



University of  
**Strathclyde**  
Glasgow



UNIVERSITY OF  
**EXETER**



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



# Embassies in Crisis

**British Academy, London**

9 June 2016

**Convenors**

**Dr Rogelia Pastor-Castro - Prof Martin Thomas - Prof Richard Toye**

## ***Embassies in Crisis***

### ***British Academy, 9 June 2016***

A warm welcome to this one-day conference exploring various facets of Embassies in Crisis from historical, diplomatic, and experiential perspectives. The conference is backed with funding from Exeter University's Centre for War, State and Society, the University of Strathclyde History Department, and the British International History Group. We're grateful for their support. We've also received much useful advice and support from the FCO Historians, for which: thank you.

We're delighted to have the opportunity to bring historians and FCO staff together for what we hope will mark the beginning of a longer discussion on Embassies, their histories, their roles, their communities and their lives. As you'll see, some of our speakers will be focusing on specific episodes of Embassy crisis, others on broader issues of crisis management. Details of what is to come are provided in the short abstracts within this conference pack. We're particularly fortunate to have contributions from FCO Ambassadors and staff who have kindly agreed to offer reflections on Embassy life in times of crisis.

Embassies have long been integral to international diplomacy, their staff instrumental to inter-governmental dialogue, strategic partnerships, trading relationships and cultural exchange. But Embassies are also discrete political spaces. Notionally sovereign territory 'immune' from local jurisdiction, in moments of crisis Embassies have often been targets of protest and sites of confrontation. Our conference will explore a few of these flashpoints in the lives of Embassies overseas, perhaps opening the door to further discussion and investigation of others. Approaching Embassies as distinct communities with their own micro-histories and discrete challenges, our conference seeks to explore each of these aspects in the lives of Embassies and the people who run them.

To all of our speaker and fellow attendees, a big thank you for coming. We hope you'll find it an enjoyable and stimulating day.

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*Rogelia Pastor-Castro, University of Strathclyde*  
*Martin Thomas, University of Exeter*  
*Richard Toye, University of Exeter*

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Wi-Fi is: 10-11CHT and the password is "hospitality" - For Twitter users #Embcrisis



## ***Embassies in Crisis*** ***British Academy, 9 June 2016***

- 9.10-9.20 Welcoming remarks: **Martin Thomas**
- 9.20-10.40 **Chair: James Ellison (Queen Mary University of London)**  
Panel I **Richard Smith**, *Keeping the Flag Flying: John Reeves and the British Consulate in Macau, 1941-45*  
**Rogelia Pastor-Castro**, *The British Embassy in Paris and the Fall of France*  
**Karine Varley**, *'Imprisoned in the Vatican': Neutrality and the Challenges Facing the French Embassy to the Holy See, 1940-1944*
- 10.40-11.00 **Refreshment break**
- 11.00-12.00 **Chair: Patrick Salmon (Foreign & Commonwealth Office)**  
Panel II **Jane Marriott**, Director of the UK's Joint International Counter Terrorism Unit, former Ambassador to Yemen  
**Simon Smith**, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, former Ambassador to Ukraine
- 12.00-12.45 **Lunch – Mall Room**
- 12.45-13.45 **Chair: Geoffrey Swain (University of Glasgow)**  
Panel III **Mary Heimann**, *The Mindszenty Affair and the U.S. Embassy in Budapest*  
**David Schriffel**, *Cold War Crises: Austrian diplomatic representations in Czechoslovakia from the early 1950s to the late 1960s*
- 13.45-14.15 **Refreshment break**
- 14.15-15.00 **Chair: Martin Thomas (University of Exeter)**  
Panel IV **Eric Hepburn**, Head of Security & DSO Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
**Nicola Mockridge**, Head of Policy Innovation and Communications, Crisis Management Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office
- 15.00-15.20 **Refreshment break**
- 15.20-16.50 **Chair: Richard Toye (University of Exeter)**  
Panel V **Alex Ferguson**, *The U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the Crisis at Dien Bien Phu, 1954*  
**Lorena De Vita**, *'Such a relationship should be a two-way street': The First German Embassy in Israel between Crises and Opportunities, 1966-1967*  
**Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez**, *Hook, line and sinker: The British Embassy in Cairo and the supposed 'expulsion of Soviet advisers' from Egypt, 1972*
- 16.50 Concluding remarks: **Rogelia Pastor-Castro, Martin Thomas and Richard Toye**

## Speakers



Dr Lorena De Vita is a Teaching Fellow at Aberystwyth University. Her research focuses on the political and cultural history of the Cold War, on post-1949 German history. Dr De Vita obtained a BSc in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Roma Tre in 2008, an MSc from the London School of Economics in 2010 and a PhD from Aberystwyth University in 2016. During the course of her PhD, Dr De Vita held a DAAD Research Fellowship at the Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena, and a Joseph Wulf Fellowship at the Memorial House of the Wannsee Conference, Berlin. Her reviews have appeared in *German History* and *Intelligence and National Security* and an article drawing from a section of her thesis has been published in *International Affairs*.



Alex Ferguson is a PhD student in History at the University of Southampton. Focused on the role of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during early American involvement in Vietnam in the 1950s, his thesis explores the embassy's efforts in implementing a policy aimed at satisfying the conflicting goals of anti-colonialism and anti-communism in Indochina. He is currently preparing an article for publication on the press management activities of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Saigon during the final four years of the Franco-Viet Minh War. He holds a BA and an MA in History from the University of Southampton.



Isabella Ginor (former Soviet/Russian affairs specialist, *Ha'aretz* newspaper) and Gideon Remez (former head of foreign news, Israel Radio) are associate fellows of the Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in the Soviet/Russian military role in the Middle East.



Their book *Foxbats over Dimona: The Soviets' Nuclear Gamble in the Six-Day War* (Yale, 2007) won the Silver Medal of the book award presented by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Their presentation at this conference is excerpted from their recently completed sequel, *The Soviet-Israeli War, 1967-1973*.



Mary Heimann, Professor of Modern History at Cardiff University and Historian of Ideas. She has particular expertise in the history of Catholicism, Communism and East-Central Europe, especially Czechoslovakia. Professor Heimann was educated at Vassar College in upstate New York and at Magdalen College, Oxford. She was one of 7 authors to appear at the Prague Writers' Festival on the theme 'The Birth of Nations' (2013) and took part in a televised debate with former Prime Minister Petr Pithart in the Czech Senate. Heimann spoke at the NATO

Partnership for Peace regional stability workshop held in Kiev, Ukraine in 2015. She is the author of *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed* (Yale University Press) and *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (Oxford University Press). Her next book, *Christianity behind the Iron Curtain*, focussing on Communist-Catholic relations in Cold War Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, is to be published by Yale University Press.



Eric Hepburn Appointed Head of Security & DSO for Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) in August 2015 where I cover Physical, Personnel and Technical security for the UK and FCO's global network of 267 Posts. I have an expert team of over 120 staff based in the UK and overseas who undertake security risk assessments and manage the day-to-day operations on the ground. My team also cover security vetting, the provision of vehicles for FCO including armoured and Personal Protective Equipment. Prior to this, I've held numerous roles in both the public and private sector including, 2012 – 2015, HM Consul General & Counsellor Corporate Services (USA), a role that involved managing a consular team for Washington DC and the four nearby US states, Finance, HR, Estates, FM and IT for the US network. From 2006 – 2012 I was the Chief Operating

Officer for 10, Downing Street, where I served three different Prime Ministers (Blair, Brown, Cameron) and was responsible for the renovation works for the building. A qualified Management Accountant, I'm married with three grown up children.



Jane Marriott is the Director of the UK's new Joint International Counter Terrorism Unit. Formerly Ambassador to Sana'a, Yemen and acting Ambassador to Tehran, she has also been posted in Iraq (twice) and Afghanistan; worked for the US Department of State under Richard C. Holbrooke and CENTCOM under General Petraeus. She has also worked in the Cabinet Office, Home Office and Ministry of Defence. Jane enjoys travelling, history and politics and fitness training. She used to play the 'cello until it was smashed in the attack on the British Embassy in Tehran.



Nicola Mockridge, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Nicola Mockridge is Head of Policy, Innovation and Communications in the FCO's Crisis Management Department. She has responded to almost twenty crises, ranging from terrorist attacks in Tunisia, France and Belgium and evacuating British Nationals from Libya, to natural disasters such as the devastating earthquakes in Nepal. Prior to focussing on crisis management she worked for former Permanent Under Secretary Sir Simon Fraser from 2012 to 2014. She been posted overseas twice, to Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, and has also worked on EU, human rights and East Asia portfolios in London.



Dr Rogelia Pastor-Castro is Lecturer in International History at the University of Strathclyde. Her research interests focus on European security and integration. Her publications include, co-edited with John W Young, *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations, 1944-1979* (2013) which was the basis for a Witness Seminar at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2014. She has published on post-war European defence and British and French diplomacy. She is currently working on British and French contending visions of Europe. She is principal investigator on a project on relations between Britain and France in World War Two funded by Royal Society of Edinburgh. She is Treasurer of the British International History Group.



Dr David Schriffl is a historian at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. He has published extensively on relations between Austria and Slovakia and his monograph *Cooperative neighbours or impassable border? Austrian-Slovak relations from 1945 to 1968*, received the best publication prize from the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2012. He is currently working on relations between Austria and Portugal from the 18th to the 20th Century comparing their crossing points, empires and their republican remainders. He has recently published with Stefan Müller and Adamantios Skordos: *Secret Friends: Austria's relations with the Southern European dictatorships after*

*1945: Spain, Portugal, Greece.* (Vienna 2016). He has worked as Historian for the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism, Vienna. He is also a member of the Permanent Conference of Austrian and Czech Historians (SKÖTH) and contributed to radio and television programmes on Austrian foreign relations.



Dr Richard Smith is Senior Historian at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and editor of *Documents on British Policy Overseas*. He recently jointly edited a special edition of the *International History Review* (38:2) on 'Sir Edward Grey and Outbreak of the First World War' to which he also contributed a paper on 'Sir Edward Grey: the private life of a Foreign Secretary'. In addition, he has just finished jointly editing a book on the Foreign Office, Commerce and British Foreign Policy (due to be published by Palgrave later in the year) and contributed a chapter on British trade with Iran in the 1970s.



Simon Smith, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

Simon Smith was HM Ambassador in Ukraine from September 2012 to September 2015, leading the British Embassy in Kyiv through the challenging months of the “Revolution of Dignity”, followed by the sustained Russian assault on Ukraine’s sovereignty and integrity. From 2007 to 2012 he was HM Ambassador to Austria and was the UK’s Permanent Representative to UN and other international organisations in Vienna, notably as the UK Governor the FCO on the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency. During a 29 year diplomatic career he has also worked in the British Embassies in Moscow and Tokyo, and headed the FCO’s Russia, S Caucasus and C Asia Directorate, and its North East Asia and Pacific Department. He is currently preparing for his next overseas assignment.



*Colonial Past.*

Martin Thomas is Professor of Imperial History and Director of the Centre for the Study of War, State and Society at the University of Exeter. A specialist in the politics of contested decolonization, his most recent publications are *Violence and Colonial Order: Police, Workers and Protest in the European Colonial Empires, 1918-1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *Fight or Flight: Britain, France, and their Roads from Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is currently an Independent Social Research Foundation Fellow and coordinator of a Leverhulme Trust research network, *Understanding Insurgencies: Resonances from the*



Richard Toye is Professor of Modern History at the University of Exeter. He has published widely in the field of British, international, and imperial history. He is best known for his three books on Churchill, the most recent of which is *The Roar of the Lion: The Untold Story of Churchill's World War II Speeches* (2013). He is currently working with Professor Martin Thomas on a comparative history of British and French imperial rhetoric from the 1880s to the 1950s, which will be published by Oxford University Press.



Dr Karine Varley is a Lecturer in French and European History at the University of Strathclyde. She is the author of *Under the Shadow of Defeat: The War of 1870-71 in French Memory* (Palgrave, 2008), and has published widely on the Franco-Prussian War and Second World War. She is currently writing a book exploring French relations with Italy during the Second World War. She is also working on a two-year Royal Society of Edinburgh funded project on relations between Britain and France in World War Two.

## **Abstracts**

### **Keeping the Flag Flying: John Reeves and the British Consulate in Macau, 1941-45.**

**Richard Smith, Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Following the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941 the tiny Portuguese colony of Macau was cut off by Japanese forces and the British consul John Reeves was one of the last consular officials left between India and Australia. Reeves was responsible for around 9,000 refugees who fled to the neutral enclave and claimed assistance from the British Consulate. He built up an organisation to provide food, shelter and medical services for the refugees; whilst all the time a target for assassination from Japanese agents who infiltrated the territory. Drawing on Reeves' recently published memoir and Foreign Office files from the National Archives, the paper examines how the 'man on the ground' dealt with events during this crisis. It also sheds light on the role of the Consular Service (still separate from the Diplomatic Service until 1943) and highlights the work of smaller posts in the diplomatic network.

### **The British Embassy in Paris and the Fall of France**

**Rogelia Pastor-Castro, University of Strathclyde**

In May-June 1940 the British Embassy in Paris faced a political, military and a humanitarian crisis. As the military situation deteriorated, the embassy was evacuated but continued to function, albeit on a smaller scale, from Tours and then Bordeaux. The embassy's efforts to stiffen French morale became progressively difficult as the French leaders were divided and increasingly defeatist. The embassy, in a matter of weeks, moved from conducting relations with a free and friendly ally to having to deal with an increasingly hostile regime. As the French collapse approached, the embassy then faced a humanitarian crisis as it had to provide assistance to thousands of stranded British subjects and refugees. This paper will examine the embassy's attempts to meet these challenges under increasingly difficult operating conditions and reflects on the impact of 1940 on Franco-British relations.

### **'Imprisoned in the Vatican': Neutrality and the Challenges Facing the French Embassy to the Holy See, 1940-1944**

**Karine Varley, University of Strathclyde**

When Fascist Italy declared war on France on 10 June 1940, the French Ambassador to the Holy See was the only French diplomat permitted to remain in Rome. As a neutral state, the Vatican was permitted to maintain embassies, but being located within the capital city of a state at which France was at war, the French embassy to the Holy See found itself in a highly unusual and difficult position. This paper explores how the French embassy to the Holy See faced the challenges of operating under significant pressures and constraints during the Second World War. After signing an armistice with Italy, the new French government under Pétain tasked the embassy with using the Holy See as an intermediary to the Fascist government, gaining inside information on Italy and using the Vatican's position to directly influence Italian public opinion. However, the embassy's very survival was at the mercy of the Italian government's willingness to honour the Lateran Treaty. Unable to communicate freely with France, forbidden from leaving the Vatican and aware that the Fascist authorities had placed a spy at the embassy, Wladimir d'Ormesson and his successor Léon Bérard likened their position to being more like a prisoner than an ambassador. This paper considers how



the experiences of the French embassy to the Holy See can shed light on the wider challenges faced by neutral embassies caught between warring states.

### **The Mindszenty Affair and the US Embassy in Budapest**

**Mary Heimann, Cardiff University**

The 1949 trial in Budapest of Cardinal József Mindszenty and Accomplices, the show trial on which the popular film 'The Prisoner' was loosely based, made Mindszenty a household name. Not only did the Pope excommunicate all those involved in staging the infamous show trial, but the Cardinal's cause was taken up with zeal in the West, where Mindszenty became one of the best-known victims of Communist oppression and was widely understood to embody 'Christian values' in direct opposition to 'Communist' ones. Mindszenty was sentenced to life imprisonment, but again came to the world's attention when he was released during the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. The Hungarian Cardinal soon took refuge in the American Legation (later US Embassy) in Budapest. He was to remain in the US Embassy for fifteen years (from his entry on 4 November 1956 until his eventual departure on 28 September 1971), during which time he gradually became a diplomatic stumbling-block not only to Hungarian-US *rapprochement*, but also to post-Vatican II attempts at Marxist-Christian dialogue and to the wider cause of East-West *détente*. This paper will seek to reassess the significance of the Mindszenty affair in light of post-Cold War Hungarian, Vatican and US state and diplomatic sources.

### **Cold War Crises: Austrian diplomatic representations in Czechoslovakia from the early 1950s to the late 1960s.**

**David Schriffel, Austrian Academy of Sciences**

The year 1968 brought the invasion of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia but also a turmoil in the way embassies and legations had to act within the framework of local politics. After the "ice-age" of the Stalinist years when policemen were positioned outside diplomatic representations not to protect them but to control everybody entering, the Sixties brought other areas of activities: the promotion of contacts in terms of culture, business and tourism. The Austrian Legation in Prague and the Austrian Consulate General in Bratislava are good examples. During the invasion they have again been reduced to islands in a sea of Civil War and occupation mainly by the Red Army and other forces of the Warsaw Pact. In this immediate crisis the personnel on the spot is decisive. The Austrian Consul General decided to organise convoys of Western citizens to the near border but met very limited support by the Government in Vienna. The envoy in Prague granted visa for thousands of Czechs who wanted to flee their country against direct orders from Vienna and nevertheless later became Federal President. The paper tries to illustrate two ways of embassies in crisis on the Austro-Czechoslovak example: the suffocating iron fist of Stalinist oppression and the imminent problems of diplomatic representations surrounded by actual war.

### **The U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the Crisis at Dien Bien Phu, 1954**

**Alex Ferguson, University of Southampton**

The battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 marked one of the most important flashpoints of the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower. It was at this valley in northwest Vietnam that Eisenhower considered the use of American military force to save French forces and prevent Indochina's fall to communism. While there has been much scholarly interest in U.S. policy during the Dien Bien Phu crisis, the focus

has been predominantly on the deliberations of leading officials in Washington. Absent from the literature to date, however, is an examination of the role of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. This paper argues that the embassy played an important role in keeping key policymakers informed about the situation at Dien Bien Phu, in relaying French requests to Washington, in managing American press coverage of the battle and in mediating Franco-Vietnamese tension. However, it also asserts that on the most important question, that of U.S. intervention in Vietnam, the embassy had surprisingly little input into U.S. government deliberations. Asking why, this paper explores the relationship of key figures in the embassy with policymakers in Washington and reflects more broadly on the place of embassies in Eisenhower's management of international crises.

### **'Such a relationship should be a two-way street': The First German Embassy in Israel between Crises and Opportunities**

**Lorena De Vita, Aberystwyth University**

The Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel established official diplomatic relations in 1965. A few months later, in the midst of heavy protests, the first German embassy was set up in Israel and, in the coming decades, Germany proved to be a very important partner for Israel. Based upon underutilised archival sources as well as oral history interviews with members of staff of the first German embassy in Israel, this paper will offer a new interpretation of the difficult moments that marked the beginning of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany. By doing so, the paper will show how the German delegation attempted, and eventually managed, to turn the political crisis unleashed by the exchange of ambassadors into an opportunity to strengthen the bilateral ties with the Jewish state, in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

### **Hook, line and sinker: The British Embassy in Cairo and the supposed 'expulsion of Soviet advisers' from Egypt, 1972**

**Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

In the summer of 1972, the Soviet Union and Egypt staged an elaborate deception exercise that created a widespread concept whereby Egyptian President Sadat had "expelled the Soviet advisers" from his country. This was presented as signaling a rift due to Moscow's refusal to supply Egypt with weaponry for an offensive against Israel. The success of this deception led to global surprise, and Israeli unpreparedness, when this offensive was launched in October 1973 with full Soviet support. The British embassy in Cairo was particularly susceptible to disinformation, despite the expertise of the ambassador in Arab affairs and of the defence attaché/MI6 agent in Soviet matters. Among other causes, their analysis was tinged by aspiration to restore British influence in Egypt and especially to replace the USSR as main arms provider. The paper describes several of the most egregious examples, which although discredited within a few months did not detract from the diplomats' reputations and standing.

***Embassies in Crisis***  
***British Academy, 9 June 2016***  
**List of Attendees**

<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>LAST NAME</b>	<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>LAST NAME</b>
Christopher	Baxter	Jane	Marriott
John	Bew	John	McGowan-Fazakerley
Stuart	Butler	Alexander	McKenna
Alison	Carrol	Nicola	Mockridge
Richard	Carswell	Kalathmika	Natarajan
Rachel	Chin	Sue	Onslow
Poppy	Cullen	Rogelia	Pastor-Castro
Gareth	Curless	Jamie	Priestley
Billy	Davis	Gideon	Remez
Lorena	De Vita	George	Roberts
Andrew	Ehrhardt	Simon	Rofe
Sara	ElGaddari	Judith	Rowbotham
James	Ellison	Maeve	Ryan
Mohamed	Farah	Patrick	Salmon
Charlotte	Faucher	David	Schrieffl
Eileen	Federico	Cengizhan	Sehir
Alex	Ferguson	Adrian	Smith
John	Fisher	Richard	Smith
Isabella	Ginor	Simon	Smith
Erik	Goldstein	Gillian	Staerck
Mary	Heimann	Geoffrey	Swain
Eric	Hepburn	Ian	Talbot
Andrew	Holt	Martin	Thomas
Laure	Humbert	Isabelle	Tombs
Stacey	Hynd	Gizem	Toponder
El	Kacimi	Richard	Toye
Michael	Kandiah	Karine	Varley
Aiah	Kpakiwa	Angela	Vincent
Jerry	Kuehl	Hassaan	Waheed
Richard	Langhorne	David	Watson
Lorna	Lloyd	Alban	Webb