

Declare Cold War on the Special Relationship

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The last week has seen two of the biggest cliches in international journalism hauled out of the archive, dusted down and splashed across front pages and TV screens: The Cold War and The Special Relationship. Stop it. Everyone, stop it. I can't bear another newspaper article or news report starting with the words: "Is this the end/return of the Special Relationship/Cold War?". The answer is quite simply "NO", "NO" and thrice times "NO".

I am not an expert in International Relations but it is quite obvious that we are NOT in a nuclear weapons stand off with an ideologically hostile empire. It is quite clear that the 'Special Relationship' never really existed and certainly doesn't now. It's just that Britain happens to be closer culturally and politically to the USA than it is to Greece. That is not a 'special' relationship, that is an accident of history. And the funny thing is that when these two dumb questions are put to an expert or a politician they are immediately rejected – always.

So the current [fuss](#) with Russia may be serious but to talk about it in Le Carre style language is to misunderstand a complex, but not world-threatening set of problems. And last week's nonsense about Foreign Office ministers Douglas Alexander and Malloch Brown 'distancing' HMG from the Yanks followed by Gordon Brown and David Miliband cozying back up was put in to good perspective by [Spinwatch](#) who, although having some odd political views of their own, were right to wonder why the British media got this so wrong. [David Aaranovitch](#) writes interestingly on this, too, showing how our obsession with the minutiae of rhetorical positioning can lead to much bigger policy blunders.

Talking of which, next Tuesday we have an event looking at the future of Iraq. It's in partnership with the Channel 4 Iraq Commission and the Foreign Policy Centre. Chaired by Channel 4 News' Krishnan Guru-Murthy the panel will feature Baroness Jay, the LSE's Mary Kaldor, Patrick Cockburn of the Independent and Gaith Abdul-Ahad, Baghdad correspondent for the Guardian. That's 6.30 on Tuesday 24th at the Old Theatre, LSE, email polis@lse.ac.uk for details.

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