economic, cultural, demographic and environmental forces that have shaped the transatlantic relationship. Within this broad context, the work seeks to address three overarching and interrelated questions: first, to assess the role the Embassy has played at crucial junctures in Anglo-American relations; secondly, to consider the opportunities that arise for a US Ambassador to influence events within the transatlantic relationship; and, thirdly, to establish whether any recurring features or principles can be identified which contribute to an enhanced understanding of long-standing debates over Anglo-American relations, US Foreign Policy and International Relations. In analysing each Ambassador since 1938 and the Embassy they headed, the work posits Transatlantic Diplomacy as a concept that extends beyond Anglo-American relations in explaining the evolution of diplomacy in international relations into the twenty-first century.

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A separate and particularly heartfelt appreciation goes to Ambassadors Price, Catto (both now sadly deceased), Seitz, Lader, Farish and Tuttle for taking so much of their time to share insight and wisdom as to how they perceived their respective experiences as Ambassador. More importantly, they, and all those serving the United States as the Presidents' personal representatives to the Court of St James's are owed a debt of gratitude. Without their efforts, and those of all the diplomats covered in these pages, *The Embassy in Grosvenor Square* would truly not be possible.

J. Simon Rofe would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported his efforts in producing this book; colleagues at the University of Leicester, SOAS – University of London, and elsewhere. Particular thanks should go to the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library, London who kindly made me a Fellow in 2011–12 and provided an oasis of calm to further the project; to the British Academy for providing me with a Small Research Grant in 2010–12; and to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, and especially the Joseph P. Kennedy Papers Donor Committee who acceded to my request and granted me access to the Ambassador's papers. Also I would like to thank the patient and helpful archivists at the Library of Congress, Churchill College Cambridge, the Franklin D. Roosevelt and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Libraries.

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Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States 1939–1977; and in doing so provided an inspiration for this book.

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Finally, we would like to thank all of the contributors to the volume. Their expert knowledge and high quality research, made the job of compiling and co-editing this volume as straightforward as it was enlightening. However, it remains the friendship at the core of the endeavour that made the task enjoyable (and survive-able), for which we are both very grateful indeed.

Note to the Cover

Front Cover: This image of the unveiling of the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial from Mary Evans/National magazines, first appeared in *The Queen Magazine*, 28th April 1948. Those attending include (r to l): Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother), Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Mrs Franklin D. Roosevelt, Viscount Greenwood, Queen Mary, Viscountess Greenwood, the Duchess of Kent, Prince Michael, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth. The statue is the work of Sir William Reid Dick.

Back Cover: This image, taken by photographer Cliff David at the unveiling of the Ronald Reagan statue on July 4 2011, is used with the kind permission of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation. Those attending include (r to l): Ambassador Louis B. Susman, The Rt Hon William Hague MP, The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Frederick Ryan, Jr, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, Ambassador Robert H. Tuttle, Congressman Kevin McCarthy and The Venerable Stephen Robbins CB QHC. The statue is the work of Chas Fagan.

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Introduction

Alison R. Holmes and J. Simon Rofe

The Importance of Place: Grosvenor Square in Transatlantic Diplomacy

Sometimes known as ‘Little America’ or even ‘Eisenhower-platz’, Grosvenor Square¹ in London has served as a hub between the United Kingdom and the United States since 1785 when John Adams was appointed the first American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St James’s.² Adams was not the first diplomat sent out from the new Republic as President Washington had sent ministers to France and Spain in 1779 and following Adams, ministers were sent to Portugal in 1791 and the Netherlands the following year. At this stage, they were deliberately not given higher titles because, as Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson explained to the Senate, they ‘carried the “lowest grades admissible” to keep costs to a minimum’.³ Throughout Adams’ frustrating three years, he and his family made their home at Number 9, ‘in the North East Angle of Grosvenor Square in the Parish of Saint George Hanover Square’ at the junction of Duke and Brook Street.⁴ It was described by his wife, Abigail, to her sister: ‘We are agreeably enough situated here in a fine open square, in the middle of which is a circle inclosed with a neat grated fence... in the middle... is a statue of George 2d. on horse back’ [*sic*].⁵ Their lodgings were not paid for by the government but, as with all diplomats of the day, from his own pocket. This was a cause of constant concern to Adams, and to many that would follow, but remained core to the idea of the ‘citizen diplomat’ for whom humble attire and a sober demeanour would be considered core to representing the new republic. By extension, this reasoning also supported the idea of political appointees as a ‘check’ on the aristocratic systems of Europe.

Abigail had confused the monarchs because it was King George I who rode, ‘gilted’ through the Square, but it was indeed ‘fine’⁶ as both the largest and last square set out in Mayfair.⁷ From the beginning, it was ‘inhabited chiefly by People of Distinction’.⁸ Unusually for London, the square’s location, as well as various innovations in its design, also meant the residents ranged

across the social scale. In the wake of the rebuilding of Buckingham Palace in the early 1800s,⁹ a period of development in the area helped pave the way for residents such as Minister Adams as well the French, Belgian, Italian and Japanese Embassies that all arrived shortly thereafter.¹⁰

In 1893, when the Senate confirmed President Grover Cleveland's nomination of Thomas E. Bayard to become the first American to hold the rank of Ambassador, London officially became the site of the first full American Embassy in the world.¹¹ Since then, the United States Chancery in Great Britain (often, but not always, combined with the Legation) has not strayed far from Grosvenor Square, including addresses at Great Cumberland Place, Piccadilly and Portland Place, the longest being a period of 29 years at 123 Victoria Street, all relatively nearby. However, in 1912 the Victoria Street location was declared by Ambassador Page to be a 'dark and dingy hall... between two cheap stores'.¹² He moved his residence from that 'cheap hole' back to No. 6 Grosvenor Square and a section to No. 4 Grosvenor Gardens shortly thereafter. The living conditions for ambassadors improved significantly nine years later when J. Pierpont Morgan donated his London home at 13–14 Prince's Gate as a permanent residence. Diplomats generally continued to pay for their own lodgings and to work in leased space, covering at least part of the cost by collecting consular fees. Cost control also explains why early Missions tended to be kept at the level of Legation. However, the change brought about in the diplomatic service by the Rogers Act 1924 included the building of bespoke premises around Europe for both offices and residences.¹³ Paris was part of the first round, but London did not begin to benefit until 1931 when the government furnished the Prince's Gate residence and began the search for a site on which to build a permanent embassy.¹⁴ They looked initially in Trafalgar Square, but when suitable premises could not be found at the right price, they again leased property, taking several floors of a new office building on the east side of Grosvenor Square, which they occupied until 1937.¹⁵

By 1938 – when we take up our story – the Embassy had moved across to No. 1 Grosvenor Square. Today, the building is the Canadian High Commission, but this was where Ambassador Winant, eschewing the Prince's Gate residence as he considered it 'a considerable distance away' opted for the 'practical advantages' of a small apartment effectively over the office: 'Flat No. 30, 3 Grosvenor Square'.¹⁶ Early in his term, Winant was granted complete authority to coordinate both civilian and military activity, effectively giving him a staff of 4,000 and making the proximity of home to office all the more important. It was also from this rooftop perch that he was able to watch the German night-time raids on the capital, when he was not walking the streets offering help to stricken Londoners.¹⁷ General Eisenhower, arriving in 1942, also opted for convenience and set up his initial offices as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces on the west side of the square, directly opposite the Embassy.¹⁸

After the war, the US government used the opportunity to undertake an extensive buy and/or build programme across Europe and used war debt credits to cover the cost. As Richard Arndt explains, ‘the conceptual rationale for the program was cultural; to showcase the architectural synthesis achieved by and for the American Century’ although he goes on to point out that ‘the phrase the “International Style” was rejected by the architects themselves, who were simply developing new forms to meet new needs with newly available materials. For them, it was the American style.’¹⁹

Despite a prohibition on land ownership in London, the US government was not prevented from leasing land and owning the buildings built on the property. The State Department therefore proceeded to purchase Nos. 1, 3 and 20 Grosvenor Square in 1947, paying the entire \$8,337,280 in credits, while at the same time signing a 99-year lease with the Duke of Westminster (a descendant of the original Thomas Grosvenor). They added No. 5 to their portfolio in 1948 with the plan to sell this at a later date and use the proceeds to buy a large enough site for a consolidated Embassy. This took place in 1950 when they bought the entire west side of the square for \$2,192,003. This was again paid entirely with credits – not including the annual fee of one peppercorn.²⁰

In terms of the Ambassador’s residence, Winfield House in Regent’s Park, formerly owned by the Woolworth’s heiress Barbara Hutton, was sold to the US government for the token price of one dollar a year after the war, but it had suffered significant damage.²¹ Its state of disrepair was considered so serious that it was slated for demolition, but in 1953 Nelson Kenworthy, the person in charge of the US government building programme, vetoed the plan to destroy the house and instead brought in Perry, Shaw & Hepburn for renovations.²² Ambassador Aldrich and his wife were the first to use Winfield House and took up residence in January 1955.²³ Prince’s Gate was sold the following year for the sum of \$138,198.²⁴ Over the years, Winfield House has benefited from the generosity of numerous ambassadors willing to use their own funds to continue the process of renovation, upgrading and updating that such a house requires, and to ensure it continues to be ‘America’s House’ in London.

With the residence well established, it was time to turn to the task of creating a permanent Embassy. According to Jane Loeffler, the period from 1954 through 1960 was the ‘heyday of the American foreign building program’ and created buildings that were ‘historically distinct’.²⁵ Despite ‘austerity’ being the watchword in the State Department at the time, they decided to create a competition for a new London Embassy.²⁶ This was the first of its kind and not repeated for another 40 years with the 1995 competition for the Embassy in Berlin (and London again in 2008).²⁷ Eero Saarinen, a Finnish-American modernist architect, had just won the commission for the Oslo Embassy in 1955 and was put on the list to compete for London.²⁸ It was a requirement of the competition that the architects visit the site which may

explain Saarinen's approach to the design. He believed that every building should have its 'own look' as well as be a 'good neighbor' which, according to the cover story on Saarinen by *Time* in 1956, 'brought down the wrath of modern purists, who favour glass and steel even if it clashes with every building in the area'. As the article points out, Saarinen tried to place the design in the context of the square by 'keeping the structure modern, but keying the floor levels and spacings of the front façade to the surrounding Georgian buildings'.²⁹

There were other critics of the modern approach, the most relevant being the Ambassador himself. Aldrich flew to Washington to address a special meeting of the Architectural Advisory Committee in August 1955 as they deliberated on the competition. He tried to convince them that the 'new London embassy should not only respect English architectural tradition', but more specifically, that its design should be 'in the nature of the late eighteenth-century architecture as designed by Nash'.³⁰ He also asserted that the Grosvenor estate would not accept a modern building on the site – despite the fact they already had accepted such buildings elsewhere. The committee's answer to Aldrich is found in the fact they invited *only* modernists to participate in the competition.³¹ Happily, Aldrich was later won over.³²

Ironically, Saarinen's winning design was not actually built, largely due to the decision to provide considerably more space. He revised the plans, but continued to alter them, even after the building was underway.³³ A prime example of this evolution is the striking gilded aluminium eagle that spreads 35 feet over the entrance. Not part of the original plan, or even the revised one, Saarinen asked Theodore Roszak to sculpt the piece and managed to get the change through the committee in 1957. This was done primarily by downplaying its significance to the overall look and using his position by that stage as the chair of the committee, to move it swiftly through.³⁴ The Embassy opened its doors for business in 1960.

American Mementoes

The statue of King George is long gone, though the square continues to provide a home to the landmarks of transatlantic milestones. On the north side stands a statue of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Organised by the Pilgrims Society³⁵ after his death in April 1945, the statue was paid for through subscription by over 160,000 British people within six days of the launch of the appeal (it took the US government 60 years after his death before the Roosevelt Memorial was opened on the Mall in Washington DC).³⁶ In the centre of the square stands a monument unveiled in 1986, sponsored by the Hearst Foundation, to commemorate the American Eagle Squadron formed in 1940 by American pilots who volunteered to join the British Air Force. Just outside the garden itself, steps away from his wartime office, stands a statue

of General Eisenhower unveiled in 1989 during the heyday of relations between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. One of only a few that exist of the General, the statue was the gift of the people of Kansas City, Missouri – hometown to both Eisenhower and Charlie Price, the Ambassador of the day.

More recently, the Square has been a focal point for more human transatlantic interaction with protests over issues such as Vietnam, cruise missiles and the war in Iraq. It was also the place people were naturally drawn to remember those who lost their lives in the attacks on 11 September 2001. An estimated 100,000 people from all over the world filed through the Square. Two years later to the day, a permanent memorial garden commemorating the 66 British victims (to date, still the largest number of British casualties from a single terror attack) was opened on the east side of the Square, designed to face the Embassy and paid for by the British government. Finally, on 4 July 2011 a statue of Ronald Reagan was added to the square and unveiled in the presence of the current Ambassador, Louis Susman, as well as former Ambassador (and former employee of Reagan) Robert Tuttle.

In October 2008, the US State Department announced that the US Embassy would depart from the Square with construction of a new Embassy building south of the Thames at Nine Elms in Wandsworth, set to begin in 2012 and to be America's new home from 2017.³⁷ It will mark over two centuries since the arrival of the first American Minister and the end of the link to Grosvenor Square.

The Embassy 'Hub'

In light of this long-standing history in Anglo-American relations it should be no surprise that the ambassadorial post to the Court of St James's is considered one of the most prestigious a President can propose, or that Grosvenor Square has been considered a vital conduit in the relationship between London and Washington.

Indeed, in the early years it was not unusual for the Ambassador to the Court of St James's to come from, or go on to, the highest US jobs. Five were President, nine were Secretary of State, and four were both.³⁸ Other posts held by former or future Ambassadors include: Attorney General and Secretaries of the Navy, War and Treasury. One Ambassador, Louis McLane, was Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury, as well as Minister to the United Kingdom – twice.³⁹ Cabinet posts have not been the recent pattern, though government service before and after an ambassadorial posting to London is more common than usually perceived.

Given the long-standing diplomatic relationship the full range of professional experience is reflected in the post-holders and in their influence on Anglo-American relations. Specifically, over the past 70 years 23 people have served as Ambassador: 22 men, one woman and no person of colour. Individual scenarios vary, but unlike three of their nominated predecessors, none in

this cohort have been rejected by the Senate – and certainly not shared the fate of Martin Van Buren who had the added embarrassment of already being in London when word of the rejection came through.⁴⁰ Similarly, none have had their passports returned by the British authorities: the ultimate expression of a host country's displeasure. Over the years, two have declined the appointment,⁴¹ one was recalled for disobeying direct orders⁴² and two more recent Ambassadors returned home under a cloud, though not for disobedience as such, but for general presidential displeasure: Joseph Kennedy in 1940 and John Louis, Jr in 1983. Two Ambassadors have had to deal with the fall-out of impeachment proceedings against their patron.⁴³

Overall, from the time of John Adams, the one thing all these emissaries have in common is the fact they have all been political appointees. In the American system, in accordance with Article II Section 2 of the Constitution the President has the power to 'nominate . . . by and with the advice and consent of the Senate . . . ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States' which includes the entire Cabinet. The Constitution does provide that 'Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper', but the essential point is that each Ambassador serves effectively at the President's pleasure.⁴⁴ This approach is rooted in the early days of the republic with ideas of 'public service' and desire to have the 'common man' represent the country abroad. However, it is also firmly connected to political patronage and the rewarding of loyalty of various kinds. For London, apart from one near miss in 1898 and a single exception, namely Raymond Seitz in 1991, every Ambassador to London has been non-career.⁴⁵ As the universal role of the ambassador has always been as the official and personal representative of the sovereign, there is an understandable debate as to the distinction between professional diplomats and those sent as a personal favour or purely on financial grounds as to their subsequent effectiveness. On the one hand, an ambassadorial post can be one of the 'baubles' an American President has at his disposal to reward supporters; on the other, their real world experience and detachment from the institution of the State Department often facilitates direct access to the Chief Executive.

Many of the authors in this volume start from the premise that career diplomats are 'better' than non-career or 'political appointees'. However, it is also clear that, as they explore the question of whether access to the President translates into influence or effectiveness, their political status becomes less important than whether they used their clout and credibility to good effect. As former Deputy Chief of Mission in London (now Ambassador) Glyn Davies explains:

The best political appointees are the best ambassadors we've got – for the really big embassies – they can be the best because you've got . . . the ear of the president . . . a stature you just can't achieve if you're essentially

a bureaucrat or a career diplomat. You can do more... You can achieve a higher point... the best political appointees, historically are the best ambassadors we've had.⁴⁶

London has long been one of, if not the largest embassy with all of the attending work that requires for both the Ambassador and their senior team. While it is true that the Ambassador is technically the head of the mission, many of those working in the Embassy do not report solely or even regularly to him, but to their own offices back in Washington. The 'silo' effect can be intense and management a challenge. To offer a level of magnitude, there are generally anywhere from 600 to 1,000 American and locally engaged staff, approximately 17 separate government agencies represented, 6,000 visas issued daily and the hosting of approximately 20,000 official visitors a year (not including the literally hundreds of thousands unofficial exchanges, groups, civic and private bodies that often request or require some form of advice or assistance from the Embassy) to be dealt with. These numbers also tend to leave out the 'unofficial' officials working for military and intelligence agencies.⁴⁷ As such, London acts as a crucial hub, not only between agencies or between the UK and the US, but also between the US and Europe and the rest of the world. As will be clear from the chapters that follow, the global aspects of UK-US relations are never far from the surface which, for the Embassy and the Ambassador, means that London is always closely involved in a much broader range of issues than the traditional idea of 'bilateral' relations might suggest.

Period Covered

A straightforward explanation for the focus of this book could be all of the sentimental reasons associated with the American presence in Grosvenor Square and its environs for well over two centuries. However, it is the period from 1938 to 2008 that the Embassy becomes a more permanent and imposing presence as the United States evolves into a strong ally and a fierce competitor to the United Kingdom. More importantly, this period also covers the lifespan of the much debated term 'the special relationship' from its 'birth' – although not its conception – in the Second World War and its aftermath, to the challenges of globalisation in the present day. The book not only highlights the ebb and flow of that *special* link, but also provides an account of the themes which underpin the special relationship and transcend individual ambassadorships.

The thematic issues of our 70-year period include not only the 'special relationship' in the post-war context given the conflicting explanations and contested nature of its evolution, but also the development and demise of the Cold War; the ongoing impact of the European Project; the military dimension including the influence of nuclear weapons; as well as wider

economic, demographic and environmental factors that have shaped the transatlantic relationship over this period.

While these issues have influenced substantial change in Anglo-American relations, by way of contrast this period has been a time of relative transatlantic stability – at least in terms of leadership. These Ambassadors have presented their credentials to only two sovereigns: King George VI and, from 1953, Queen Elizabeth II. The political leadership of the period has been similarly stable with only 15 Prime Ministers and 13 Presidents since the Second World War. Leaving Franklin Roosevelt's four election victories to one side, four of the 13 Presidents served two full terms and two served nearly two.⁴⁸ Given that only 20 per cent of all American Presidents have been re-elected, it is clearly relevant that half have in recent times. In fact, the only other concentration of single-party, single-handed leadership takes us back to George Washington's appointment of John Adams when five of the first seven Presidents were two-termers. One century and two world wars later and we are back to Franklin D. Roosevelt – a three-full-term President and the man generally considered to mark out the beginning of what is often considered to be the 'modern presidency' – and the dawn of the so-called 'special relationship'.⁴⁹

The Framework

The time frame under scrutiny has been divided into six parts delineated by significant shifts in global affairs as reflected in UK–US relations. Each part covers individual ambassadors in chronological order, though we are conscious that strict chronological narratives often become a trawl from ambassador to ambassador which tends to lead to a 'flattening' of historical perspective. To counter this, we have used the introduction to each section to provide brief thematic digests for each period, while adding structure in terms of the issues that link the ambassadorships within and between sections in order to enhance the analytical coherence of the whole. They are as follows:

- Part I: The Wartime Ambassadors, 1938–1946
- Part II: The Cold War Ambassadors, 1946–1961
- Part III: The Cold War Ambassadors, 1961–1981
- Part IV: The Cold War Closers, 1981–1991
- Part V: The Post-Cold War Ambassadors, 1991–2001
- Part VI: The Post-9/11 Ambassadors, 2001–2008

The breadth and relevance of sources used to write a volume covering such a time span are testament to the resourcefulness of the authors. Primary resources located in archives in the United Kingdom (National Archives, Kew) and the United States (National Archives, College Park MD), as well

as interviews with the last six US Ambassadors to London and other leading protagonists from the wider Diplomatic Corps, alongside a broad swathe of secondary literature indicates the range of materials that have been employed. Different resources were available to authors covering the early period – for example, the official *Foreign Relations of the United States* Series only extends to the 1970s at the present time. Whatever their particular sources, the authors have each taken the opportunity provided by the volume's approach to display their individual expertise.

'Something Old, Something New': Special Relations and Transatlantic Diplomacy

Discussion of almost any aspect of Anglo-American relations in the post-Second World War era requires a doffing of one's cap to something ubiquitously known as the 'special relationship'. Popular culture abounds with imagery of 'Uncle Sam' and 'John Bull' or 'Britannia', or the American Eagle and British Lion. Richard Curtis's 2003 film, *Love Actually*, makes direct reference to British dissatisfaction about the state of the Special Relationship. The fictional British Prime Minister rebukes a fictional American President who claims that 'our special relationship is still very special'. Reflecting popular anti-American discontent of the time, the British PM retorts: 'I fear that this has become a bad relationship. A relationship based on the President taking exactly what he wants and casually ignoring all those things that really matter to, erm ... Britain. We may be a small country but we're a great one, too.' Lines in a film are one thing, but when *The Spectator* comments and a YouTube site is created to draw parallels to remarks made by leader of the Liberal Democrats and now, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg to Curtis's fictional PM, a more interesting phenomenon is at play.⁵⁰

Exploring every nuance of the special relationship is a mammoth task beyond the immediate focus of this volume. Nonetheless, we hope to be able to make a contribution to a seemingly perennial debate. First of all, what language to use: 'a' special relationship or 'the' special relationship – the latter definite article used to express more intimacy, the former indefinite used in a recent volume to describe a plurality in America's special relationships.⁵¹ Then there is the question as to whether or not to capitalise the 'S' and the 'R' as an indication of it being a proper noun; or to italicise it for exaggerated intonation. Equally, the Celtic influence on relations between the United States and the United Kingdom should not be overlooked, despite the common concentration on the 'Anglo'. The first British Prime Minister to make an official visit to the United States in 1930 was, in fact a Scot, Ramsey Macdonald, and other significant Celts have followed. One author, writing about Philip Kerr, Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to the United States at the outset of the Second World War, entitled his article 'The Inestimable Advantage of Not Being English'.⁵² As such, the prefixing of the

special relationship with 'Anglo-American' is clearly not without challenge and UK–US relations may be more appropriate. Dilemmas of this sort may seem trivial, and indeed on one level they are. At a deeper level, however, they reflect the difficulties in extracting substance from verbiage.

Further evidence of the special relationship's pervasive hold on transatlantic discourse is found in the different ways of talking about it by the protagonists themselves in often rather pointed political rhetoric. The most 'Europhile' Tory leader of the post-war era, Edward Heath, disliked the term and refused to use it. At the same time, he acknowledged that Anglo-American relations had a 'natural' quality.⁵³ The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office have, at various times since the 1980s, performed linguistic gymnastics to avoid the phrase while the Foreign Affairs Committee in March of 2010 went so far as to declare it a 'potentially misleading' phrase and to 'recommend that its use should be avoided'.⁵⁴ However, it was not so very long ago that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strategy bluntly asserted that relations with the US were 'the most important individual relationship'.⁵⁵ The underlying fear being that the term only resonates amongst a British audience and therefore to use it with the US government might lead to a questioning of its existence at all. Put colloquially, it is deemed far better not to mention it, lest 'it' become the focus of the conversation.

More recently, in March 2012, President Barack Obama hosted Prime Minister David Cameron and, with strikingly different positioning than that adopted for Cameron's predecessor, attached a new prefix to the term 'relationship'. The relationship was not 'special' but should now be deemed 'essential' (the *Financial Times* commenting: 'The word "special" is worn thin through over-use'.⁵⁶) The pair published a joint article in *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian*, stressing instead the 'essential' character of transatlantic relations while President Obama hailed the relationship as one of the 'greatest alliances the world has ever known'.⁵⁷ 'Our alliance is essential', Obama stated at a press conference on the lawn of the White House with Cameron nodding in agreement, 'it is indispensable to the prosperity and security that we seek, not only for our own citizens but for people around the world'. The idea that the Anglo-Americans are guardians of prosperity and security beyond their own citizens is something we will return to.

From an earlier era there are two dominant views of UK–US relations, special or otherwise. British economist John Maynard Keynes' reputation for driving a hard bargain with his American counterparts in Washington as the war drew to an end was well deserved. Nonetheless, as his biographer, Robert Skidelsky, states of Keynes: 'qualifying all Keynes's battles with the Americans was the underlying belief that the New World had to be yoked, and kept yoked, to the Old World, if the latter were to enjoy durable peace and prosperity'. In other words, it was important for Britain to be aligned with the United States in a special relationship. Skidelsky goes on: 'It was in Britain's long-term interest to arrange for this, even if it meant having to swallow humble pie on the way'.⁵⁸ Such a view points to the asymmetry in

the transatlantic relationship – a feature that becomes acute at various points in this volume.

The second perspective on the transatlantic special relationship comes from the originator of the phrase. It would be impossible to talk of the *special relationship* without considering Churchill's rose-tinted view and lashings of prose in support of the 'English-speaking peoples'. It was in his address entitled 'The Sinews of Peace' at Westminster College in March 1946 in Fulton, Missouri, perhaps best known to the world for its line about an 'iron curtain' descending across Europe, that he first refers to a transatlantic 'special relationship'. He considered the special relationship to be 'the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples', requiring 'not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of society'.⁵⁹

Reference to the examples above of the use of the term 'special relationship' provides brief insight into the challenge that each of our contributors has grappled with – consciously and subconsciously – as they reflect the use of the term themselves and by their protagonists, and its associated meanings in the chapters that make up this volume.

In the realm of academia, considerable ink has also been spilt. An identifiable traditional orthodoxy of the post-Second World War Anglo-American special relationship rests on three core characteristics. The first, often seen as the principal basis of the special relationship, is the military and intelligence interconnectedness of the two states with the inter-operability of military institutions and equipment often being offered as evidence of intimacy. Although the latter is at considerable financial cost to the UK, the belief and expectation that they will be operating with the United States in the future means it is a cost they are prepared to countenance. The strategic implications in the military realm are perhaps seen most clearly in relation to Britain's nuclear capability. Whatever the political debate in the UK over the value of nuclear weapons may be, the reality is that Britain's nuclear deterrent has been built and maintained by the United States since the 1960s. As a further exemplar, the three letter acronym that UK-US militaries have enjoyed since the Second World War for their bilateral parlance is 'ABC' in describing 'American–British conversations'.

The second characteristic of the traditional view is the economic connection between the United Kingdom and the United States. It is often remarked that if 'Wall Street sneezes, the City catches the cold', an observation that holds true for the vast majority of the period under consideration here. Equally, there are extremely high levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) between the two countries and despite almost 40 years of membership of the European Union in its various guises, the United States remains the UK's biggest export market.

The third characteristic within traditional views of the special relationship is that of common culture. The markers of shared language, history and language contribute to a cultural affinity which means people and

policy-makers alike look across the Atlantic before turning to other potential partners. Echoing the work of Professor H. C. Allen in his seminal work *Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations 1783–1952*, Inderjeet Parmar considers the key attributes of the connection to be a common political-cultural heritage of liberal institutions and anti-militarism, rule of law, respect for free speech, religious and family ties, and the English language.⁶⁰ In such an assessment, strategic and economic interests are 'subordinated to the deeper rhythms and shared histories of Anglo-Saxon peoples'.⁶¹ Greg Kennedy writes in similar terms, referring to the special relationship as the 'long-lasting circumstances that created friendship through understanding, networking, intellectual affinity, financial ties, family or blood relations, empathy and mutual fear of deception, but remained only a sentiment, not a formal or public expression of policy'.⁶² Of course there is variation in emphasis within the scholarship, but recent exponents of what might be considered an orthodox viewpoint include scholars Kathleen Burk, Alan Dobson, John Dumbrell and David Reynolds.⁶³

Such views, echoing Churchillian motifs, also raise a question as to the degree of specialness. In other words, how special is 'special'? Alex Danchev offers a critical view in proposing ten criteria for a special relationship. Without going through them all, he identifies two key criteria as 'transparency' and the ability to 'mythicise' (as he calls it). Danchev could speak for many when he concludes: 'Specialness is semaphor. It needs to be decoded and analysed.'⁶⁴

Transatlantic Diplomacy

Beyond the puzzle of 'specialness' in terms of bilateral or specifically diplomatic relations, there is also a broader question to be contemplated for potential future scholarship. Throughout the volume it becomes clear that there is a pattern of behaviour between these two democratic, developed, serially hegemonic states. However, it is also clear that the language of 'specialness', by whatever definition, and the existential debates regarding the relationship do almost as much to obscure as to reveal the workings of the wider international system. The focus of this volume is firmly in the realms of diplomacy, history and politics. However, the authors here, collectively, even if not overtly, offer evidence that there may be deeper, structural factors involved. We would like to pose the initial idea that it may be possible to think of still another prefix, at least in terms of the diplomatic relationship, namely 'transatlantic'. Clearly the term is regularly used in this context; however, our argument is that the term should be released from its geographic bond and applied to forms of diplomatic interaction that states develop as they increasingly move towards what has been called the 'global state'.⁶⁵

Long before discussions of the phenomenon of globalisation became commonplace, relations between the United States and the United Kingdom have blurred the traditional line between ‘foreign’ and ‘domestic’. Every author here spends time outlining, some in great detail, the fundamentally enmeshed nature of the bureaucratic, political, economic and social relations between these two state actors with the result that UK–US relations have become ‘intermestic’ rather than anything we recognise as purely international or even bilateral.

The wider point therefore, to contemplate as part of our analysis of the US Embassy in London is its implications for broader understanding of international relations. The suggestion is that the processes of globalisation, as uneven as we recognise them to be, are slowly homogenising the traits that once made the US and the UK ‘special’ or at least exclusive to each other. There is the possibility that, rather than a brave new world of diplomatic exchange, we are returning to an older form of continuous negotiation, but rather than Richlieu’s version of *négociation continue*, UK–US relations exist in a world that is continuous and connected, but not secret.⁶⁶ ‘Transatlantic diplomacy’ as a model may, ultimately be one that is followed by others, as it operates through a process by which every issue, every policy, every debate is open and transparent to the other side. Secret diplomacy is finally, truly dead. The rest of the world may have much to learn from the eagle and the lion. Nonetheless, the eagle and lion have, as will become evident in this volume, had to learn, and re-learn lessons that embrace a meaningful relationship and engender ‘transatlantic diplomacy’.

There is a thought that echoes down from the first Minister, John Adams, through the timeframe of this volume and even to the sentiments recently expressed by both President Obama and Prime Minister David Cameron. The British Ambassador to Washington, Lord Lothian (1939–40), was arguing passionately with the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax (his successor in Washington), that the Anglo-American relationship was essential not only to the future of each nation separately, but to all of ‘civilisation’. He keenly felt, like so many others in his place before and after, that theirs was not a mission of purely bilateral relations. Rather, that the relationship’s success (or failure) was important on a much wider scale and to a global audience and their actions and reactions in the diplomatic realm should be measured accordingly.

... it has often been said that patience is the most difficult of the statesman’s arts. There is certainly no field in which it is more essential to exercise it if you believe, as I do that... the destinies of the two countries and of the Dominions are now inextricably involved and that the future of our civilisation depends upon our gradual discovering the basis upon which we can confidently cooperate for our own and the common good.⁶⁷