



THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE BICENTENNIAL
OF THE TREATY OF PARIS

REMARKS MADE BY JOAN R. CHALLINOR

Dedication of The Diplomatic Gates

Grosvenor Square, London, 10 May 1984

Your Royal Highness, Lord Hailsham, Ambassador Price, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet to dedicate the Diplomatic Gates of Grosvenor Square. These gates are the gift of the National Committee for the Bicentennial of the Treaty of Paris to the people of Great Britain in honor of the peace treaty which, in 1783, restored relations between Great Britain and the United States and provided the basis for the friendship we enjoy today.

We dedicate these gates in honor of the peacemakers of 1783 and all British and United States diplomats who have labored for understanding and good will between our two countries. In doing so, we affirm the importance of diplomacy, an endeavor well understood and highly esteemed by the negotiators of 1783. Benjamin Franklin, writing to David Hartley, the British signer of the treaty, described diplomacy as "the best of all works, the work of peace."

The National Committee has inspired many events for the observance of this treaty and "the work of peace"; but in the end, museum exhibits are dismantled, cathedral services move inexorably toward the recessional, orchestras sound the last note, balloons must descend to earth. These Diplomatic Gates are our most lasting remembrance of the Treaty of Paris observance and the friendship between our two nations.

The United States and Great Britain are bound together by more than language, culture, heritage, common law, and a reverence for freedom; we are bound together by affection. It is in that spirit that we come here today to present these gates to the British people as a symbol of our affection and respect.

Grosvenor Square has been the center of Anglo-American diplomacy ever since John Adams came here in 1785, fresh from the treaty negotiations in Paris. In the center of the square stands a statue of the great American president Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was placed on land donated by the Duke of Westminster in 1947. No better example of the unique relationship which binds our two countries together exists than that statue. At a time of grim austerity, when Britain was recovering from the ravages of war, thousands of British citizens contributed to this memorial to an American president.

Its long involvement with Anglo-American diplomatic history, therefore, makes Grosvenor Square a particularly felicitous home for these gates. The architect, Mr. A. John Kaye, has combined in their design the attributes of strength and grace. These are also the traits of a good diplomat: strength to hold fast to one's principles, grace to understand other people's goals and constraints at the negotiating table; strength to remain calm when provoked, grace to accept setbacks and yet struggle on. The balance of these qualities is as difficult to achieve in the field of diplomacy as in architecture, and when it occurs it is always the result of talent rightly exercised.

A recognition of the talents necessary for diplomacy and a rightful regard for the skills of international negotiation seem a most appropriate commemoration of this treaty. In 1984, when the whole world cries out for

reasonable talk to end an unthinkable threat to human survival, we can determine to move forward to peace--to seek negotiation out of conflict. We should put negotiators on an equal footing with our martial heroes. Diplomats must take their rightful place beside warriors in our pantheon if we are to claim an overriding commitment to a lasting peace.

It is the will to build a durable peace that has been so often lacking in the past. We have waged war with singlemindedness and then negotiated in a fragmented and often hesitant way. To achieve a lasting peace will take force and vigor. We must let the world know that we are now about the work of peace as we were once about the work of war. The same resourcefulness, endurance, and self-reliance which were once the hallmark of the British and American negotiators in 1783 must now inform our peacemaking. We must wage a peace that will make it possible for humanity to breathe freely instead of merely holding its breath; and we must construct a peace that will let our children grow old and our old people die a natural death. This determination, born out of the commemoration of the Treaty of Paris, would pay due respect to the peacemakers of 1783 and the men and women who labor today to bring peace and reconciliation to deeply troubled parts of the globe.

The gates we dedicate today will be opened in a few moments. We hope they will open on an era of international understanding and respect for diplomacy and diplomats. For more than a century and a half, relations between Britain and the United States have been candid and forthright, and on both sides agreements have been strictly honored. We have been well served in our relations by what David Hartley termed our "ancient affections and common interests." We must, however, in the future, learn to keep all diplomatic gates open and to negotiate

successfully even when there are few interests and little affection. The task is agonizingly difficult, yet we must persevere. We can perhaps take heart by remembering Christ's words, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and add to them for our own very dangerous times, "and blessed be the 'work of peace.'"