

Anne Armstrong, a Top Aide to Nixon,
Expected to Be Named London Envoy

by Bernard Gwertzman

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Washington, Jan. 5 - President Ford intends to nominate Anne L. Armstrong, a former White House counselor, to replace Elliot L. Richardson as Ambassador to Britain, a well-placed Administration official said today.

Mrs. Armstrong's new position will be announced when the British Government agrees to her nomination -something viewed here as merely a formality.

Mrs. Armstrong, whose nomination must also be approved by the Senate, would be the first woman in the prestigious London post. Mr. Richardson will return to Washington as Commerce Secretary.

Mrs. Armstrong has long been active in Republican politics in Texas. In 1972 she served as co-chairman of the Republican National Committee.

In December 1972, after his re-election, President Nixon invited her to join the White House. She was the first woman since Oveta Culp Hobby, in the [continued on Page 7]

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1950's, to have Cabinet-level status.

President Ford asked her to stay on as a counselor after he became President in August 1974. She was given responsibility in such areas as planning for the Bicentennial, in the work of the Federal Property Council, the White House Office of Women's Programs, and she served as an official liaison officer between the White House and youth groups and Spanish Americans.

Mrs. Armstrong, who is the wife of a Texas rancher, served at the White House until Dec. 21, when she submitted her resignation, citing "unforeseen and pressing family responsibilities."

State Department officials said when they were told of the pending appointment that Mrs. Armstrong had been chosen as a trusted Republican worker who should be rewarded and that at the same time the Ford Administration was demonstrating its dedication to women's rights.

She would follow 14 other women appointed to United States embassies since World War II, including six currently serving. The past women ambassadors were: Perle Mesta, Luxembourg; Clare Boothe Luce, Rome; Eugenie Anderson, Denmark; Frances E. Willis, Switzerland, Norway, Ceylon; Catherine Elkus White, Denmark; Margaret Joy Tibbets, Norway; Patricia Roberts Harris, Luxembourg; Carol Laise, Nepal; Eileen Donovan, Barbados.

Current ambassadors include Jean M. Wilkowsky, Zambia; Ruth Farkas, Luxembourg; Nancy Rawls, Togo; Shirley Temple Black, Ghana; Mary Olmsted, Papua New Guinea.

Praised by Officials

Several officials who knew Mrs. Armstrong had high praise for her administrative abilities and for her ability to handle herself in difficult situations. The nominee, 48 years old, is the wife of Tobin Armstrong, whose ranch in Armstrong, Tex., adjoins the famous King Ranch.

A phone call to the ranch today was answered by a secretary who said that Mrs. Armstrong could not comment on the pending appointment, but that if reports of it turned out to be accurate, Mr. Armstrong would accompany Mrs. Armstrong to London.

The British Embassy would not comment on a report of Mrs. Armstrong's appointment that appeared today in The Guardian in Britain. "It's a bit awkward for us," an official said, "since it has not been announced yet."

Costs Are Heavy

Though Mrs. Armstrong will be the first American woman assigned to the British post, a British official said he believed there had been other women envoys in Britain. As Ambassador, she would reside in Winfield House, the mansion in Regent's Park.

The costs of running the embassy are large and usually require Ambassadors of independent means. Mr. Richardson had secured approval in principle from Congress for a larger-than-usual appropriation, since he is not as wealthy as some of his predecessors.

State Department officials said that the White House had recently insisted that political appointees be given first preference for ambassadorships. They said, for instance, that the White House was looking for a political personage for the Peking liaison office, which is now vacant.