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The London Ambassadorship of David K. E. Bruce During the Wilson-Johnson Years, 1964–68

JONATHAN COLMAN

Using recently released sources, this article offers a fresh perspective on the London ambassadorship of David K. E. Bruce in the years of Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson, 1964–68. Bruce's running of the US Embassy is examined, as are his views of the Anglo-American relationship. Further attention is given to his diplomatic management of the Anglo-American relationship in the context of the difficult personal relations between Wilson and Johnson and with regard to policy differences over the Vietnam War and Britain's position as a world power. It is argued that while Bruce did help to ease some of the personal strains between Wilson and Johnson, he was generally less significant to the White House than has previously been asserted. It is also contended that his vision of Britain joining the EEC, yet retaining extensive military commitments beyond Europe was not viable.

In 1961, President Kennedy appointed David K. E. Bruce to the post of United States Ambassador to the Court of St James, a position in which he remained until 1969. Labour prime minister Harold Wilson, elected in 1964, described Bruce as “a giant among diplomats, with more experience and wise judgment than possibly anyone else in the diplomatic profession of any country.” Both the White House and the State Department had “total” confidence in his capabilities, and it was unlikely that “in modern times any Prime Minister and American

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Ambassador have been closer.”¹ The foreign policy practitioner and academic Henry Kissinger believed that throughout a lengthy diplomatic career Bruce helped to “ennoble” American foreign policy.² An assessment from the British Foreign Office described the Ambassador as “a man of very considerable stature.”³ It would seem fortunate that in the years of Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson there was a figure of such calibre participating in the Anglo-American relationship, as the mutual dealings of the two leaders were, as a number of historians have noted, fractious and troubled.⁴ Against a background of British economic decline, there was an adverse personal chemistry between the principals as well as substantial divergences of policy between Britain and the United States. Of these divergences the Vietnam War demanded of Bruce the highest degree of diplomatic intervention to help ease the strain. The British unwillingness to commit troops meant that policy-makers in Washington tended to see as self-seeking and essentially a nuisance the British desire to exert a moderating influence upon the war. There was a further erosion of Britain’s standing in Washington as a result of the plans, announced in 1967 and accelerated in 1968, to evacuate most of the country’s military bases “East of Suez.” This left the forces of the United States exposed at a politically vulnerable time as the sole peacekeeper in Asia, while the withdrawal itself complemented the UK’s adoption of a more modest focus to its diplomacy by seeking membership of the European Economic Community (EEC, or “Common Market”).

Philip Kaiser, deputy at the US Embassy, has suggested that Bruce was “a superb interlocutor” between Wilson and Johnson,⁵ but most of the literature of Anglo-American relations tends to confine him (like most ambassadors) to a largely incidental and somewhat passive role, that of dispensing information to the State Department and to the White House, and enlightening British policy-makers on Washington’s views.⁶ Tasks of this nature were indeed fundamental to Bruce’s activities, but given his centrality to the Anglo-American relationship he does deserve more attention: how, for example, did he run his embassy? What were his own views about the ties between Britain and the United States? How far did he influence the relationship between Wilson and Johnson? To be sure, Bruce has not been entirely neglected. Nelson K. Lankford has provided a worthy biography of him, based largely on the Ambassador’s diaries deposited at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia. Lankford

maintains that after the death of President Kennedy in November 1963 Bruce came “into his own as ambassador in London. In temperament, in style, in almost every way unlike the new president, Bruce nevertheless became important to a White House untutored in foreign affairs.”⁷ The release in recent years of a growing amount of government documents, oral history testimonies and secondary material in Britain and the United States has presented an opportunity to reassess Bruce’s time as US Ambassador to the UK. This paper focuses mainly on the tumultuous years of 1964–68, when Wilson’s Labour government coincided with the Democratic administration of Lyndon Johnson and in which the difficult relationship between the two leaders, the Vietnam War, British economic weakness and the abandonment of the world role imposed notable strains on the Anglo-American relationship. Bruce offered an invaluable vantage point on all these developments, and he did exert some moderating influence on the difficult relationship between Wilson and Johnson. However, in many ways he was less important to the White House than has been asserted, and his idealistic and firmly held vision of a Britain upholding the roles both of world power and a member of the EEC was simply not tenable. So far as his day-to-day management of the Embassy was concerned, his style was very much “hands-off,” but this, too, was not without its problems.

Kennedy’s choice of ambassador to London — still one of the most prestigious of ambassadorial posts — was entirely logical in the light of his appointee’s outstanding diplomatic pedigree and, in particular, his experience running large embassies. Born in 1898, Bruce began his career in foreign affairs in 1926, in Rome as Vice Consul in the Foreign Service, and he came to hold a number of more senior positions, including in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the forerunner of the CIA) in 1941, Chief of the European Cooperation Administration to France 1948–49, Ambassador to France 1949–52, and Undersecretary of State 1952–53. In 1953–54 he was Special United States Observer at the Interim Committee of the European Defense Community and Special American Representative to the European High Authority for Coal and Steel. From 1957–60 he was US Ambassador to West Germany.⁸

The Anglo-American so-called “special relationship” — at the heart of which Bruce participated from 1961 — stemmed largely from the intimate practical cooperation during the Second World War and rested upon a nexus of continued institutional ties in the fields of

defence and intelligence, as well as frequent and prominent dealings between presidents and prime ministers, and between lower-ranking officials. The organization of the London Embassy reflected in microcosm the continued convergence of Anglo-American interests. American experts on the British political scene, and on different regions of the world, worked with officers who dealt with the whole spectrum of overlapping interests. There were sections on economics, military affairs, intelligence, information, culture, science, consular and legal affairs, and, of course, administration. To deal with these tasks, the Embassy had a combined staff of some 700 people.⁹ This figure represented one of the largest diplomatic contingents of all American legations and embassies, which in 1965 ranged in number from a mere two people in Gambia to as many as 788 in South Vietnam.¹⁰

On the question of managing the Embassy, Kaiser reported that Bruce ruled “with an easy hand. He gave his officers great leeway in carrying out their responsibilities, providing support whenever they needed it.”¹¹ Another member of Bruce’s staff, Jonathan Stoddart, noted that “Everybody thought Bruce was above the fray and did not involve himself in the more mundane operations of the embassy. He delegated very well, assuming he had competent people working for him.”¹² According to Hermann Eilts, a Political Officer at the Embassy, Bruce “was interested in everything that went on” there. “He delegated authority, but at the same time when you needed the Ambassador’s help on anything, you could go to him and he would immediately respond.”¹³ Michael Palliser, Wilson’s Foreign Office private secretary after March 1966, had frequent dealings with Bruce and other US officials and has noted that the Ambassador’s “hands off” approach was generally appreciated by the Embassy staff, as it showed confidence in their abilities.¹⁴ Yet Bruce’s detached style of management had its deficiencies. Richard Ericson, who served in the Political Section of the Embassy, noted that on one occasion the Senate “invited David Bruce back to address the Foreign Affairs Committee on how you ran an embassy because he was a diplomat of such distinction.” He presented “a letter-perfect description of how an embassy should be run,” but this description and how he *actually* ran his embassy were “at opposite poles.” Working for Bruce was “like being part of a catamaran... one hull was here and one hull was off there and never the twain would meet. He was very difficult to see, very busy.” Even Kaiser had limited access: “He had to make appointments like everybody else unless it

was a real crisis." Furthermore, the consensus "among those of us who were working in external affairs was that David Bruce never saw a damn thing that went out of that embassy before it went out except the stuff that he wrote himself."¹⁵

Philip Kaiser has suggested that the Embassy had an "exceptional staff of officers,"¹⁶ Michael Palliser has stated that Bruce "had a good embassy,"¹⁷ and, similarly, Oliver Wright, Palliser's predecessor as Wilson's Foreign Office secretary, has commented that it was a "first-class operation."¹⁸ Yet such favourable opinions were not universal at the time. The Permanent Undersecretary of the Foreign Office, Paul Gore-Booth, noted in 1965 that there was a view "not confined by any means to the Foreign Office, that the US Embassy here at the moment is regrettably weak."¹⁹ While praising Bruce's personality and character, Gore-Booth felt that he did not:

... get around quite as universally as he might, no doubt partly because he does not get any younger... The [American] Department [of the Foreign Office] find that, unlike members of the American Embassy over the years, the present staff do not seem to go around and gossip as an Embassy ought to. Nor does one find members of the American Embassy staff around the place in the sort of general way in which American Embassies usually operate, and in which we try to operate ourselves. Philip Kaiser is not very impressive and... one has great difficulty in remembering the personalities at all.²⁰

Ellen M. Johnson, a secretary at the Embassy from 1964–66, noted that prior to Labour's election most officers of the Embassy other than Bruce "hadn't deemed it worthwhile getting to know the leaders of the Labour Party, feeling the Conservatives and Liberals were the ones to know".²¹ Failings of this type led National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy to think that "the US Embassy was far too large and far too overpaid and really produced very little."²²

Even prior to his arrival in London, Bruce developed some firm views about the value of the bonds between Britain and the United States. He reached the conclusion that while Britain and the United States should preserve close mutual ties, Washington should nevertheless use its influence to encourage the British to participate in the movement towards European unity (Michael Palliser has described Bruce as a "transatlantic" and "cosmopolitan" man with "a very European feel to him," and who was therefore naturally engaged with the question of European unity).²³ The experience of two world wars bestowed an obvious wisdom upon trying to prevent a further

conflagration, and consequently the need for European integration seemed more worthy than London's desire to sit at the diplomatic "top table" next to the Americans. In 1950, for example, Bruce, then US Ambassador to France, argued that American foreign policy was too closely aligned with that of Britain. This position could have "an extremely harmful" impact on Washington's "other partners in the Atlantic community... A special relationship of this kind" would be "regarded on the continent as an abandonment by the US of any serious attempt at European or even Atlantic community integration in favour of an Anglo-American world alliance as the cornerstone of US foreign policy."²⁴

Although the "special relationship" remained evident at both the elite and at the institutional levels, Bruce regarded Britain's decision in 1962 to apply to join the EEC as a "thrilling and momentous" move. For him, British membership would be "one of the historical events of our century," offering the prospect of "lasting European unity, with all that that would connote for the preservation of Western civilisation against aggression from elsewhere."²⁵ It was not until 1973, however, that Britain would be able to enter the EEC; Bruce was correct to question the impact of the "special relationship" upon European observers. In December 1962, President de Gaulle of France, using as an excuse the Kennedy administration's recent decision to sell the British Polaris nuclear missiles, vetoed Britain's application on the basis that the country would be a mere "Trojan horse" for American influence in Europe. Although Bruce (now in London) did not criticise the Polaris decision, the EEC failure was undoubtedly a disappointment. Part of the Polaris understanding held that the British should participate in a multilateral NATO naval fleet, and in Bruce's eyes this stipulation should on no account be disregarded. To his way of thinking, such participation, while by no means as momentous as joining the EEC, would nevertheless go some way towards strengthening the British relationship with western Europe as well as bolstering the general principle of supra-national integration. In November 1964, when the "Multilateral Force" (MLF) issue had reemerged after a period of abeyance as a result of the British general election, Bruce urged Undersecretary of State George Ball (himself already a vigorous supporter of European unity) that the United States "should be tough" with London over the MLF. The assumption was that although the Labor government would try to drive a hard bargain, it did not expect Washington to

surrender completely. Bruce also wanted the State Department — which was host to the most zealous advocates of the MLF — to direct the negotiations.²⁶

Bruce did not express support for Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's assertion in June 1962 that independent nuclear arsenals such as that of Britain were a destabilizing force in world affairs,²⁷ but he did think that the MLF offered an excellent means of enabling the UK to dispose of its "independent" deterrent. (To mollify the advocates of unilateral nuclear disarmament on the left of the Labour Party, Wilson had pledged to renegotiate the Polaris agreement. But once in office Labour merely cancelled one of the five Polaris submarines that the previous government had ordered.) In December 1964, just before Wilson's first prime ministerial visit to Washington, Bruce tried to persuade Johnson that helping to do away with the British nuclear deterrent would be valuable as a way of enhancing the administration's position in relation to Congress, the goodwill and support of which was essential to the success of the President's ambitious programme of social legislation. According to the Ambassador, the White House would have "eliminated one national deterrent" and would be "trying hard to avoid the creation of another," — that of West Germany, "while at the same time binding Germany more firmly into the Atlantic Community and more firmly to England."²⁸ Objections from Britain and other European allies, concerns about the impact of the scheme on nuclear proliferation, plus Johnson's own reservations, meant that ultimately the MLF came to nothing. However, even as late as January 1966, when the project had all but run out of steam, Bruce was urging the President to continue pursuing the creation of some kind of collective nuclear arrangement for Europe.²⁹

Bruce's tenacious backing of the MLF reflected his longstanding view that Washington should encourage the British to seek closer ties with the continent. Although this perspective followed the State Department line, it also embodied a strongly held, more personal, conviction on Bruce's part, born of his extensive diplomatic experience working in Europe as well as his friendships with leading integrationists such as Jean Monnet. While the Johnson White House was generally supportive of the idea of British membership of the EEC, the inevitable preoccupation with Vietnam meant that there was little real engagement with the question of European unity. It was also the case that overt American support for British membership

would perpetuate the sort of concerns that de Gaulle had expressed in 1962.

Consistent with protocol, Bruce tendered his resignation soon after Johnson became president and continued to do so every year, but the new president, seeing no reason to make a change, asked him to remain in his post. Lankford's idea that Bruce now came "into his own as ambassador in London"³⁰ is based on the supposition that compared to Kennedy, Johnson was unversed in international affairs and was therefore especially reliant on ambassadorial counsel. Certainly, the work of orthodox historians has, as noted by Thomas Schwartz, tended to depict the thirty-sixth president as "the ugly American" — crude, provincial and lacking subtlety in the conduct of foreign affairs.³¹ Although the views of revisionists such as Schwartz are kinder to Johnson's standing in this regard, Vietnam casts a long shadow and few commentators would go so far as to argue that diplomacy was Johnson's natural arena. In 1971 Bruce argued circumspectly that Johnson would be considered a great president with regard to his domestic policies of the "Great Society" and civil rights, but the foreign policies — especially Vietnam — were simply too controversial to permit a verdict.³² Early, contemporary perceptions supported the idea that Johnson was less at home in international affairs than he was in the domestic sphere. The British Foreign Office, for example, noted in 1963 that he was 'relatively inexperienced' in foreign affairs.³³ Although he drew upon a wide range of opinions when making decisions,³⁴ there is no evidence that his relative inexperience in the conduct of diplomacy led him to turn all the more frequently to his ambassadors — firstly, like all presidents, Johnson had a circle of foreign policy advisers at his immediate disposal in Washington. This included Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, and McGeorge Bundy, all of whom had served under Kennedy and were veterans of international crises over Berlin, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and elsewhere.

Secondly, the frequency of Johnson's consultation with his ambassadors (beyond routine contacts at summit meetings) would also depend on his interest in the countries involved, as well as the exigencies of any current issues. Broadly speaking, he was inclined to value allies not for any sentimental reasons but to the extent of their practical contributions to the western alliance. The corollary of this was that he tended to disdain those allied states he felt were not pulling their weight in the world.³⁵ In the light of Britain's economic

problems and the struggle to maintain a central role on the international stage, he once said that it was no longer worth spending two days with a British prime minister because the UK “was not that important anymore.”³⁶ Yet that is not to say that Johnson was typically uninterested in developments in Britain as reported by Bruce; the Foreign Office noted in July 1965 that the Ambassador had “the advantage of at least part of one ear of the President.”³⁷ Oliver Wright and Michael Palliser, among others, have confirmed that Johnson held Bruce in high esteem.³⁸ Bruce and Johnson met at least each of the six times Wilson visited Washington, and, more generally, the Ambassador helped maximise his influence by ensuring that his written communications were pithy, incisive and — certainly as far as those specifically directed to the White House were concerned — sparing in number.³⁹ Bruce’s view was that ambassadors could shape events by their reporting but only if their despatches were read.⁴⁰

Many of Bruce’s missives concerned the British economy, which had suffered for some years as a result of uncompetitive industrial practices, an overvalued pound, and a resulting inability to pay its way internationally. If Britain was obliged to devalue sterling in order to deter continued speculative attacks on the currency and to improve national competitiveness, there might be a wave of competitive devaluations from other governments across the world. Then the position of the United States could itself suffer. (Sterling was finally devalued on November 18, 1967, from a parity of \$2.80 to \$2.40. As it turned out, the international impact was relatively apocalyptic). The US Treasury orchestrated three multilateral “bailouts” for sterling when the currency faced intense speculative assault — in November 1964, September 1965 and July 1966. Bruce’s verdicts about the British economy were consistently — and, it has to be said, exaggeratedly — pessimistic, and seemed on occasions to reflect the misperception that Wilson was a radical politician rather than a moderate. In October 1964, as soon as Labour had assumed power, Bruce expressed concern to the State Department about the likelihood of economic radicalism or recklessness on the part of the new government, whose underlying aim, he argued, was to eliminate “sectors of the free enterprise system.” The City feared the “anticipated proposals for taxation,” which could well lead to “a further diminution of confidence, already impaired by a Labour victory, amongst Britain’s creditors.”⁴¹ (In truth, Labour’s budgets tended

more towards austerity than profligacy.) A few weeks later, Bruce warned with continued overstatement about the wider damage that Harold Wilson might inflict on the UK: the Prime Minister was “too steeped in the early fifties, too devoted to outmoded dogmas, too suspicious of the motives of others. It may well be that he believes in the necessity for class warfare to extirpate residual privileges.”⁴² At the end of a typically bleak economic commentary in 1967, Bruce added that ‘Things will get worse before they get better.’⁴³

At least one individual in the White House regarded Bruce’s prognostications as excessively grim: Francis Bator of the National Security Council, for one, argued to Johnson in July 1966 that the Ambassador was “too gloomy about Britain’s economic prospects”; the situation was certainly not “hopeless.”⁴⁴ There were others who doubted Bruce’s wisdom in the field of economics. According to Willis Armstrong, who worked in the Embassy’s Economic Section, much of the alarmism of Bruce’s analyses derived from sheer ignorance: he was “not very experienced in economic matters.” Bruce once sent a particularly depressing telegram to George Ball and John Leddy, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. “God,” the Ambassador told Armstrong, “they both called me up in the middle of the night, all excited. I guess I didn’t show you that telegram.” According to Armstrong, the despatch in question was mere “hysteria about the British economy... about Britain going “down the tube.” He explained to Bruce that ‘there isn’t any tube big enough for an economy the size of the British to go down. It either gets worse to the point it can’t pay its bills, and then it has to shape up, or it gets better. It won’t go away. There isn’t any place for it to disappear to.’ Armstrong noted later that Princeton University “dedicated a chair for David Bruce at the Woodrow Wilson School. George Ball gave the appreciation. It was mostly about David’s career in the OSS. The OSS is not a good place to learn economics.”⁴⁵

Despite his reservations about Labour’s economic policies, from the outset Bruce enjoyed close relations with the representatives of the Labour government. James Tull, one of Bruce’s colleagues in the Embassy’s Executive Section, noted that, “before the election when Wilson was shadow prime minister, he occasionally lunched privately with the ambassador at the embassy.” Thus, when Labour entered office, Bruce “did not lose a beat in the contact area — to be expected, I guess, given the ambassador’s span on acquaintances across political, economic, clerical, and press and broadcast lines.”⁴⁶

Bruce's personality — urbane, cheerful, charming, discrete — permitted him to move very easily in establishment circles.⁴⁷ Furthermore, his judgment of political personalities was often perceptive, and he understood from an early date that Wilson was determined to preserve and to strengthen the Anglo-American relationship. The Ambassador forecasted in October 1964 that Washington should prepare itself "for a greater degree of high level negotiation with the British than has been our previous experience."⁴⁸ He explained to Johnson late the following year that the Prime Minister was "anxious to establish... something like the close relationship — or its appearance — which existed between Harold Macmillan and President Kennedy."⁴⁹ Wilson was in effect his own foreign secretary, a policy that would involve frequent dealings with the US Ambassador and, certainly, when possible, with the President himself.

Given its salience in US foreign policy and in the wider international environment, the question of the Vietnam War could hardly fail to touch upon the Anglo-American relationship. Until March 1966 Wilson commanded only a single-figure majority in the House of Commons and was always obliged to placate the anti-American left wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party lest its agitation became unmanageable, and he also had to address a climate of public opinion that was increasingly hostile to America's "imperialist" war in the former Indochina. With the relatively modest exception of the "dissociation" of 1966 (considered below) Wilson did not yield to temptation by adopting an anti-American policy. He opposed the idea of a precipitate withdrawal by American forces, because such a measure might "bring with it the danger that friend and potential foe throughout the world would begin to wonder whether the United States might be induced to abandon other allies when the going got rough."⁵⁰ Given the controversy in Britain, Bruce regarded as "daring" the official British policy of diplomatic support for the basic principle of American involvement in Vietnam.⁵¹

As "a faithful instrument" of President Johnson, Bruce was far too professional ever to express public misgivings about American policies,⁵² but in private he did question the wisdom of the escalating American involvement in Vietnam. In early 1962, he confided to a journalist that he was "not sure that we should have made a commitment to either Laos or South Vietnam in the first place. Getting bogged down with larger numbers of men but without confronting the real enemy is the way to suffer real attrition."⁵³ Later, he told

Charles Cross, an Asian specialist at the London Embassy, that Vietnam was “distracting our attention from Europe and that therefore we should probably disengage from there.”⁵⁴ But Bruce knew that once the United States had proclaimed its commitment to the world then it was difficult to retreat without undermining the credibility of American pledges.

While Bruce, as an ambassador to a European state, was rarely if ever consulted by his masters in Washington on what they should do in Vietnam, he often tried to persuade American policy-makers to value Britain's loyalty to the American position. As a social-democratic state with ample experience in diplomacy, this loyalty was important in helping to confer a greater degree of legitimacy upon American actions. Unfortunately, the UK's failure to provide more practical forms of help and the British propensity for high-profile peacemaking initiatives meant that the Ambassador's counsel often fell on stony ground. In March 1965, he explained to the State Department the intense “restiveness here, especially in the House of Commons, over the British Government not seeming to play a more active part in trying to induce negotiations over Vietnam.”⁵⁵ Wilson was “under intense domestic pressure to intervene as mediator,”⁵⁶ and was “hotly accused by many British, including a formidable number of moderate Labour Parliamentarians, of being a mere satellite of the US, and of subscribing blindly and completely to policies about which he has not been consulted in advance.”⁵⁷ In the Commons Wilson once mounted an especially vigorous defence of American policy in Vietnam, which so impressed Bruce that he thought it deserved an expression of gratitude from the highest level in Washington. “Perhaps,” the Ambassador asked Dean Rusk, “if the President thought favourably of it, it might be well for him to send a personal communication to the PriMin, expressing thanks for his support.”⁵⁸ It was telling, however, that the “personal communication” from Johnson to Wilson that the Ambassador felt would be beneficial was not forthcoming. However, on this occasion the Ambassador's efforts to cultivate some appreciation in Washington of Wilson's support did succeed at least to a modest extent, by encouraging McGeorge Bundy (himself no Anglophile), to take up the case. On March 22, he tried to persuade Johnson to try to “see what is the least we can offer the British in return for continued solidarity in support of the essentials of our policy in Vietnam.” Bruce, noted Bundy, had argued that there should be “a full and continuing

exchange of views and of information at all levels between our two Governments on this important issue.”⁵⁹

The idea was merely to make the British feel that their support was valued, but the problem was as much one of personality as of policies: the President simply did not like Wilson, and thus felt little inclined to mollify him. Only a few days later Bruce lamented in his diary that that he and Bundy had a “ticklish matter to resolve”: Johnson “has an antipathy for the Prime Minister”, and, in particular, he considered that “attempts on the part of the British to insinuate themselves into Vietnamese affairs” were “irrelevant and impertinent”. The President believed that Wilson, “for his own domestic, political purposes, wishes to capitalise on a supposed close relationship that is non-existent.” The Ambassador hoped that Johnson should behave with at least a degree of finesse, to “give the impression of good relations” in the next meeting with Wilson, because “The PM needs at least to be able to portray to his associates, and in the House of Commons, the appearance of an intimacy and a mutual confidence.” There was “no room, in my opinion, for [a] lack of conventional courtesies between chiefs of allied states,” noted Bruce with some disdain towards Johnson’s attitudes.⁶⁰

Part of the challenge for Bruce’s efforts to manage the relationship between 10 Downing Street and the White House was that on occasions Wilson acted in ways that impeded the task. On February 11, 1965, for example, the growing political pressures in London led the Prime Minister to make a late night telephone call to Johnson (3:00 am in London, 10:00 pm Washington time), urging an *ad hoc* Anglo-American summit, with the aim of dissuading an over-aggressive retaliation to a recent attack upon a US base at Pleiku. Johnson’s response was a famously blunt one, saying, in effect, that it was none of Wilson’s business how the United States conducted its affairs.⁶¹ Bruce responded soon after by advising Wilson that “it was better to communicate with the President by teletype, because a man like Johnson to whom reaching for the telephone was second nature and principally an instrument to pressure people, did not like others using it to put him on the spot.”⁶² A few weeks later there was a further example of diplomatic clumsiness on the part of the British when Wilson asked his foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, who was visiting Washington, to raise the issue of the use of poison gas in Vietnam, the American use of gas had inflamed opinion in the House of Commons.⁶³ Stewart brought up the topic but to ill-effect,

with the President complaining later that it was “insulting for politicians to come chasing over to see him, to expound for home consumption their condemnatory statements from the White House steps.”⁶⁴ Bundy responded by telephoning Bruce on Johnson’s behalf to tell him “to prepare a draft of a possible letter to the Prime Minister, expressing the President’s indignation over Michael Stewart having answered a question at the National Press Club by replying with a citation from the Declaration of Independence.” Stewart had “coupled British objections” to the American use of gas “with a quotation about the ‘decent observance of the opinions of mankind’.” But Bruce finally persuaded Johnson not to “rebuke” Wilson for Stewart’s “delinquency,” “a great relief... for I thought it would be undignified and unnecessary to do so.”⁶⁵ To have the US Ambassador berating the Prime Minister was no way to bring harmony to the higher reaches of the Anglo-American relationship.

The year 1966 saw still more of Bruce’s intervention over Vietnam. Ironically, while Labour’s narrow majority in the Commons had caused problems for Wilson with regard to his commitment to the American axis, an expanded majority was to pose even greater difficulties. On March 31 of that year, Labour won the general election with a decisive 94 seat majority, thereby giving rise to an expanded and especially fractious Labour left that would bedevil the Prime Minister’s already fraught attempts to strike a balance between Party opinion on the one hand and Washington on the other. A State Department report indicated that the standard-bearers of the “New Left” included some “traditional left-wingers such as Michael Foot,” along with some “new elements, principally educators or journalists, who are doctrinaire, articulate, and constructive.” Unlike their “Bevanite forbears, the New Left is not trying to displace” Wilson, but to drive him back to a more “socialist” approach.⁶⁶ This would involve the pursuit of a more independent policy towards Washington. In July 1966, Wilson felt obliged to “dissociate” Britain from the latest American military measures, and Bruce found himself called upon to explain this action from a man who had so frequently expressed loyalty to the United States. Bruce told the State Department that when Wilson took office he was “prepared to cooperate with the United States on major American policies in a measure that would not always be popular” in Britain. “Nevertheless, to counter the charge of being a mere puppet or satellite of the US, HMG would, from time to time, assert its independence by

taking exception to certain details of policies to which he is ready to give general support." Bruce advised that Johnson should "content himself with remarking on his disappointment" over the dissociation "and say he expects continuing fidelity to the promise of adherence to our overall objectives in Vietnam."⁶⁷ On one occasion during the dissociation crisis, Wilson practically pleaded with Bruce in order to secure a personal meeting with the President as a way of easing the rift. The Prime Minister explained that he was "absolutely confident he could avoid any embarrassment to the President during his visit to Washington." Bruce was persuaded by Wilson's assurances, reporting that the Labour leader wanted the President to be certain that "he does not believe in making a mess on another fellow's carpet."⁶⁸ He believed that Wilson should indeed be permitted to visit Washington, to help repair "the personal relationship" with Johnson.⁶⁹ The visit went ahead, in fact surprisingly smoothly in view of the precedents, not least because Wilson took Bruce's advice and renewed his pledges of fealty to the United States.⁷⁰

In January 1967, the Ambassador tried to assuage the Prime Minister's concerns that the White House was failing to keep London fully informed about developments in Vietnam.⁷¹ Part of the disquiet stemmed from the fact, as Bruce noted, that the British were "always interested in trying to ascertain whether their own contacts could not be used...to bring about a settlement of the affair in Vietnam."⁷² He was involved in a major British peacemaking initiative in February 1967, which Wilson described with a touch of hyperbole as "an exercise planned between the Prime Minister and the Ambassador which only just failed to secure peace in Vietnam."⁷³ The intention was to use the visit to London of the Russian premier Alexei Kosygin to initiate fruitful contacts with the communist regime in North Vietnam. In Wilson's self-serving account, Bruce is alleged to have said that the Wilson-Kosygin initiative was "going to be the biggest diplomatic coup of the century."⁷⁴ In truth, he neither encouraged nor discouraged the Prime Minister in his peacemaking venture; the Ambassador's "laidback style" meant that he was more a "detached observer" of these events than a prime mover.⁷⁵ He was also too shrewd and well-informed to believe that there was much substance to the British efforts. Hanoi had given no intimation at all that it was ready to make concessions at the negotiating table, and for reasons of its own Washington decided to toughen its policy toward negotiations at the eleventh hour. As a

result of the change in policy, Bruce had to dissuade an angry Prime Minister from flying to the White House forthwith: "it would not be wise for the Prime Minister to dash off to Washington...since it would appear to be an act of panic and hysteria,"⁷⁶ and was in any case likely to antagonise the President, who was always hostile to the idea of an ad hoc summit with Wilson. But the fact that Bruce had to some extent participated in the diplomatic maneuverings undermined, albeit temporarily, his own standing in the White House — Johnson condemned Bruce's apparent desire to be a "God-damned peacemaker" like Wilson,⁷⁷ and questioned sarcastically whether in trying to extend the bombing pause to cover the duration of Kosygin's visit to London if Bruce was himself frightened of getting hit by an American bomb.⁷⁸

Philip Kaiser argues that to prevail on the question of a suspension of bombing Bruce had "decided to send one of his cables direct to the President. When Johnson read it, he overruled his top advisers and ordered them to follow Bruce's recommendation to delay the resumption of bombing until Kosygin had returned home." The cable was "brought to the President while he was meeting with his top advisers." Robert McNamara was apparently "the first to react, arguing in favour of resuming the bombing immediately," and asking "What does Bruce know about Vietnam?"⁷⁹ The reality of these events was more mundane. National Security Adviser Walt Rostow told Johnson of Bruce's opinion over the telephone, saying that he had been "vehement in saying that if we resume bombing even in the southern part of Vietnam...we will remove the possibility of Kosygin's being helpful for some time to come."⁸⁰ Soon after, Rusk confirmed Bruce's view in a memorandum to the President, saying that he had "given me his extremely strong judgment that if we resume operations against North Vietnam tonight, it would mean that the Soviets would refuse to discuss the matter seriously tomorrow, there will be a break-up on the issue, and the break-up would be blamed wholly on our action." Rusk supported Bruce's advice, and informed him later that day that Johnson had accepted the counsel.⁸¹

A few weeks later, a disenchanted Wilson, feeling that he had been treated badly by Washington, explained to the Ambassador that he had been "considering the possibility of moving toward the middle, between the two nations, on Vietnamese policy," so that his peace proposals might be more likely to prosper and also to grant him some respite from the disaffected Labour left. Bruce urged to

the contrary, that Wilson should "keep in close contact with the President, being mindful of the close relationship between our countries and of the friendship of the President."⁸² He was soon reminded, though, of the Prime Minister's odd personal and political dependency on Johnson, which meant that despite his mutterings the Prime Minister was never likely to make fundamental changes in his policy towards the United States. The Ambassador noted in his diary that Michael Palliser had called "to say that the Prime Minister was concerned" about a certain newspaper article which "alleged dissatisfaction and lack of warmth on the President's part toward the Prime Minister." Under instructions from Wilson, Palliser asked Bruce if he could find "any recent statements by the President laudatory of the Prime Minister." Bruce assumed that Wilson expected to be "questioned about this article in the House," and, in a commentary on the bonds at the highest level of the Anglo-American relationship, noted that "there has been no occasion for the President recently" to make favourable pronouncements about Wilson.⁸³

The continued delicacy of the Vietnam issue in particular was such that in February 1968 while helping to draft a White House dinner toast for Wilson, Bruce counseled that there should be no "references to Vietnam; or at least to the British role in support of our efforts."⁸⁴ Later, a report by Louis Heren in the *Times* intimated that Johnson did not hold the Prime Minister in high regard.⁸⁵ Once again, a worried Wilson sent Palliser to make enquiries of Bruce, this time to ask whether Heren's article was a faithful reflection of Johnson's opinions. Bruce "concluded on the basis of his own knowledge of the President's point of view, that this [article] must be the outcome of a personal talk with the President," not least because it condemned Labour's recent announcement of an "accelerated withdrawal" of British forces from Asia.⁸⁶

Lankford indicates that "it was America's traditional anti-imperialist stance — which Bruce emphatically did not share — that encouraged the British retreat from empire."⁸⁷ In February 1965, the Ambassador attributed Britain's balance of payments problems rather simplistically to the decline of the empire and the commonwealth,⁸⁸ but it was certainly not the case that, as Lankford implies, he was an old-fashioned imperialist who supported the long-term preservation of the colonial empires, nor was the United States exerting pressure upon the British to abandon the global bases that were a legacy of the imperial era. In fact, the climate of the Cold

War meant that Washington was keenly appreciative of the geopolitical utility of Britain's East of Suez bases. But the far-flung defence commitments that this entailed were a considerable economic burden for the UK. Indicating the need for economies, Wilson told Bruce in November 1964 that "Britain was at the moment trying to fulfil three roles — the independent nuclear deterrent, the conventional role in Europe, and a world role East of Suez."⁸⁹ A 1964 Foreign Office document noted that Britain's defence spending was increasing from £1,596 million in 1960–61 to an estimated £2,141 million in 1965–66 and an estimated £2,400 million by 1969–70.⁹⁰ Some £300 million was spent overseas each year on "defence and related activities."⁹¹ Wilson told Bruce in November 1964 that although he was "an East of Suez man... he did not see how his government could keep up the present rate of expenditure in that area."⁹² Bruce noted that cuts East of Suez commended themselves "in both budgetary and foreign exchange savings (at a time when no other sources for welfare spending and investment incentives are in view) and it appeals to the growing number who, for doctrinal and emotional reasons, want to reduce Britain's world role."⁹³

In summer 1967, contrary to Wilson's numerous assurances to Washington, the British revealed plans to withdraw from most of their positions East of Suez by the mid-1970s, and early the next year it was further announced that the pace of withdrawal would be accelerated to provide for withdrawal by 1971. The proposals caused immense distress to the US Ambassador, as they seemed tantamount to a betrayal of US foreign policy, which was already under assault both at home and abroad owing to the Vietnam debacle. Bruce complained to Foreign Secretary George Brown that the UK's intention to make "a unilateral determination" to withdraw from East of Suez was:

more likely to cause bitter controversy between the US and UK Governments than any other issue between us during the last few years...the appearance of our being deserted...in the midst of our Vietnamese involvement, by a Government assumed to be our most reliable ally, headed by a Prime Minister who had repeatedly declared himself an "East of Suez Man" was unwise, provocative, and absolutely unacceptable.⁹⁴

While continuing to rue the UK's relinquishment of most of its extra-European strategic commitments, Bruce indicated later that the bonds between Britain and the United States were already

changing, in part because the UK was now pursuing its second bid to join the EEC. The United States, said Bruce, would “derive massive and fortunate benefits” from “the existence of a cohesive and united Europe” that would include the UK. The American government would be able to continue its “bilateral relations with the constituent states, but, on matters where they speak with a single voice, their influence, coupled with our own, should serve for generations to come as the most practicable connection available to induce peace and order.” The “entry of the UK into Europe, via common institutions, should strengthen, not impair, our easy intercourse with it and its new associates.” In any case, the “so-called Anglo-American special relationship is now little more than sentimental terminology, although the underground waters of it will flow with a deep current.”⁹⁵ Bruce’s statements indicate that a key prop of the Anglo-American relationship, Britain’s standing as a world power, was soon to give way. However, all was not lost: the reference to “the underground waters” indicated that less visible forms of cooperation — such as that between the diplomatic, defence and the intelligence establishments — would continue to the mutual benefit of each state. Of Bruce’s reports in the Wilson-Johnson years, this was certainly the most significant, given that it charts so well a distinct running down of the Anglo-American relationship against the background of Britain’s turn towards Europe.

Optimistically, Bruce argued that the EEC application would probably succeed, telling the State Department in October 1966 that “British strategy and tactics during the past six months have been both intelligent and effective,” and anticipating that de Gaulle, although remaining opposed to British membership, seemed “unwilling or unable to use the flat veto because it would create crisis in the Community” and was “bad French domestic politics, given public support for British entry.”⁹⁶ Yet in December 1967 de Gaulle confounded Bruce’s prediction by rejecting the British application, partly on the grounds that the UK’s apparently close connections with Washington would mean “continued US domination of Europe” if the British were permitted to join the Common Market. The French leader believed that Britain “would have to totally change its traditions, outlook and commitments abroad (such as Hong Kong and Singapore).”⁹⁷ There was a notable tension between the UK’s position as a world power and the pursuit of a more European role. Wilson told his Cabinet on, June 6, that the turn towards Europe

meant that "the concept of a special relationship between the United States and ourselves was...undergoing a gradual modification, although close relations in the shape of continuing consultations on international affairs would no doubt continue."⁹⁸ George Ball was among those in Washington who understood the incongruence of the British ambitions in Europe and the retention of a global role. In July 1966, he argued that Washington should try to discourage British claims of a "special relationship" with the United States, by easing the pressure for a continued British commitment East of Suez and by expressing a willingness to take part in some kind of financial operation to facilitate British membership in the EEC.⁹⁹

Bruce himself once noted that in the eyes of many British observers the proposed East of Suez reductions were thought "to strengthen the Common Market bid."¹⁰⁰ There was therefore a certain contradiction between championing British membership of the EEC and his concurrent, emotional opposition to the abrogation of the East of Suez role. While he understood that Britain's spending on defence abroad was "out of hand, [and] seemed to be out of proportion to the political gains that might have been had as a result of continuing as previously,"¹⁰¹ there is little evidence that Bruce managed to square the circle that if the country had been prosperous enough to sustain the world role there would have been little need to turn towards the EEC for economic rehabilitation.¹⁰² By the time he finally left London in 1969, Britain lacked either of the international roles that he had supported so firmly over the years: the "world power" status was moribund, and there was no countervailing membership of the EEC. Developments such as these had led the Ambassador to suggest that it would cause him "no heartburn whatever" when the time came for him to move on from London.¹⁰³

In conclusion, while questions have been raised about Bruce's relative remoteness from the day-to-day operations of the Embassy, he was by no means remote from Harold Wilson and senior Labour Party politicians; Michael Palliser has suggested that on occasions Bruce seemed almost "omnipresent."¹⁰⁴ Wilson, who saw Bruce frequently at Chequers as well as 10 Downing Street, was very much inclined to use him as a key medium of communication with the White House: the Ambassador's "standing with the President, his discretion, and his bankerish connections...made him more convincing than professorish types."¹⁰⁵ The mutual dealings of Wilson

and Bruce were so frequent as to be entirely routine; it can be said with confidence that few if any prime ministers have ever attached so much importance to establishing a close relationship with an American ambassador. Wilson saw a close, informal relationship with Bruce as the first step towards establishing a corresponding relationship with the White House — that was one reason why under him “the United States ambassador to the Court of St James’ always found an “open door at Downing Street.”¹⁰⁶ Yet Wilson was also to argue that ‘Despite the very special position that David Bruce held in London, with his direct access to the White House... the Prime Ministerial-Ambassadorial relationship is relatively unimportant.’ One of the reasons for this assertion was that prime ministers tend to find themselves with “far too much to do on the home front on economic and social questions and legislation.”¹⁰⁷

There are also limits to the influence in Washington even of an ambassador as well-regarded as Bruce. He strove to persuade US policy-makers of the value of the UK’s diplomatic support over Vietnam, but the administration had little native sympathy for the British and became increasingly preoccupied with the more critical issue of events on the ground in Vietnam itself, as well as the growing furore in the United States. Thus many of Bruce’s counsels trying to encourage his colleagues in Washington to value British support of American policy were largely fruitless. On the economic front, the White House proved receptive to the Ambassador’s more negative ideas, given the worries that a substantial devaluation of sterling might precipitate a major international economic upheaval. In August 1965, Johnson told William Martin of the Federal Reserve that he had “never had any confidence” in the British ability to handle economic questions.¹⁰⁸ Undoubtedly, some of this pessimism had roots in Bruce’s gloomy exegesis.

More positively, Bruce’s diaries and his despatches offer an essential — and eloquent — perspective on Anglo-American relations in the 1960s. He captured well the tensions in the relationship at a critical time, including the difficulty imposed by the UK’s moves away from the world role in favour of a more modest, Europe-centred vocation — although there are few indications of him accepting that one development fostered the other. In the light of these events, Bruce’s 1967 cable dismissing the Anglo-American “special relationship” as mere “sentimental terminology” found echoes in later commentaries in Washington. In June 1968, for example, a

State Department analysis reflected that Britain's future was "at best, a middle-sized European power, albeit one with a nuclear capability, a residual sense of extra-European responsibility and a continuing, if diminished, status as a favored partner of the US."¹⁰⁹ While Bruce did manage to ease some of the strains between Wilson and Johnson, he could exert but little influence on the deeper developments in the Anglo-American relationship.

NOTES

1. 'Anglo-American relations: a special case?,' University of Texas speech, April 30, 1970, Wash. DC April 1970 NY May 4, 1970, C. 1179, Harold Wilson Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Harold Wilson, 'How a prime minister and an ambassador almost stopped the Vietnam War,' *The Diplomatist*, 35:4 (April, 1979), p.30.
2. Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), p.22.
3. Gore-Booth to Dean, July 21, 1965, AU 1904/2 (A), FO 371/179615, Public Record Office, London (PRO).
4. On that relationship see Jonathan Colman, A "Special Relationship"? *Harold Wilson, Lyndon B. Johnson and Anglo-American Relations 'at the Summit', 1964-68* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming 2004); Jonathan Colman, 'Harold Wilson, Lyndon B. Johnson and Anglo-American "summit diplomacy," 1964-68', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 1:2 (autumn 2003), pp.131-51; Sylvia Ellis, 'Lyndon B. Johnson, Harold Wilson and the Vietnam war: a not so special relationship?,' in Jonathan Hollowell (ed.), *Twentieth Century Anglo-American Relations* (London: Palgrave, 2001), pp.180-204; Ben Pimlott, 'Courting the President: Wilson and Johnson in the 1960s,' in Antoine Capet and Aissatou Sy-Wonyu (eds), *The "Special Relationship": La "Relation Spéciale" entre le Royaume-Uni et les Etats-Unis* (Rouen: Université de Rouen, 2003), pp.185-91.
5. Philip M. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide: A Political and Diplomatic Memoir* (New York: Scribners, 1992), p.219.
6. Valuable general accounts of Anglo-American relations include C.J. Bartlett, *The "Special Relationship": A Political History of Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1992); Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1995); John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001); Robert M. Hathaway, *Great Britain and the United States: Special Relations since World War II* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), Ritchie Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).
7. Quoted in Nelson K. Lankford, *The Last American Aristocrat: The Biography of David K.E. Bruce* (New York: Little, Brown, 1995), p.327.

8. David Bruce oral history transcript, interview conducted by Jerry N. Hess, 1 March 1972, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.
9. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide*, p.218.
10. Elmer Plischke, *The Conduct of American Diplomacy* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1967), p.270.
11. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide*, p.219.
12. Jonathan 'Jock' Stoddart oral history transcript, interview conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, January 19, 2000, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Arlington, Virginia (ADST).
13. Hermann Frederick Eilts oral history transcript, interview conducted by William D. Brewer, August 12, 1988, ADST.
14. Author's interview with Sir Michael Palliser, London, December 12, 2003.
15. Richard A. Ericson Jr oral history transcript, interview conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, April 19, 1995, ADST. The transcript refers to "holes" rather than "hulls" but this is obviously an error of transcription.
16. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide*, p.219.
17. Author's interview with Sir Michael Palliser.
18. Author's interview with Sir Oliver Wright, London, December 11, 2003.
19. Gore-Booth to Dean, July 26, 1965, AU 1904/2 (A), FO 371/179615, PRO.
20. Gore-Booth to Dean, July 21, 1965, *ibid*.
21. Ellen M. Johnson oral history transcript, interview conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, April 1994, ADST.
22. Dean to Gore-Booth, July 26, 1965, AU 1904/2 (A), FO 371/179615, PRO.
23. Author's interview with Sir Michael Palliser.
24. Bruce to Philip Jessup, head of the delegation preparatory meetings, Paris, May 4, 1950, quoted in John Baylis (ed.), *Anglo-American Relations since 1939: The Enduring Alliance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.63.
25. Quoted in Hathaway, *Great Britain and the United States*, p.60.
26. Note 2, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964–1968 XIII Western Europe Region* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1995), p.105.
27. See Nigel Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.157.
28. 'Wilson Visit and the MLF', December 6, 1964, UK Wilson Visit I 12/7–8/64, Box 214, NSF: Country File, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Texas (LBJL).
29. Bundy to Rusk, January 17, 1966, *FRUS 1964–68 XIII*, p.301.
30. Quoted in Lankford, *The Last American Aristocrat*, p.327. For an account of Bruce's ambassadorship under Kennedy, see *ibid.*, pp.295–325. On Anglo-American relations more generally in these years, see also Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War*, and David Nunnerley, *President Kennedy and Britain* (London: Bodley Head, 1972).
31. Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard, 2003), pp.1–6. The phrase 'ugly American' refers to the 1958 Cold War novel of the same name by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick. The theme of Johnson's mastery of the domestic arena combined with a limited feel for international affairs is a staple

- of orthodox historiography. See for example, the comments of Waldo Heinrichs, "Lyndon Johnson: change and continuity," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (eds), *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963–1968* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.26.
32. David Bruce oral history transcript, interview conducted by Thomas H. Baker, 9 December 1971, part II, p.18, LBJL.
 33. "Lyndon Baines Johnson," by J. L. N. O'Loughlin, December 4, 1963, AU1012/5, FO 371/168409, PRO.
 34. See the case study by David M. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and his Vietnam Advisers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1993).
 35. See note 33.
 36. Quoted in Henry Brandon, *Special Relationships: A Foreign Correspondent's Memoirs from Roosevelt to Reagan* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p.210.
 37. Paul Gore-Booth to Patrick Dean, July 21, 1965, AU 1904/2, FO 371/179615, PRO.
 38. Author's interviews with Sir Oliver Wright and Sir Michael Palliser.
 39. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide*, p.220.
 40. Obituary, "Mr David Bruce: valuable diplomatic service to the United States," *The Times*, December 6, 1977.
 41. Bruce to State, *Foreign Relations of the United States XII Western Europe* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 2001), p.467.
 42. 'Prime Minister Wilson', December 6, 1964, Wilson Visit I 12.7/8.64, Box 214, NSF: Country File, LBJL.
 43. Bruce to State, May 30, 1967, *FRUS 1964–1968 XII*, p.572.
 44. Bator to Johnson, July 26, 1966, Chron. File 6/16/66–7/31/66, Box 3, Bator Papers, LBJL.
 45. Willis C. Armstrong oral history transcript, interview conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, November 29, 1988, ADST. The telegram in question is probably that of July 11, 1966, in which Bruce warned that "every sluice gate is beginning to open" on the British economy. See Lankford, *The Last American Aristocrat*, p.329.
 46. James L. Tull oral history transcript, interview conducted by Raymond Ewing, May 31, 2001, ADST.
 47. Author's interview with Sir Michael Palliser.
 48. Embassy to State, October 16, 1964, *FRUS 1964–1968 XII*, pp.464–7.
 49. Diary of David Bruce, entry for December 16, 1965, MSS5:1B8303:55, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (VHS).
 50. House of Commons speech, undated, L-2 1963–66, C. 1127, Wilson Papers, Bodleian Library.
 51. Bruce oral history, part I, p.23, LBJL.
 52. Author's interview with Sir Michael Palliser.
 53. Quoted in Lankford, *The Last American Aristocrat*, p.332.
 54. Charles T. Cross oral history transcript, interview conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, November 19, 1997, ADST.
 55. Bruce diary, March 6, 1965, MSS5:1B8303:51, VHS.

56. *Ibid.*, February 16, 1965.
57. Embassy to State, March 12, 1965, POL 27 Viet S. 3.11.65, Subject-Numeric Files 1964–1966, State Department, RG 59, US National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (NARA).
58. *Ibid.*
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60. Bruce diary, March 22, 1965, MSS5:1B8303:51, VHS.
61. See Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964–1970: A Personal Record* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p.80; Wilson-Johnson telephone conversation, February 10, 1965, *FRUS 1964–1968 II*, pp.229–32.
62. Brandon, *Special Relationships*, p.210.
63. Wilson to Stewart, March 23, 1965, T2/65–T294/65, C. 1580, Wilson Papers, Bodleian Library.
64. Bruce diary, March 23, 1965, *FRUS 1964–1968 XII*, p.472.
65. Bruce diary, March 24, 1965, MSS5:1B8303:51, VHS.
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67. Bruce to State, July 11, 1966, Wilson Visit, Box 12, NSF: Memos to the President, LBJL.
68. Embassy to State, July 4, 1966, *FRUS 1964–1968 XII*, p.538.
69. Macle hose (Foreign Office) to Palliser, June 15, 1966, PREM 13/1274, PRO.
70. See Colman, ‘Anglo-American summit diplomacy’, pp.138–9.
71. Wilson-Bruce conversation, January 10, 1967, PREM 13/1917, PRO.
72. Bruce oral history, part I, p.21, LBJL.
73. Wilson, “How a prime minister . . .,” p.30. For detailed accounts of the initiative see John Dumbrell and Sylvia Ellis, ‘British involvement in Vietnam peace initiatives, 1966–1967: Marigolds, Sunflowers, and “Kosygin week,”’ *Diplomatic History*, 27:1 (January 2003), pp.113–49; and Geraint Hughes, “A “missed opportunity” for peace? Harold Wilson, British diplomacy and the Sunflower initiative to end the Vietnam War, February 1967,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 14:3 (September 2003), pp.106–30.
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75. Author’s interview with Sir Michael Palliser.
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77. Rostow-Johnson telephone conversation, February 12, 1967, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964–1968 V Vietnam 1967* (Washington DC: USGPO, 2002), p.154.
78. Rostow-Johnson telephone conversation, February 11, 1967, *ibid.*, p.127.
79. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide*, pp.221–2.
80. Rostow-Johnson telephone conversation, February 11, 1967, *FRUS 1964–68 V*, pp.126.
81. *Ibid.*, p.129.
82. Embassy to State, April 4, 1967, *FRUS 1964–1968 XII*, p.565.

83. Bruce diary, April 14, 1967, MSS5:1B8303:60, VHS.
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85. Louis Heren, "Anglo-US Relationship comes under strain," *The Times*, February 23, 1968.
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87. Lankford, *The Last American Aristocrat*, p.330.
88. Bruce diary, February 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968* XII, p.483.
89. 'Note for the Record', November 27, 1964, PREM 13/103, PRO.
90. Trend to Wilson, "Defence: Chequers Discussion," November 19, 1964, PREM 13/018, PRO.
91. *Ibid.*
92. Bruce diary, November 29, 1964, MSS5:1B8303:50, VHS.
93. Bruce to State, *FRUS 1964-1968* XII, p.574.
94. Bruce to Rusk, May 6, 1967, POL UK-US, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-69, RG 59, NARA.
95. Bruce to Rusk, May 8, 1967, UK Memos XI 4/67-6/67, Box 211, NSF: Country File, LBJL.
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100. Bruce to State, May 30, 1967, *FRUS 1964-1968* XII, p.574.
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102. Also see Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Withdrawal East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp.157-77.
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106. Tony Benn, *Out of the Wilderness: Diaries 1963-1967* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p.108, entry for May 5, 1964; Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat*, p.44; "Anglo-American Relations: a Special Case?," University of Texas speech, April 30, 1970, Wash. DC April 1970 NY May 4, 1970, C. 1179, Wilson Papers, Bodleian Library.
107. Wilson, "How a prime minister . . .," p.30, 32.
108. Johnson-William Martin telephone conversation, August 5, 1965, citation 8510, tape WH6508.02, LBJL.
109. "NSC Paper on the UK," undated, Rostow June 1-6, 68 Vol. 80 (2/2), Box 35, NSF: Memos to the President, LBJL.