

What do we need from a new Ambassador to the USA?

The outgoing Ambassador was right to resign. His position was undermined by the leaker, who needs to be identified. He could no longer perform his role, as the President took his criticisms personally. The next Ambassador must be capable of good analysis in private communications, expressed in moderate and professional language, and be a great advocate of the United Kingdom. He or she will need to rebuild trust and regular exchanges with the Administration after this most unfortunate rupture. We need someone who likes the USA and respects the democratic decision of US voters.

The new appointee should be expected to regain access to senior officials and the President and to reassure them that the UK respects the Administration in office and wishes to work with them, whilst of course reserving the right of a trusted friend and ally to give unpopular advice in private and to disagree in public about policy where our interests as countries diverge. The first report back home should explain the successes and aims of the White House as they set them out, and to remind us that we can learn from their economic progress. The US is growing considerably faster than the UK or the EU. It is enjoying considerable success in creating many new jobs and getting real wages up. The President's tax cuts have made people better off, promoted more investment in the USA and helped establish more and better paid employment. The President, unlike his predecessors has kept them and us out of difficult Middle Eastern wars. More background to US achievement would be helpful and provide essential political context to the long run up to the next Presidential election, which Mr Trump is in a good position currently to win.

Of course the Ambassador should also inform London of the Democrat critique of the Presidency to provide balance. Instead of siding with the Opposition the analysis should evaluate chances or probabilities of the Democrats finding a candidate for the Presidency who might be able to win, and in the meantime assessing what the Democrats in the House of Representatives can achieve on issues where the Congress has a say.

The diplomatic memo should not be cheer leading for the President's critics, giving a false sense of their chances of gaining control. Nor should it be propaganda for Mr Trump, whose policies should be reported and scrutinised professionally. The new UK representative needs to be proud of the UK and our decision to leave the EU, and alert to the many opportunities Brexit offers for the US relationship, not just in our minds but in the mind of the President.