It is a great honor to me to be here today as the first Briton to receive a Bradley Prize.

The United States has always been close to my heart: its cities and towns; its rivers and countryside; its history and literature; its achievements and its ideals. All have been an integral part of my life’s experience.

In 1962, I was fortunate to be able to travel for several months by car, criss-crossing the United States, the length and breadth of this great land. I learned then much of the qualities and aspirations of the American people. During that visit, and in the course of the many visits that followed, I came to understand the enduring quality of American democracy. I have never shared the unpleasant anti-Americanism of some Britons. I am one of those who can say in trust not just that some -- but many -- of my best friends are Americans. Indeed, my wife Esther (who is here this evening) was born in Chicago and grew up in Idaho.

As a Briton, I frequently recall the essential historical truth that twice in the 20th Century, the United States came -- amid the pain and peril of war -- to the rescue of Britain, and of the free world. That after the Second World War, she made an extraordinary effort to put Britain and much of Europe back on its feet. And that during the long years of the Cold War, with grim determination, she bore the brunt of the defense of freedom.
No wonder that Winston Churchill told his final Cabinet, as he retired forever from public life in 1955, "Never be separated from the Americans."

I am pleased that so many of my American friends are able to be here this evening. Each of you represents a facet of America’s greatness: education, opportunity, responsibility, free speech, and the abiding love of -- and the defense of -- freedom.

It was my good fortune while serving at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 1985 and 1986 to have seen at first hand and to have worked closely with the official American delegates. I saw how they fought so hard against those countries whose whole political outlook and practice was centered around the severe punishment of political opinions and of honest opposition. The American delegates at Geneva, headed by Morris Abram and Marshall Berger, influenced me greatly in the need for plain speaking and forthright opposition to tyranny, as did President Reagan’s great negotiator with the Soviet Union, Max Kampelman, who is here this evening. A man to whom the United States owes a great deal in the defense of its freedom.

In my writings, including my three-volume A History of the Twentieth Century and my Routledge Atlas of Russian History, I have tried to reflect what I learned from the lead that the United States took in the long, steady, and ultimately successful struggle against Soviet Communism and its destructive tentacles.

This evening has one sadness for me. When I was asked whom I would like as my personal guests, I was about to telephone one of my oldest American friends, only to read his obituary in that day’s paper. This was Jack Kemp, my contemporary whose company I always enjoyed, and who once encouraged me to have the liveliest of debates with his staff at HUD. Jack Kemp had a keen sense of what America was and what it could be. He will be much missed.

Freedom cannot be taken for granted. The defense of freedom needs continual vigilance. As an historian, I have always stressed this -- and have always been moved when leaders cite my writings and use them, including President George Bush and his son, George W. That has meant a great deal to me. As did the recent gift of my Churchill volumes, including Churchill: A Life, by my Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to your President, Barack Obama.

My American writing connection goes back a long way. Forty-six years ago, I received a letter from Evelyn Lincoln at The White House that President Kennedy had asked her to remind him to send me a thank-you letter for my very first book, as soon as she returned from Dallas. In that book, I showed the determination of the British appeasers not to allow the United States to become involved in any way in an anti-Hitler front.

I first saw the United States in April 1944 -- 65 years ago -- as a young wartime evacuee returning to Britain after four years away from my family and friends. My very first letter that survives includes a drawing of the Statue of Liberty as seen by me from on board ship -- the ocean liner Mauretania, then a troopship, whose GI’s -- on their way to war -- looked kindly on the troublesome young seven-year old in their midst. The United States has always been an integral part of my writings, not least in my twin histories of the First World War and Second World War.
I began drawing the maps for my *Routledge Atlas of American History* during my first visiting professorship, at the University of South Carolina in 1965.

Since 1968, in writing about Churchill, the United States -- in peace and war -- has been central to my research, culminating in my recent book *Churchill and America*. I am particularly proud that in my most-recent book, the 250-map *Routlege Atlas of the Second World War*, the United States has its rightful -- and remarkable -- place. (Something to which my Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, will be paying tribute at Normandy in three day's time.)

I never imagined that I would be so generously rewarded here in the United States for my life's work. Or that I would ever have the opportunity to stand before an American audience to thank them -- to thank you -- for all that America has meant to me, and has taught me. It is indeed a special moment for me (saddened only that my dear parents are not alive to share it). I shall to my utmost to make sure that your award tonight is not only regarded by me as a most generous pat on the back, but also as a spur to further writing. I will do my best to prove worthy of your confidence.

Thank you so much.