

The ambassador to Washington's gaffes

Published: April 29, 2026, 6:34 am

I was amused to note the FT's revelations yesterday of the massive diplomatic gaffes by Peter Mandelson's successor as the UK's ambassador in Washington yesterday, no doubt held back for best effect to coincide with the state visit of Charles Mountbatten Windsor to the USA. [They reported:](#)

Britain's ambassador to Washington has said that America's only "special relationship" is "probably Israel", not the UK, in remarks that risk embarrassing King Charles during his visit to the US this week.

They also noted this:

Sir Christian Turner also criticised America's political system for failing to hold US associates of the sex offender Jeffrey Epstein to account, saying it was "extraordinary" that the scandal "hasn't touched anybody" in the US.

They added:

He noted that, by contrast, senior British figures, including his predecessor as ambassador Lord Peter Mandelson and "potentially the prime minister", had been "brought down" by the affair.

Three key messages, then.

First, that the USA's special relationship is with Israel, but since I also happen to think that's true of the UK as well, you could argue that the special relationship survives, but it's just a threesome these days. Of this, I have little doubt.

Second, the Epstein case has not caught up with Trump as yet. Give it time. It might still. Avoiding it appears to be what motivates Trump most of all.

Thirs, Starmer is going. Was that a leak, a prediction or an acknowledgement of a certainty? Does it make a difference? It is hardly classified information these days.