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By Roula Khalaf
July 13, 2019

The value of an ambassador's private memos is in the unvarnished assessments they contain. When the cables are leaked to the media, and the administration they report on is that of Donald Trump, the result is diplomatic mayhem.

Sir Kim Darroch, the UK ambassador to the US, discovered this the hard way. This week he was the victim of a damaging leak that aptly described the chaos at the White House. Mr Trump reacted with fury on Twitter, unleashing a torrent of insults at Sir Kim, and blocking him from White House meetings. When Boris Johnson, the frontrunner in the Conservative Party leadership contest and a Trump fan, failed to support the British envoy, Sir Kim was left with no choice but to offer his resignation.

The story that consumed the UK for much of the week leads to two unfortunate conclusions: the first is that in the age of leaks and hacks, the basic job of diplomats is at risk; the second is that, as prime minister, Boris Johnson cannot be counted on to support the civil service. You can read how the [Darroch saga unfolded](#) and what it tells us about the [transatlantic relationship](#).

What I've been reading

1. A [Royal Navy frigate](#) intervened to block three Iranian gunboats headed for a British tanker in the Strait of Hormuz this week. One-third of seaborne crude passes through the strait, which has become a [focal point for tensions](#) between Iran and the west, threatening global trade, as FT correspondents report.