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MAGAZINE 2017/2018



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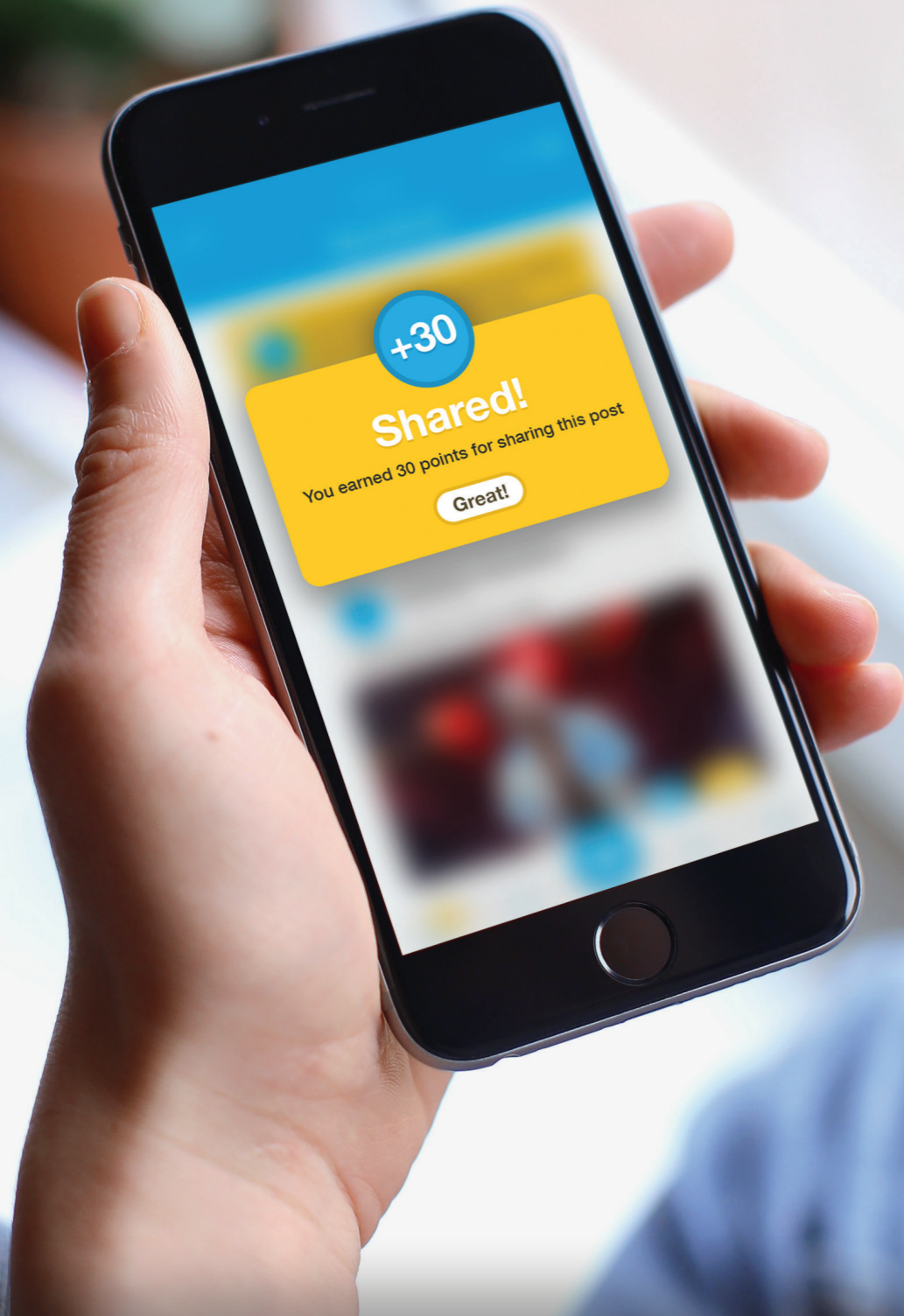
# INFORMED

2017/18

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*CFI works to promote its  
twin aims of supporting  
Israel and promoting  
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Aerial View Of Tel Aviv At Night - Tel Aviv Cityscape. Dmitry Pistrov, Shutterstock.

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# SUPPORTING ISRAEL AND PROMOTING CONSERVATISM

# WELCOME



**Lord Polak CBE**  
CFI Honorary  
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**Andrew Heller**  
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**James Gurd**  
CFI Executive  
Director

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to this new edition of CFI's fully redesigned Informed magazine.

This year has been one of great significance to the UK-Israel relationship – the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Britain played an integral role in creating a homeland for the Jewish people, and it is only right that we celebrate one of the most defining moments in our shared history. As we have reflected on the history of UK-Israel relations, it is heartening to know that the partnership between our two countries is stronger than ever and the future is full of exciting opportunities.

At all levels, the Conservative Party has demonstrated unwavering support for Israel; whether it be putting the United Nations Human Rights Council “on notice” for its selective focus of Israel, to establishing the UK-Israel Trade Working Group which will prepare the ground for a post-Brexit trade deal and build on our flourishing trade relationship.

CFI has long campaigned for the Department for International Development to support peaceful coexistence projects bringing Israelis and Palestinians together. We especially welcome the unprecedented announcement of £3 million in funding towards these important projects by the Secretary of State for International Development, Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP, a former CFI Officer.

In December 2016, CFI held its biggest ever Annual Business Lunch with Prime Minister Theresa May,

attended by 800 guests, including 200 Conservative parliamentarians. At the event, the Prime Minister made the landmark announcement that the UK would be formally adopting the broad definition of antisemitism drawn up by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

The organisation's delegation programme has continued to expand, with CFI coordinating an unprecedented 16 delegations to Israel for over 119 Conservatives between the May 2015 General Election and August 2017.

It has been particularly exciting for CFI to continue to engage with more groups within the Conservative umbrella, with high-profile visits to Israel for nine Welsh Conservatives, including six Assembly Members, as well as the Conservative Christian Fellowship.

Throughout the General Election campaign, the CFI team campaigned come rain or shine for Conservative candidates up and down the country. CFI congratulates and welcomes all elected Members of Parliament to the Conservative benches and we look forward to working with them over the coming months and years.

In April 2016, CFI was sad to say farewell to Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles as our Parliamentary Chairman, after he stood down as Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar following 25 years of service. Under Sir Eric's leadership, CFI has gone from strength to strength, and we thank him for all of his tireless and invaluable work to cement the UK-Israel relationship.

We are delighted to welcome our distinguished new Parliamentary Chairman (Commons), Rt. Hon. Stephen Crabb MP, who is a long-standing friend of Israel and the Jewish community.

We would like to thank our small and dedicated Professional Team for their continued hard work, along with all of our parliamentary supporters.

If you would like further information about any of CFI's activities please visit our website ([www.cfoi.co.uk](http://www.cfoi.co.uk)) and follow us on our increasingly popular social media pages – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram – for the latest news.

Enjoy this new edition of Informed and we hope we can count on your continued support.

# CFI AND ISRAEL ACCORDING TO...



Prime Minister Theresa May at CFI Annual Business Lunch 2016

## RT. HON. THERESA MAY MP PRIME MINISTER

"We have, in Israel, a thriving democracy, a beacon of tolerance, an engine of enterprise, and an example to the rest of the world about how to overcome adversity and defy disadvantages".

CFI Annual Business Lunch, December 2016

"In this centenary year of the Balfour Declaration, we remember Britain's vital role in creating a homeland for the Jewish people, and we celebrate the achievements of a remarkable country. We continue to stand up for Israel, we refuse to join in unfair criticisms internationally, and we firmly oppose boycotts and sanctions".

Video message to Jewish community, June 2017

"We have continued to stand up for Israel. We have refused to support one-sided and unfair criticism of Israel internationally, whether at the Paris Peace Conference in January [2017] or in voting at the UN Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and even the World Health Organisation this spring [2017]".

Jewish News, May 2017

## RT. HON. BORIS JOHNSON MP FOREIGN SECRETARY

"On every visit, I'm reminded all over again of the scale of Israel's achievements, the strength of its democracy and the tolerance and openness of the only free society in the Middle East. This small country - barely the size of Wales - has managed to become one of the most innovative and technologically advanced nations in the world. Year after year, Israeli scientists, surgeons and engineers push out the frontiers of human knowledge... There is simply no other country of Israel's size or population that can match its record of invention and discovery".

Jewish News, March 2017

"It goes without saying that this Government has no time for anyone who would try to obstruct the burgeoning flow of trade between Britain and Israel. We abhor those who use the language of sanctions and boycotts or question Israel's legitimacy... I never forget the pride felt by many British Jews in Israel's achievements. I share that emotion myself. Indeed, I have only to enter my office to see the place where one chapter of that story began".

Jewish News, March 2017



Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in London

"I put it to you that Britain and Israel are both countries where our dreams are still bigger than their achievements. Our best days are ahead. We must stand and work together. Britain, Israel and Conservative Friends of Israel can build those dreams together".

CFI Party Conference Reception, October 2016

## RT. HON. AMBER RUDD MP HOME SECRETARY

"When Israel is under attack we will support its right to self-defence. We will work with Israel and the Palestinians to help bring about the lasting and peaceful two-state solution that all peoples of the region desire and deserve, and we will continue to strengthen our bilateral relationship with trade, cultural and scientific exchanges, and security cooperation".

Emunah Gala Dinner, September 2016

## RT. HON. PRITI PATEL MP INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

"At the heart of our relationship is the fact that Britain recognises Israel's status as a modern liberal democracy, and actually it acts as a beacon to other countries as well. The last 70 years has established so much in terms of the bonds of our relationship, and we should never forget the circumstances surrounding Israel's birth, and the hope and sanctuary that Israel provides to Jewish people around the world".

CFI Parliamentary Reception, January 2017



International Development Secretary Priti Patel at CFI Parliamentary Reception 2017

"We have to reflect while we are here this evening on something that I think unites us all, and brings us together here to support Conservative Friends of Israel, and that of course is the values. The shared values that we all have when it comes to the value of democracy, the value of peace, but also the value of freedom as well. And these values apply to Israel in such a great way... Those values that all of us in this room tonight are standing up for and championing".

CFI Parliamentary Reception, January 2017

## RT. HON. SAJID JAVID MP COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECRETARY

"I guess necessity is the mother of invention. Because over the past 69 years, Israel really made business bloom in the barren desert. It is the ultimate Start-Up Nation".

Israel's Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut) speech, May 2017

"The lessons I learnt in Israel - as a traveller, businessman and politician - have profoundly shaped the way I have approached my job in Government. I admire Israel for its tenacious determination when the odds are stacked against it. But as a British Government Minister I believe we should not allow the odds to be stacked against Israel. That's why as Secretary of State for Culture, I made it a priority to battle against cultural boycotts of Israel".

Israel's Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut) speech, May 2017



I am proud once again to contribute to the Conservative Friends of Israel magazine. Your organisation does a huge amount to promote a better understanding of Israel in the UK and to strengthen links between our two countries.

This year we mark one hundred years since a Conservative Foreign Secretary, A.J. Balfour, set out the British Government's support for the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people. It is one of the most important letters in history and it is an anniversary we will be marking with pride.

The vibrant, diverse and innovative country Israel is today would have been almost unimaginable in 1917. The hard work of generations of Jewish people has made Israel the 'start-up nation' – one of the world's great success stories.

The United Kingdom and Israel enjoy a close partnership and, as Britain forges a new global role outside of the European Union, I want to build on that relationship in the years ahead.

There is much that Britain and the world can learn from Israel's economic success. In areas like high technology, medicine and energy, Israel is a world leader. The UK is Israel's biggest European export market and, as we leave the EU, we are determined to grow our trading relationship further.

Israel's economic success has been secured in the teeth of constant threats to its security and hostility towards its very existence. Our position is clear: Israel has a right to defend itself and responsibility to keep its people safe. A lasting peace will only be secured in the Middle East when Israel's right to exist is recognised by its neighbours.

Whenever we see antisemitism rear its ugly head in our own country, we must be absolutely unequivocal in our condemnation of it. Whatever approach some other parties may take, the Conservatives will always condemn anti-Semitic hatred and call it out for what it is – racism pure and simple. The UK's new Holocaust Memorial will provide a lasting reminder of what unchecked bigotry can lead to, and I am proud to give it my full support.

The contribution of British Jews to life in the United Kingdom is immense. I was proud that at the general election earlier this year, so many Jewish people gave our Party their support – not least thanks to the hard work of CFI volunteers in constituencies up and down the country. We are determined to repay the trust they placed in us.

So thank you and congratulations to Conservative Friends of Israel for the great work you do for our Party and our country. I wish you every success for the year ahead.



*Message from HE Mark Regev, Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's*

This year has seen the further strengthening of the partnership between the United Kingdom and the State of Israel, and I wish to begin by thanking outgoing Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) Parliamentary Chairman, my good friend Sir Eric Pickles. In recognition of his staunch friendship of the Jewish state and the Jewish people, Israel honoured Sir Eric in February with a special tree planting ceremony in the Aminadav Forest near Jerusalem.

Part of Sir Eric's legacy is his role in establishing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. Announced by Prime Minister May at CFI's Annual Business Lunch last December, the UK became one of the first countries to adopt the IHRA definition: a lead followed across party lines in Britain, by the Scottish and Welsh governments, and by local councils.

Over the past 12 months, we have also seen significant challenges. Terrorism has struck in London, Manchester, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and our Prime Ministers have repeatedly spoken about the ways in which we can better confront this threat. Our governments are working closely together to protect our peoples, and because of the strong cooperation between our counterterrorism, intelligence and emergency services, I am confident that the citizens of the UK and Israel are safer.

We have also seen the terrorist group Hamas infiltrate humanitarian organisations operating in Gaza, seeking to fund violence against innocent Israeli civilians through mendaciously exploiting the generosity of others. Our countries maintain an ongoing dialogue about this important and serious issue, and Israel appreciates the commitment of the British Government to helping stamp out the abuse of international aid.

This November will be a pinnacle in the history of our partnership when our nations together mark with pride the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Authored by the then Foreign Secretary and former Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour – a Conservative – this was the first statement by a major world power to recognise the Jewish people's right to national self-determination in our ancestral homeland.

A century on from the Balfour Declaration, our countries' bond is stronger than ever, and our bilateral trade relationship is booming: some £5 billion in 2016. Israel is fortunate to have in Prime Minister May a true friend, and as my Prime Minister joins her in London on this remarkable anniversary, I hope that you too will celebrate the vital role that CFI has played in strengthening our countries' longstanding friendship.

I wish to conclude by thanking your Honorary President Lord Polak, Executive Director James Gurd and his young, energetic team, and all of CFI's dedicated supporters. As we forge new areas of cooperation between a Global Britain and Israel, the Innovation Nation, please know that my country is grateful for your friendship, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the years ahead.

Mark Regev  
Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's

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Over the last year, we have continued to build what I believe is the strongest and deepest relationship there has ever been between the UK and Israel.

In the 12 months after the Brexit referendum, 32 Israeli companies set up in the UK. Israeli investment in the UK in that period increased 33% to £152 million, creating 900 jobs. British companies are growing their markets in Israel, including Vispring luxury beds, Bendicks chocolates and Aston Martin. The first El Al Dreamliner with Rolls-Royce engines landed in Israel in August. Lord Price has launched our working group to prepare for the strongest possible trade relations after we leave the EU.

Tech relations go from strength to strength, driven by the UK/Israel Tech Hub, which has now celebrated its fifth anniversary. In July 2017, Israeli company Orbotech, a leader in the microelectronics industry, received the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

We worked with London-based NGOs Founders and Coders as they held their first ever tech course outside the UK, in Nazareth. There is huge potential in the Arab tech sector, which we continue to support, alongside other projects aimed at promoting coexistence in Israel. It was a real pleasure to host the Embassy's Iftar this year at the spectacular castle in Shefa-Amr.

In July, we held the seventh annual meeting of the UK-Israel Science Council. We agreed an ambitious programme for the next few years, including a new theme (the science of aging) for our flagship research programme, BIRAX. The current phase of BIRAX has involved 1,000 scientists in the UK and Israel.

Another highlight was the visit of HMS Bulwark, the second biggest ship in the Royal Navy. That visit was an important symbol of a steadily deepening defence and security partnership, which is all the more necessary as the threat from extremism and terrorism continues to grow.

This autumn, we look forward to marking with pride the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. I shall be in London for Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit and what promises to be a splendid dinner hosted by Lord Rothschild, before returning for events here in Israel.

Many of you reading this will have enjoyed or endured my hospitality over the last year as part of Conservative Friends of Israel delegations. As I say to each visiting group, it is really important from my point of view that as many British Parliamentarians as possible come and see for themselves how much is going on between the UK and Israel. I hope to see many more of you over the next year.

David Quarrey  
HM AMBASSADOR



'Ah! Jones, organise another layer of bureaucracy, please.'

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# A NEW DAWN IN THE UK-ISRAEL PARTNERSHIP

Rt. Hon. Mark Harper MP

Since Israel was founded 69 years ago, the UK has stood by its side as a partner while the country rose out of the desert and prospered against all odds to become an innovation powerhouse – the ‘Start-Up Nation’.

We have long-standing ties with Israel in defence and intelligence, and thanks to Conservative-led governments since 2010, we have built on this solid foundation, launching joint programmes in so many important areas, from tech to academia to medical research, with spectacular outcomes.

In 2011, Britain established the UK Israel Tech Hub – the first of its kind – which helps to create partnerships between British companies and world-class Israeli innovators across a wide range of tech sectors. So strong has this partnership grown, that it is now being used by the UK as a model to pave the way for five new international tech hubs in emerging markets.

Israel’s world-leading expertise in cyber security – one of the most pressing issues facing businesses, public bodies and nations today – has greatly benefitted the UK. Our Government has made cyber security cooperation with Israel a priority, launching the UK-Israel Cyber-Physical Initiative in 2016 to better protect critical infrastructure;

the importance of which has been glaringly highlighted by recent cyber attacks against the NHS.

The past few years have seen a golden age in UK-Israel business. Bilateral trade has reached a record high of £5.5 billion, and 2016 saw the biggest UK-Israel trade deal in history, with Rolls-Royce landing a £1 billion contract to service and maintain its Trent 1000 engines for Israel’s national airline El Al. Investment has boomed in both directions. Great British businesses like HSBC, GSK, Barclays, Rolls-Royce and others have invested more than £1 billion in Israel, and the UK is now Israel’s number one destination for investment in Europe.

There is also huge demand for British goods in Israel; Aston Martin’s dealership in Herzliya is the fastest growing in the world.

But there is still much more that can be done. Brexit offers new opportunities to maximise our important trading relationship and it is imperative that we reach a free trade agreement with Israel as soon as possible.

Despite a small but vocal boycott movement and scepticism about Brexit, hundreds of Israeli companies are operating in the UK and they are continuing to expand. In the year after Britain voted to leave the EU, Israeli investment into

the UK actually increased, with 32 Israeli companies entering the British market. These Israeli companies invested £152 million into our economy and created 888 new jobs – a rise of 33% on the previous year.

More than 350 Israeli companies now operate here in the UK, responsible for thousands of British jobs. They represent a diverse range of sectors – from financial services to software, advertising, infrastructure, trade, engineering, space, tourism and technology.

For these Israeli entrepreneurs, Brexit is an exciting opportunity for strengthening UK-Israel ties, not a barrier.

The establishment of a new UK-Israel Trade Working Group in February 2017, following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit to London, has revealed the real enthusiasm on both sides to intensify our joint ventures.

It is heartening to see the UK-Israel partnership flourish at every level and I am looking forward to leading a high-level CFI delegation of British parliamentarians to Israel in the near future, in order to explore more routes to deepen our alliance and promote trade wherever possible.



**350**  
Israeli companies operate in the UK



**£5.5bn**  
Total bilateral trade between the UK and Israel



**£152m**  
Invested in UK by Israeli companies from June 2016 to May 2017



**33%**  
Israeli investment increased in the UK compared to same period in previous year

In 2011, the UK Israel Tech Hub was launched by the British Embassy in Israel and is the first of its kind to promote partnerships in technology and innovation between two countries.

The Britain Israel Research Academic Exchange (BIRAX), which is a joint British-Israeli scientific collaboration in regenerative medicine, has funded over £7 million into 15 bilateral research programmes over the past five years.

The biggest ever trade deal between the UK and Israel was signed in 2016, with Rolls-Royce landing a £1 billion contract to service and maintain its Trent 1000 engines for Israel’s national airline El Al.

**“Brexit offers new opportunities to maximise our important trading relationship and it is imperative that we reach a free trade agreement with Israel as soon as possible”.**

Rt. Hon. Mark Harper MP

Best wishes from

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION



Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles, UK Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues

Since 2015, I have had the great honour of serving as the UK's Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues. In that time, I have worked to ensure that the legacy of Holocaust survivors is secure and that future generations in this country and elsewhere never forget what happened.

Conservatives can take pride that this Government has led the way in combating the evils of antisemitism and has also pledged to build a new National Memorial and Learning Centre to the Holocaust in Victoria Tower Gardens beside Parliament. The building is scheduled to be completed by Holocaust Memorial Day 2021.

Establishing a landmark of national significance on this site will highlight the importance and relevance of the Holocaust to the UK's history. It will also affirm the UK's commitment to stand up against prejudice and hatred, inspire reflection and compassion, and encourage visitors to respect and embrace difference. It will be a lasting monument and as former Prime Minister David Cameron said, a "permanent statement of our values as a nation".

The Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will stand against all forms of hatred and extremism in the modern world, educating millions of visitors every year about the discrimination that underpins antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice today.

As Home Secretary, Theresa May secured £13.4 million to protect Jewish institutions across the UK, an unprecedented amount, and as Prime Minister has repeatedly emphasised the UK's zero tolerance stance on antisemitism.

Sadly, antisemitism has continued to rear its ugly head across Europe, surfacing here in the UK across social media, university campuses, and perhaps most shamefully in mainstream political parties. The Community Security Trust's figures show the number of recorded antisemitic incidents reaching unprecedented levels in 2017, reinforcing the need to continuously combat antisemitism and its various guises.

So I am particularly honoured to have played a large part in the drafting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) modern working definition of antisemitism, which Prime Minister Theresa May announced the UK would be formally adopting at CFI's Annual Business Lunch in December 2016.

The IHRA definition is now used by UK police, councils, universities, and schools, and has been adopted by the Greater London Assembly, as well as Austria and Romania.

The definition, which is thorough and comprehensive, includes various modern examples of antisemitism and sets out that denying the Jewish people their



Sir Eric and the Prime Minister at rally against antisemitism

right to self-determination and drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis is antisemitic. It is a significant step forward.

It was extremely encouraging when in February 2017, Universities Minister Jo Johnson MP wrote a letter to Universities UK underlining the obligation of all UK higher education institutions to tackle antisemitism on campus and abide by the IHRA definition, particularly in the context of the pernicious 'Israel Apartheid Week'. The letter recognised that demonising Israeli and Jewish students across UK university campuses and creating a hostile and unsafe environment, is simply a new form of the old hatred.

Prime Minister Theresa May was right to say that "without its Jews, Britain would not be Britain", and the community can rest assured that the Conservative Party will continue working to eradicate antisemitism.



# CFI DELEGATIONS TO ISRAEL

Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP

Chairman of the Treasury Committee



Looking out onto Gaza from the southern Israeli town of Sderot and seeing the remains of hundreds of Hamas rockets that have exploded in the community is a truly eye-opening experience.

Located less than a mile from Hamas-run Gaza, Sderot has been subject to barrages of indiscriminate rocket fire from Hamas for years, necessitating bomb shelters in schools and on every street with a mere seven to 15 seconds warning to hide from these rockets. In total, an astonishing 19,000 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel from Gaza since 2001.

But despite the precariousness of their location, I got the overwhelming sense from my conversations with locals of a desire and yearning for peace, to be able to raise their families and to live side-by-side with their Palestinian neighbours.

After being a strong friend of Israel for many years, I had the great pleasure of visiting Israel for the first time with CFI during the February 2017 recess, exploring the security, diplomatic, political, economic and social challenges facing the country.

The meetings with Palestinian businesspeople and politicians in Ramallah proved most valuable. A visit to the first Palestinian-planned city in the West Bank, Rawabi, gave a glimpse of what can be achieved in a future Palestinian state. The hugely impressive development envisions itself as an entertainment, commercial and business hub in the region, as well as a home for 35,000 Palestinians.

In Israel's Knesset, it was eye-opening to speak to Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan and leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party Yair Lapid, who both raised strong concerns about Iran's involvement in the region through Hezbollah in Lebanon and its various proxies in Syria. It was in our conversations with those who weren't politicians, however, where I gained the impression that ordinary citizens on both sides of the conflict now simply want to get on with their lives and their work.

We visited two inspirational charities – Beit Issie Shapiro and Save A Child's Heart. In both cases, they work with families and children on the basis of need, regardless of their nationality, background or religion.

Beit Issie Shapiro was established to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities in Israel and internationally through innovative technology, crossing all cultural and religious divides.

We visited the charity's Sindian Center based in Qalansawe, which was established in 2001 as the first early intervention centre in the Arab sector in Israel. The centre currently serves 42 children with severe disabilities, from the ages of six months to four years.

I was particularly struck by the words of the organisation's Executive Director, Jean Judes: "Parents of children with disabilities aren't interested in politics".

Individuals we spoke to at the NGOs told us about their working relationships and friendships with people from 'the other side', and I discovered that at Save A Child's



Parliamentarians at Beit Issie Shapiro

Heart, around half of the 4,400 children who had received life-saving heart treatment were Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.

At the NGO's hospital in Holon, we met a young girl with her father who had left Gaza that day and travelled for treatment. We met doctors from around the world, including a Palestinian doctor working there, who has to explain to his friends and family why he feels that it is the right place for him to use his skills.

After seeing these projects first-hand and the incredible work that they do in laying the groundwork for peace, I am hugely encouraged by our Government's recent announcement to provide additional funding to coexistence NGOs in Israel and the West Bank.

Upon returning to the UK, I feel I have a much more informed understanding of this complex region and the current situation on the ground thanks to this visit. I would like to thank CFI for facilitating these invaluable experiences, which gave us as politicians a huge amount to think about.

## Darren Millar AM

### Shadow Secretary for Education and Children in the Welsh Assembly



**D**uring the 2017 summer recess, I had the great honour of leading a group of Welsh Conservative Assembly Members to Israel and the West Bank on the first visit of its kind in coordination with CFI.

The CFI trip came after Wales welcomed an Israeli business delegation visit, which has since led to significant Israeli investment in Wales, generating further job and business growth.

In our whistle-stop four day visit we were given a fascinating introduction to this vibrant nation, and saw for ourselves that it is a country which in many respects is very different to the one portrayed in the news.

After a mere two hour drive from Tel Aviv, we found ourselves looking towards the deceptively peaceful mountain view along the Israel-Lebanon border. The reality of the situation facing Israel was only brought home with a glimpse of the infamous yellow flag of the Hezbollah terror group flying close by to one of the white armoured patrol vehicles of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The UN force is supposedly there to prevent Hezbollah's armed presence in the area.

An intelligence officer from the Israel Defense Forces briefed us that Hezbollah possesses an estimated 150,000 rockets hidden in civilian villages throughout southern Lebanon. These Iranian-supplied missiles are reportedly capable of hitting any point in Israel, and represent an enormous increase on

the number the group possessed in the 2006 Second Lebanon War. Hezbollah's combat capabilities are also said to be much-improved as a consequence of their experience fighting in support of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

In Jerusalem, we toured the ambulance dispatch centre of Magen David Adom (MDA); Israel's national emergency medical service. Here we were introduced to the smartphone application that is revolutionising emergency services in Israel. The app, which is available to all Israelis, enables users to provide medical dispatchers with live feeds of any given emergency scene who can then relay possibly life-saving medical instructions before emergency responders arrive. It also gives medics immediate access to a full medical history of each patient, and the MDA's volunteer first responders can be GPS-located to enable the MDA to dispatch the closest possible medic to a patient at any given time.

There is much that the Welsh NHS can learn from the innovations in emergency care which are saving

precious minutes in Israel and making the difference between life and death for patients.

We also took time in Jerusalem to participate in a moving Act of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum and National Memorial.

From meetings with high-profile Knesset Members, Ya'akov Peri (Yesh Atid) and Michael Oren (Kulanu), and the Israel Britain Chamber of Commerce, through to a briefing in Ramallah with Xavier Abu Eid of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Negotiations Support Unit, the group had access to some of the key players in the region.

We left Israel better informed about the complex relationship between Israel and its neighbours and the reality of the challenges ahead, but we were also encouraged by opportunities which exist to develop positive relationships between our two nations which can support economic development, dialogue and friendships between Wales and this special part of the world.



Darren Millar AM at Magen David Adom, Jerusalem

## Gareth Wallace

### Conservative Christian Fellowship (CCF) Executive Director



**A**s the birthplace of Christianity, Christians have for centuries been drawn to Israel to experience the Land of the Bible. Thanks to Conservative Friends of Israel, the Conservative Christian Fellowship (CCF) made its first official visit to Israel ahead of the 2017 Easter and Passover holidays to learn more about this remarkable country.

Our week-long visit was a whirlwind mix of politics, security, history, and religious pilgrimage, with many memorable conversations.

On a visit to Israel's northern borders we experienced at first-hand some of the realities of the current situation with a tour by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) of the borders with Lebanon and Syria. The plight of those caught up in the current violence in Syria was very much brought home to us.

As the debate continues in the UK and across Europe about how best to respond to the Syrian conflagration it was heartening to see the medical support the IDF provide to injured Syrians at the border.

As we travelled back down the mountain road towards the peace and tranquillity of the holy sites of the Galilee, my thoughts turned to the plight of Christians caught up in Middle East violence not only in Syria but Iraq, and also my Coptic friends in Egypt. The appalling Palm Sunday 2017 terror attacks against Egypt's Coptic community were a painful reminder of the sad reality facing these struggling Christian communities.



CCF delegation in front of the Knesset

In Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, we heard from the Acting Mayor about how the Christian population in the town and elsewhere in the West Bank has shrunk dramatically. Among the reasons for this decline are the ongoing threat of religious persecution, economic hardship, and the lack of progress towards a lasting peace.

In recent years, we have seen a multitude of minorities across the region, from Yazidis to Kurds, Baha'i and Christians, targeted by both Islamist groups and governments. We learnt that in stark contrast to the plight faced by Christians all across the region, Israel's 160,000 Christians live as citizens in a democratic country with freedom of religion, rule of law and open elections. Crucially, they enjoy a freedom to worship which is denied to so many in the Middle East.

One of the most poignant moments of our visit came at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial where the CCF laid a memorial wreath. As I was leaving the Hall of Names my eye caught the verses from the book of Isaiah which offer God's hope amid such despair.

*"Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off". Isaiah 56:5*

As the sun set on our last night in Jerusalem, we took communion by the Garden Tomb and prayed by the Western Wall. It was wonderful to be able to see the freedom to worship for all faiths in evidence in this most holy of cities.

Israel has played a unique role in the history of the Christian faith, and we pray for the peace and prosperity of all its people and the wider region.

I would like to thank CFI for producing such an extensive itinerary that managed to cover the length and breadth of the country, and many of the most pressing issues. The insights of the visit enabled me to look beyond the headlines and any preconceived ideas, and build up knowledge which would have been impossible had we not had the opportunity to visit Israel.

# STANDING UP FOR ISRAEL IN EUROPE



John Howell OBE MP, CFI Vice-Chairman

It is sometimes argued that the role of a Member of Parliament should be purely focused on local concerns, but the benefits of engaging in wider issues such as foreign affairs should not be underestimated.

On a personal level, my own extensive involvement in diplomatic efforts has no doubt increased my ability to assist my constituents, and I now have an additional platform after being invited to join the Council of Europe by the Prime Minister in 2016.

As a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), I have spoken on a range of issues including Israel and antisemitism in sessions which take place four times a year, and continue to do so regularly in Westminster as CFI's Parliamentary Vice-Chairman.

Earlier this year at a PACE sitting, where parliamentarians who make up the Assembly discuss topical issues that European governments must respond to, I called for the outright condemnation of Hamas by my fellow Assembly Members. I made this intervention in response to the publication of a report by the Council which found Israel solely responsible for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Bolstered by Paul Scully's contribution, the Conservative MP for Sutton and Cheam, I reminded colleagues voting on the adoption of the report that if Hamas stopped diverting resources to the financing of terror and the building of underground tunnels into Israel,



John Howell OBE MP in the Council of Europe chamber

the crisis would likely come to an end. Both myself and Paul have visited the region with CFI and seen first-hand the rockets fired into Israel by Gaza-based terror groups, which target Israeli border communities relentlessly. In the debate, I raised the issue of Hamas's incitement of Gazans against Israel and Jews, underlining that no negotiated agreement will be able to guarantee peace if a generation of Palestinians are growing up indoctrinated in hate.

Unsurprisingly, PACE voted to adopt the one-sided report, highlighting the diplomatic challenges Israel faces. Instead of ignoring the Assembly, though, it is all the more important to engage and make Israel's case, and it is encouraging that more pro-Israel voices from across Europe are now being heard.

The resurgence of antisemitism in Europe is deeply alarming, and I have repeatedly raised my serious concerns in the Council about the safety of Europe's Jewish population in recent years.

This Conservative Government's action on this issue is extremely welcome, with measures such as the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism and a commitment of more than £13 million per year for security measures in the Jewish community, providing much-needed reassurance in worrying times.

During a PACE debate on rising xenophobia, antisemitism and Islamophobia in April 2017, I underlined that the UK's clear definition of antisemitism is the first step in defeating it, removing any doubt about what is acceptable so no one can plead ignorance or hide behind any kind of excuse. It is our hope that other European nations will follow suit.

Friends of Israel can be hard to find in the Council of Europe, but I will remain steadfast in my determination to ensure Israel's case is fairly represented both at home and abroad.



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# CELEBRATING THE BALFOUR DECLARATION'S CENTENARY



Rt. Hon. Stephen Crabb MP,  
CFI Parliamentary Chairman (Commons)

**T**here are many famous letters in history, but few can be said to have led to the birth of a state.

This year, CFI, the UK and Israel united to celebrate one of the most defining moments in our shared history – the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

Prime Minister Theresa May repeatedly underlined that the centenary would be marked “with pride”, and Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was formally invited to London to mark the occasion on 2nd November 2017.

The strength of support for celebrating the Balfour centenary was demonstrated during a Westminster Hall debate in November 2016, when as many as 15 Conservative MPs stood up to emphasise the importance of our shared relations.

In marking the Balfour centenary, we celebrate our enduring friendship and the success story of the Jewish and democratic state.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was the first official expression of Britain’s historic commitment to a homeland for the Jewish people, and stated support for Jewish self-determination in Israel.

In the letter, Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour – a Conservative – confirmed to Lord Rothschild the UK’s support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people.

Lord Balfour wrote: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”.

The Balfour Declaration undoubtedly paved the way for the founding of the State of Israel, bringing to an end two millennia of exile and persecution. After the Holocaust and expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Middle East, many sought and found refuge in the Jewish State.

The path since then has not been easy. Soon after Israel declared independence in 1948 the country was invaded by multiple Arab armies, and again in 1967.

Faced with a constant threat to its national security, whether it be from hostile states or terror groups committed to its destruction, Israel’s response has been to innovate.

**“In marking the Balfour centenary, we celebrate our enduring friendship and the success story of the Jewish and democratic state”.**

I have seen first-hand Israeli accomplishments in all fields of life, and in celebrating this centenary it is right to acknowledge Israel’s countless contributions to the world.

Israel has become world-renowned for being one of the most technologically advanced nations on earth, pioneering numerous innovations in medical technology that help save and improve lives.

For example, in the field of stem cell research, Israel holds the largest number of articles, patents and research studies per capita of any country.

As a tiny country with a population of just eight million people, located on arid land with limited natural resources, Israel has defied geographical obstacles. Yet today, it can boast of being the world-leader in water desalination, vastly outranking any other country.

The Jewish State’s humanitarian contribution to the world also cannot be overlooked; being at the forefront of providing effective and rapid lifesaving relief to countries following natural or man-made disasters.

Since the creation of the Jewish State, the UK and Israel have had an enduring partnership – in trade, technology, medicine, academia, and in our shared values. Indeed, it is the shared values that make our alliance all the more invaluable. Israel is not a country where democracy ends at the ballot box; it celebrates democracy – the only one of its kind in the Middle East – with its very active civil society, the full rule of law, and a liberal press.

Living up to the highest aspirations of the Balfour Declaration, Israel has built a society that extends full rights to all its citizens regardless of sex, race or religion. Up to 200,000 Arabs who chose to remain during the War of Independence in 1948 were absorbed into Israeli society as equal citizens and their descendants make up Israel’s 1.7 million-strong Arab minority today.

For the Balfour Declaration to be fully realised however, the peace which has eluded this region must be negotiated – with a prosperous and sovereign Palestinian state existing alongside a safe and secure Israel. This centenary provides us with a unique opportunity to revive the Middle East Peace Process, which can only be achieved through direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The story of Israel is a story of resilience; its very survival testament to the strength of the human spirit. Taking the words of our Prime Minister: “The hard work of generations of Jewish people has made Israel the ‘Start-Up Nation’ – one of the world’s great success stories”.

## HISTORY

The Balfour Declaration was a letter from Conservative Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild (as a representative of the British Jewish Community and for passing on to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain) on 2nd November 1917, promising support for the creation of a national homeland for the Jewish people in Israel.

Foreign Office,  
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

‘His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country”

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

## Lebanon

- Iranian-backed Shi'a terror group Hezbollah operate from Lebanon where they have de facto control of the government and boast the country's largest military infrastructure.
- Hezbollah is designated as a terrorist organisation by the US, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and the Arab League. In 2013, the UK successfully led an EU-wide effort to proscribe the group's so-called 'military wing'.
- Hezbollah have reportedly amassed an arsenal of 150,000 rockets and missiles – 10 times what it had in the 2006 Second Lebanon War which killed 46 civilians in Israel. According to IDF estimates, the weapons have been embedded into villages throughout southern Lebanon.
- The organisation has more than doubled its fighting capabilities since the 2006 war with Israel to 45,000 fighters. Hezbollah fighters have been actively fighting alongside President Bashar al-Assad's forces during the Syrian Civil War, where they have gained access to advanced long-range missiles and drones provided by Iran, as well as advanced fighting and training experience.

## Gaza

- Hamas, the de facto ruler of Gaza, is designated as a terrorist organisation by the US, the EU, Canada, and Israel. The UK lists Hamas's 'military wing' as a terrorist organisation.
- The organisation's founding charter calls for the destruction of the Jewish State, and the organisation has repeatedly opposed peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.
- Hamas's rocket fire endangers more than five million citizens in Israel – over 70% of the country's population. Since 2001, over 19,000 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel from Gaza; an average of three rocket attacks every single day.
- Hamas has deliberately embedded its rockets and terrorist infrastructure in densely populated civilian areas in Gaza, using human shields. 550 rockets and mortars were identified by the IDF in the 2014 conflict as being launched from 'sensitive sites' such as schools, UN facilities, hospitals, and places of worship.
- Hamas has developed a sophisticated network of interconnecting concrete-reinforced military tunnels to be used for terror attacks against Israel.

## Egypt

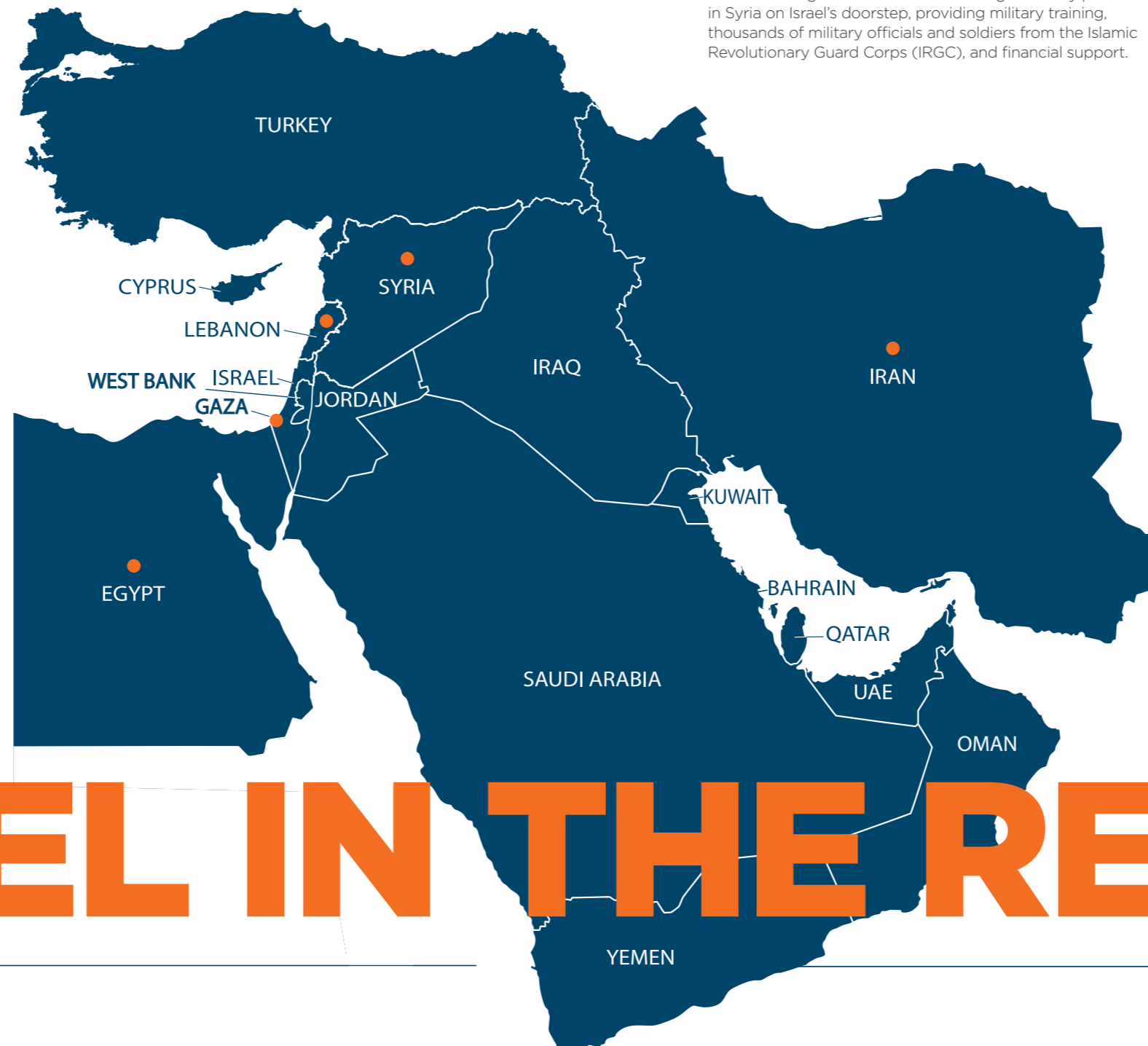
- Egypt's restless Sinai Peninsula has been used as a launchpad for terror attacks on Israel by Islamic State-affiliated terrorists and arms smuggling into Gaza in recent years.
- Between January and August 2017 at least eight rockets were fired at Israel by Islamists in the Sinai – a big increase.
- The Egyptian military has launched a concerted effort to crack down on arms smuggling by Hamas in Gaza to Sinai-based terrorists; closing the Rafah crossing with Gaza thereby implementing a blockade on the territory, destroying thousands of tunnels and creating a buffer zone on the Gaza border.

## Iran

- Iran is a leading sponsor of state terrorism, providing financial assistance, weapons, ammunition and military training to the Islamist Lebanon-based Hezbollah terror group, and has historically provided weapons, training, and funding to Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups.
- Iran's active role in providing military support to President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, sending advanced weapons and military advisers to the Houthis in Yemen, and involvement in other regional conflicts, has been condemned by the UK Government, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Israel, and many other countries as destabilising regional security.
- The Iranian regime has been establishing a military presence in Syria on Israel's doorstep, providing military training, thousands of military officials and soldiers from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and financial support.

## Syria

- The chaos of the Syrian Civil War has enabled Iran and a myriad of Islamist factions, including Islamic State-linked groups Khalid Ibn al-Walid Army and the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, to establish a military presence in southern Syria, on Israel's northern border.
- A number of stray rockets and mortars from the Syrian conflict have landed in the Golan Heights since 2015, which Israel has responded to in order to protect the Golan region – including its Druze residents. The number of spillover incidents from Syria into Israel escalated in 2017.
- The IDF has asserted that it will not tolerate any breach of Israel's airspace and its policy in Syria has been to act to prevent Iran's smuggling of advanced weapons to Hezbollah, reportedly carrying out multiple strikes against arms convoys headed for the terror group since the civil war began in 2011.
- Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, Israel has provided treatment to thousands of wounded Syrians and the IDF set up a field hospital along the border. In a multifaceted humanitarian relief operation, Israel has delivered hundreds of tonnes of food, thousands of litres of fuel and other goods across the border to Syrians in need, and is helping to build two clinics inside Syria.



# ISRAEL IN THE REGION

# ISRAEL CAN TEACH US HOW TO COUNTER THE NEW TERRORISM



Will Quince MP, CFI Officer

“Israel is considered a world leader in many security-related fields, largely as a consequence of its painful history in combating terrorism”.

Will Quince MP

Britain is no stranger to terrorism. Despite the many campaigns of terror over the past hundred or so years, our way of life has endured against all those who have tried to use violence to destroy the values we hold dear.

Yet we are experiencing a new type of terrorism in the West. Scores of innocent lives across Europe have been claimed at the hands of radicalised cowards armed with little more than knives or vehicles.

Why? The simplicity in executing and the difficulty for security services in detecting such attacks until it is too late.

While it is undoubtedly the ideology behind the violence that must be tackled in order to eliminate the threat of terror for good, there are still lessons we can learn in the short-term and we should recognise where we can learn best practice from our international partners. Just as US forces learnt counterinsurgency tactics from the UK in Iraq given our experience with the IRA, we should look to other countries on how to deal with these attacks.

From intelligence gathering to police operational procedures and airport security, Israel is considered a world leader in many security-related fields, largely as a consequence of its painful history in combating terrorism. For Israel, terror attacks



Israeli police officers at the scene of a terrorist attack in Jerusalem

are sadly a way of life. According to Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from September 2015 to August 2017, there were 184 stabbing attacks and 129 attempted stabbings; 161 shootings; 60 vehicular (ramming) attacks; and one bus bombing. This so-called 'low-level' terrorism has killed 55 people and left 812 with injuries, many life-changing.

Israeli police have had to learn and adapt to this new form of attack, and the country is undergoing a continuous update of its counter-terrorism strategy.

A revised doctrine of anticipation and rapid response has proven effective against this more rudimentary method of terrorism. It is for this reason that Israel is often cited as a model for counter-terrorism activities. Of course, what may work or be appropriate in Israel may not be suitable in Britain, yet counter-terrorism police from across Europe, including the UK, have been travelling to Israel to receive training.

Carefully structured counter-terrorism units enable Israel to respond rapidly to threats. The installation of defensive barricades and the banning of vehicles in specific high-profile areas – tourist destinations and transport hubs – have also been effective, although they can be disruptive to everyday life.

Many countries around the world have elevated their security measures to counter the terror threat to holy sites, including at Mecca in Saudi Arabia and the Vatican, where

CCTV cameras and metal detectors have been installed respectively. In Jerusalem, the Temple Mount holy site has been a flashpoint of violence for decades, and in the latest wave of violence, numerous deadly attacks took place in its vicinity. Israel responded by installing metal detectors and additional CCTV at the entrances to the holy site, which prompted large-scale condemnation from the Muslim world for perceived changes to the highly sensitive status quo at the site. This incident highlighted the unique challenges Israel continues to face in responding to security threats.

Finally, bolstered intelligence capabilities should be a cornerstone for any Western security service. Israeli intelligence agencies closely monitor social media platforms for signs of radicalisation and plans for any attacks. While British security services monitor in these areas, the development of advanced technology for data processing based on big data – much of which is done at Elbit, Israel's leading defence electronics contractor – will enable security services to respond even more quickly to emerging threats.

These attacks against the West are providing an unprecedented challenge for our police and intelligence services. We should work with our allies, particularly Israel, in learning how to defeat them.

*Adapted from an earlier article published in The Times.*



John Lamont MP

# THE SCOTLAND-ISRAEL

**T**he June 2017 General Election made headlines for many reasons. Among them, was the stunning success of the Scottish Conservatives, who bucked the trend across the UK to win 13 seats.

The election came less than a year after I and nine other Scottish Conservatives visited Israel and the West Bank on the first-ever CFI delegation of its kind. The visit was conducted to bolster the growing pro-Israel advocacy movement in Scotland, and received widespread press coverage in the UK and Israel.

A lot has changed in that short space of time. Two of the then-Members of Scottish Parliament from the CFI delegation – Douglas Ross and Ross Thomson – now join me in the House of Commons as elected MPs, and Director of the Scottish Conservatives, Mark McInnes CBE, has been elevated to the House of Lords.

Many may not be aware, but there is a small but significant Jewish community in Scotland, and I am proud that a talented Conservative – Paul Masterton – was elected as an MP in the constituency of East Renfrewshire, which is home to Scotland’s largest Jewish community.

The UK-Israel partnership is now stronger than ever, and Scotland is playing an increasingly central role in this. The value of Scotland-Israel trade now exceeds £120 million.

With Brexit, there are many opportunities to expand these burgeoning ties.

Immediately following our visit to the country with CFI, fellow Scottish Conservatives and myself campaigned for direct passenger flights between Israel and Scotland in a bid to encourage and enable more Scots to visit Israel. Only by visiting can one truly appreciate all it has achieved in a mere 70 years, and see what a fantastically vibrant country it is.

I was delighted that in 2017, Israel’s Ambassador to the UK, H.E. Mark Regev, visited Scotland to celebrate Israel’s 69th Independence Day with Scottish parliamentarians including leader of the Scottish Conservatives Ruth Davidson, and Jewish communities in Scotland. The narrative of debate around Israel in Scotland has for too long been dominated by a vocal and hardline minority of anti-Israel activists.

They are simply not representative of the vast majority of Scots. Sadly, as I found on my visit, there was a perception in Israel that Scotland is a hub of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and Israelis are not welcome in the country.

A concerted effort has been taken by myself and fellow Scottish Tories to challenge this misguided view. A month after the visit to Israel with CFI, Deputy Leader Jackson Carlaw

MSP set up the Building Bridges with Israel Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament, to engage with Israel, build links based on business, culture and academia, as well as countering BDS and antisemitism in Scotland and abroad. Scottish Conservatives have since tabled a number of motions and questions in both Holyrood and the House of Commons highlighting Israel’s strengths and opposing boycott campaigns.

Leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, has also taken a consistently strong stance against those advocating boycotts. In a speech at the Board of Deputies Annual Dinner in September 2017, she underlined: “Israel is a force for good as a democratic country. It is one that has a vibrant free press, that allows the kind of political debate that we take for granted”.

The Balfour Declaration, was of course, the work of a Scottish Conservative, and in this centenary year we should recognise the success story of Israel. The Scottish Conservatives are determined to build on these political, cultural, and economic ties with the Jewish State, and I will encourage many more of my colleagues to visit Israel with CFI in the coming years.

**Pictured left:** Scottish Conservative delegates in front of Western Wall in Jerusalem.

# CONNECTION

# THE FLOURISHING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL & INDIA

CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE and CF India Founding Chairman Lord Popat



Reuters

Jerusalem's famed King David Hotel welcomed India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 2017, as the leader of the world's largest democracy made his much-anticipated visit to the Jewish State. Israelis are fairly accustomed to the world's leaders making whistle-stop diplomatic visits, but it is hard to overstate the importance of Modi's visit; the first to Israel by an Indian Prime Minister.

Principally, this was a celebration of democracy. India and Israel are among the very limited number of flourishing democracies across the vast expanse of Asia and the Middle East North Africa region. At a time of great uncertainty and instability worldwide, it is encouraging that both Prime Ministers have embarked on extensive world tours to promote the virtues of these two great democracies. While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made a series of fruitful visits to emerging African countries, Mr Modi is running out of countries that he hasn't visited since his election in 2014.

In the UK, the Hindu and Jewish communities have formed a strong bond, largely due to our shared values and mutual aspirations, which have helped underpin a vital diplomatic alliance. Both are very successful communities because of integration with the host community. The commonalities between our communities led to the formation of the Indian-Jewish Association UK. It is, therefore, very much in the UK's interests to ensure we not only support this friendship, but look to join in.

To mark the visit in London and celebrate trilateral ties between the UK, Israel and India, we met with Israeli Ambassador H.E. Mark Regev and Indian High Commissioner H.E. Y.K. Sinha.

The economic opportunities between Israel and India are vast. Despite their gulf in geographic



Lord Polak CBE and Lord Popat with Ambassador Regev and High Commissioner Sinha

size, both countries boast growing economies and invest significantly in the technology and space sectors. Israel may already be the second-largest defence supplier to India after Russia, but there is significant scope for trade growth in other industries. Encouragingly, the two nations began negotiating an extensive bilateral free trade agreement in 2015.

During the landmark visit, seven bilateral agreements relating to cooperation in technology, water and agriculture were signed by the two leaders, as well as the creation of a \$40 million innovation fund. A new Memorandum of Understanding to mark 25 years of diplomatic relations was also enacted, and the strong personal rapport between Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Netanyahu was evident throughout the three day visit.

As the 'Start-Up Nation', Israel boasts the world's most groundbreaking high-tech companies. The UK grasped the potential for partnerships between British and Israeli tech companies in 2011 when it opened the UK Israel Tech Hub - its first such one in the world. To build on this success, the UK announced in early 2017 that it would create a global network of tech hubs, and given India's own burgeoning tech industry, the country is likely to be high on the list.

Utilising Israeli tech, India can make huge strides in major national projects,

including cleaning up the Ganges River and general water management.

Young Israelis looking for adventure after their IDF service have for years headed to India for its beautiful scenery, history, and culture. Israel offers its own versions of these in abundance. As ties warm, India's growing middle class will hopefully be encouraged by its government to consider Israel as a tourist destination. We're looking forward to Bollywood coming to the Holy Land.

As the UK lays the groundwork for post-Brexit free trade deals with some of the world's major economies, both India and Israel will be increasingly important strategic partners. Given our shared interests in defence, cyber, health, fintech and many more, one can expect our three countries will work ever more closely for shared benefit.

We're natural partners on the world stage.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Since diplomatic relations were established in 1992, bilateral trade between Israel and India grew from £140 million to £3.1 billion in 2016.



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# ISRAEL AND THE UN: A BRIGHT FUTURE?



James Gurd, CFI Executive Director

It's no secret that the United Nations (UN) and its many associated bodies have a long-history of singling out Israel. According to Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, in the past decade the UN passed 223 resolutions condemning Israel, compared with only eight resolutions condemning Bashar al-Assad's massacre of his citizens in more than half a decade.

The 47 country-strong UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the worst offender. Counting some of the world's worst human rights abusers among its members, the UNHRC has invested its time and efforts into issuing as many as 70 resolutions targeting Israel; more than half of the 135 country-specific resolutions the body has passed in its ten-year history. It is, as Danon asserts, "absurd".

The cause of such bias has been long-documented, with the main catalyst being the automatic bloc-voting against Israel by majority-Muslim, Arab, and developing countries - many of which have no diplomatic ties with Israel. The Palestinian Authority has seemingly welcomed and encouraged these divisive voting blocs as part of a strategy to isolate Israel on the international stage.

Outgoing United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself highlighted this phenomenon in December 2016: "Decades of political manoeuvring have created a disproportionate number of resolutions, reports and committees against Israel".

The tide, however, may finally be turning. Israel has been investing significant diplomatic energy into building relationships with emerging countries on the world stage, and the voting patterns at UN bodies in the last year indicate this diplomatic initiative is starting to pay dividends. Increasingly, more countries are either abstaining, voting against or not showing up, than voting for resolutions against Israel.

Israel has found much of this support from African nations. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a historic four nation visit to the continent in 2016, taking in Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda, and built on this by meeting an additional 10 African leaders at the Economic Community of West African States summit in 2017. Another East African country, Tanzania, opened an embassy in Israel for the first time in June 2017.

These African nations, along with others across the world, are coming to see improved relations with Israel as an attractive proposition - from shared security concerns over the rise of Islamist extremism through to agriculture, health, water and energy technologies.

Reflecting this changing dynamic, Netanyahu became the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit South America, embarking on a three country tour in September 2017.

Another important component in Israel's changing fortunes at the UN has been the United Kingdom's increasingly outspoken

criticism of the UN for its bias against the Jewish State.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has seen repeated attempts by the Palestinians to egregiously deny the deep and historic Jewish ties to holy sites in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Theresa May's Government showed its firm commitment against UNESCO's anti-Israel bias when it rejected one such motion in May 2016.

In June 2016, the UK Government voted against a motion at the World Health Organisation's (WHO) World Health Assembly that singled out Israel, and issued a statement condemning the "politicisation" of the UN body.

The Conservative Government went further still in March 2017 when it delivered an unprecedented condemnation of the UNHRC's stance towards Israel, announcing that it is putting the UN body "on notice", and will vote against every motion on the conflict unless it ends its "disproportion and bias" against the Jewish State.

Collectively, these principled stands in support of Israel by Theresa May's Government stand to embolden other nations to follow suit and help further erode the UN's automatic bias. As the UK moves towards Brexit our position on important international issues will gain yet more weight.

Israel's future at the UN may well look bright after all.



Elkie Myers, CFI Parliamentary Officer

# PEACEFUL

# COEXISTENCE

In September 2016, as world leaders gathered in Israel to commemorate the life of Shimon Peres, a group of Conservative MPs were already in the country on a CFI delegation which I had the privilege of accompanying.

As one of Israel's founding fathers, Shimon Peres made an immense contribution to the success of the Jewish State. He dedicated his life to peacebuilding, and his NGO, the Peres Center for Peace, ensures his legacy of working towards peaceful coexistence with Israel's neighbours.

The late leader once remarked: "I can't think of anything more noble, more moving for me as a person, than the idea that I took part in saving the life of a child".

It was particularly poignant, therefore, that after the news of his passing, we met children from the developing world, Gaza and the West Bank, receiving life-saving heart surgery from Save A Child's Heart (SACH) at the Wolfson Medical Center in Holon – a regular feature of CFI trips.

SACH provides treatment to children suffering from congenital and rheumatic heart disease who are unable to receive adequate medical care in their home countries.

Doctors working at the hospital volunteer their time to perform surgery, and train medical personnel from developing countries who later return home to perform surgery themselves – often as the first qualified doctors in this field in their country of origin.

An incredible 4,400 children have so far been treated from as many as 54 countries - from Afghanistan to Zambia. Around half of those given this new chance at life come from the West Bank and Gaza, and 6,000 Palestinian children have been examined in the weekly cardiology clinic, accompanied to Israel by their parents. For many of these children and their parents it is often the first time they have travelled outside of the West Bank and Gaza, and had positive interactions with Israelis.

Almost 100 Conservatives have visited SACH with CFI, and many MPs and Lords have highlighted the work of the charity in debates in Parliament, calling on the Government to support such commendable projects. In October 2012, CFI coordinated a delegation for the cross-party Lords and Commons Cricket Club to see and support some of the Peres Center's projects bringing Israeli and Palestinian children together through their shared love of sport.

At another very worthy initiative, Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET), 200 Israeli and Palestinian students and 300 alumni have learnt computer science, entrepreneurship and leadership skills together.

In recent years, CFI's Parliamentary Group has led cross-party efforts to secure funding for these important coexistence initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians, which will hopefully lay the foundations for a lasting two-state solution.

It is extremely welcome news that in July 2017 the Department for International Development (DfID) announced unprecedented UK Government funding of £3 million for a 'Partnerships for Peace' programme in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, which will support people-to-people work to "build understanding and cooperation on social, economic and political issues".

This follows an extensive review into UK aid to the Palestinians led by International Development Secretary, Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP, resulting in the redirection of aid to focus solely on health and education services.

Yet while the benefits of coexistence initiatives speak for themselves, regrettably, some Palestinian participants have been criticised within their communities and even by Palestinian Authority officials for taking part in activities that "normalise" relations with Israel.

The Palestinian Authority has been widely accused of misusing international aid, and continues to reward terrorists who have killed Israelis with monthly salaries.

The presence of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at Shimon Peres's funeral was a step in the right direction, however, as differences were put aside in the remembrance of a remarkable man.

In death, as well as in life, Shimon Peres united adversaries and his legacy continues to give Israelis and Palestinians much-needed hope for the future.

# CFI ELECTION CAMPAIGN DIARY

Sedef Akademi, CFI Informed Editor

In the run-up to the 2017 General Election, the CFI team spent four weeks travelling across the UK to campaign for Conservative candidates in marginal seats, walking over 160 miles come rain or shine, delivering leaflets and talking to hundreds of voters on the doorstep.

The election left the UK with a hung parliament as no party secured a majority. The Conservative Party won 317 seats and 42% of the vote share, as well as securing a pact with the Democratic Unionist Party who won 10 seats. In Scotland, Conservative support surged to secure 13 seats – the party's best performance in the country since 1983.

CFI congratulates all the candidates that won, and we wish to thank those who sadly lost their seats for all their support and hard work in Parliament and their constituencies.

## WEEK ONE: SOUTH WALES AND BRISTOL EAST

The CFI road trip began in beautiful but rainy South Wales with a day of campaigning with **Chris Davies** in Brecon and Radnorshire. The CFI Professional Team, Lord Polak CBE, and Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles, leafleted and canvassed our way across the constituency – where some very steep hills were climbed! Spirits were high the following day despite the continued deluge, as CFI campaigned with **Byron Davies** in Gower – Britain's first designated area of outstanding natural beauty. The day was memorably spent canvassing in the iconic Mumbles district (the Welsh Riviera), and we were delighted to be additionally joined by our new Parliamentary Chairman (Commons) Rt. Hon. Stephen Crabb MP and the Earl of Courtown.

Team CFI spent the morning of 17th May canvassing in Bridgend for candidate **Karen Robson**, continuing into the afternoon in Cardiff North, delivering thousands of leaflets for **Craig Williams**. On Thursday, as campaigning in Wales was suspended following the death of the first ever First Minister of Wales Rhodri Morgan, CFI drove to nearby Bristol East to canvass with candidate **Theo Clarke**. Campaigning returned to Wales again at the end of the week with a morning in Cardiff West with candidate **Matt Smith** alongside activists and councillors, before moving onto Newport West with **Angela Jones-Evans** in the afternoon.



CFI Team and Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles in Brecon with Chris Davies

## WEEK TWO: SOUTH ENGLAND AND NORTH LONDON

From Wales, we drove across the country to the south of England, where the team leafleted in the morning for candidate **Kristy Adams** in sunny Hove and Portslade, and spent the afternoon pounding the pavements for **Simon Kirby** in Brighton Kemptown.

Following the horrific Manchester Arena terror attack, local and national campaigning was suspended for two days. As local campaigning resumed on Thursday, the team were back in London to canvass alongside activists and local constituents in Westminster North for **Lindsey Hall**. The following day, we were joined by Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP and Lord Popat for a full day of delivering leaflets in Harrow West with the excellent **Hannah David**.

CFI closed the week with a successful North London Action Day on Sunday with CFI members and activists out in force, with the day kicking off in Hampstead and Kilburn with **Claire-Louise Leyland**, before joining **Mike Freer** in Finchley and Golders Green. The productive Sunday saw many doors knocked on and thousands of leaflets delivered across these two important seats, and we were delighted to be joined by Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles and Baroness Altmann CBE. Mike has worked very hard in the constituency and deserves the support he has built up.



CFI Team with Hannah David in Harrow West

## WEEK THREE: BIRMINGHAM AND LONDON

In our third week on the road, CFI spent two busy days campaigning for **Meg Powell-Chandler** in Birmingham Northfield alongside Baroness Sugg CBE and Minister for Exiting the European Union, Robin Walker MP. Later on in the week, the team headed back down to London to canvass voters in Brent North with **Ameet Jogia**. Joined by Phillip May and CFI Vice-Chairman John Howell OBE MP, CFI later leafleted the streets of Ealing Central for candidate **Joy Morrissey**. The CFI team were out in force campaigning in Watford at the end of the week with long-time friend **Richard Harrington**, who had an army of activists working to ensure the seat remained blue. We are thrilled Richard kept his seat in the election after all his hard work in the constituency.

On Saturday 3rd June national and local campaigning was again suspended after the tragic London Bridge terror attack. As local campaigning resumed, CFI were joined by its activists, members and Directors on the streets of Hendon with **Matthew Offord**. In the afternoon, the group leafleted with **Bob Blackman** in Harrow East. Bucking the London voting trend, we were pleased that the North London constituencies of Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green, Harrow East, and Chipping Barnet remained blue, with the excellent MPs and CFI Officers Dr Matthew Offord, Mike Freer, Bob Blackman, and Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers retaining their seats.



CFI Action Day in Hampstead and Kilburn

## WEEK FOUR: ESSEX AND LONDON

As the General Election campaign entered its final phase, the CFI team busily campaigned in Essex, split between the seats of Colchester and Harlow for **Will Quince** and **Robert Halfon**. Increasing his majority, Will proved himself to be a popular local MP, and Robert's dedication to his constituents also paid off. For the last push, Team CFI joined **Lee Scott** in Ilford North and **Matthew Maxwell Scott** in Carshalton and Wallington.

On Election Day, the CFI team divided up into our own constituencies, helping our local candidates and getting the vote out until the very last hour.

Despite some disappointments on the night, the CFI team had a memorable time meeting hundreds of people across the country to talk about the Conservative Party's vision for a fairer, stronger Britain.

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our Action Days. It is now more important than ever to support the Conservative Party locally in order to build a strong base for the Conservatives in the months and years to come.

To volunteer with your local Conservatives, visit [www.conservatives.com/volunteer](http://www.conservatives.com/volunteer)



CFI Team, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles and CFI Officer Will Quince in Colchester



THANK YOU,

SIR ERIC

In April 2017, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles announced that he would be standing down as Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar after 25 years of service.

Sir Eric's long and distinguished political career speaks for itself. From a young councillor in Bradford and National Young Conservative Chairman to Chairman of the Conservative Party and Cabinet Minister, Sir Eric has been at the forefront of British politics for a remarkable four decades.

Throughout this time, Sir Eric has been a steadfast advocate for Israel and the UK's Jewish community, working over many years to develop and cement the UK-Israel relationship. Simply, there is no greater friend.

Becoming CFI's Parliamentary Chairman in May 2015, Sir Eric took

the organisation to a whole new level, with record levels of engagement in Westminster and beyond.

In Parliament, Sir Eric has always spoken up for Israel and worked to advance the two-state solution. As a major advocate for peaceful coexistence projects bringing together Palestinians and Israelis, Sir Eric played a crucial role in securing an unprecedented £3 million in UK Government funding towards this.

Sir Eric has also consistently challenged those advocating anti-Israel boycotts on all levels, whether it be local councils or on university campuses, and has engaged with hundreds of British and Israeli university students across the country on the issue.

He has joined CFI on numerous delegations to the Jewish State, having first travelled with CFI in 1993. In February 2017, Sir Eric planted a tree at the Yad Kennedy Memorial in the Aminadav Forest in Jerusalem in honour of his knighthood, which was awarded in

May 2015 for his services to local government.

In recent years Sir Eric has served as the UK's Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, playing a central role in the planning for a new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. Given his relentless drive to stamp out antisemitism and intolerance in all its forms, there was no person better suited for the role.

Sir Eric was instrumental in the drafting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which Prime Minister Theresa May announced the UK would be adopting at CFI's Annual Business Lunch in December 2016. The IHRA definition is now used by UK police, councils, universities, and schools, and has also been formally adopted by Austria and Romania.

These giant achievements, among many others, will forever be part of Sir Eric's legacy and the whole CFI family would like to thank Sir Eric for his invaluable support and leadership.



Sir Eric with late President of Israel Shimon Peres on CFI delegation in 1993



Sir Eric with President of Israel Reuven Rivlin in July 2015



Sir Eric with Lord Polak CBE, Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP, and Ambassador Regev at CFI Parliamentary Reception 2017

“It is immensely important that we speak up for the only working democracy in the Middle East. A bastion of democracy, a bastion of free speech, a bastion of civil liberties”.

Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles

# CFI'S CALENDAR 2016/17



## SEPTEMBER 2016

- CFI leads delegation of seven Conservative MPs to Israel and the West Bank, led by former Culture Secretary Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale OBE MP.
- CFI co-hosts a cross-party briefing in Parliament with Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, attended by 11 Conservative MPs and peers.
- Professor Alan Dershowitz addresses supporters in House of Commons at CFI event co-hosted with the Henry Jackson Society, and the Gatestone Institute.



## OCTOBER 2016

- CFI's biggest ever Conservative Party Conference Reception with Foreign Secretary Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP and senior Conservative MPs, attended by over 500 delegates.
- Team CFI campaign for Conservative candidate Robert Courts in Witney by-election.
- Home Affairs Select Committee report into antisemitism in the UK welcomed by CFI.



## NOVEMBER 2016

- Senior Israeli defence official Amos Gilad briefs Conservative MPs in Parliament at a lunch hosted by CFI.
- As many as 15 Conservative MPs voice support for Israel in Westminster Hall debate on the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration.
- Senior parliamentarians and diplomats attend first ever CFI-Conservative Friends of Cyprus event to celebrate the UK-Israel-Cyprus trilateral relationship.
- Conservative MPs attend a CFI briefing event with Sarri Singer, Director of Strength to Strength, an NGO focusing on bringing victims of terrorism worldwide together.



## DECEMBER 2016

- CFI hosts biggest ever Annual Business Lunch with Prime Minister Theresa May, where UK Government's adoption of IHRA definition of antisemitism is announced. Event is attended by 800 guests, including 200 Conservative parliamentarians.
- CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE condemns violent harassment against Jewish students on UK university campuses in House of Lords debate.
- CFI welcomes Department for International Development's announcement of series of critical changes to UK funding to the Palestinian Authority.



## JANUARY 2017

- CFI Annual Parliamentary Reception with International Development Secretary Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP and Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Mark Regev, attended by 250 supporters, including 50 parliamentarians.
- Conservative MPs attend a CFI Parliamentary briefing with Dr Azriel Bermant, to mark publication of his book *Margaret Thatcher and the Middle East*.
- CFI Vice-Chairman John Howell OBE MP and other Conservative MPs condemn Hamas and speak in support of Israel at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.



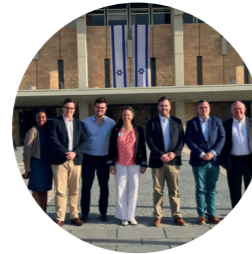
## FEBRUARY 2017

- CFI coordinates a high-profile delegation to Israel with four senior Conservative MPs and two Conservative Lords, where then-CFI Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles plants a tree at Yad Kennedy Memorial in the Aminadav Forest in Jerusalem to mark his knighthood.
- Then-CFI Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles unveils Simon Wiesenthal Center exhibition on Jewish history in Houses of Parliament, with Conservative MPs and peers in attendance.



## MARCH 2017

- Cross-party MPs, MKs and Lords take part in first ever UK-Israel Parliamentary Friendship group video conference.
- Numerous Conservative MPs and supporters attend a joint event between CFI and Conservative Muslim Forum with Israeli peaceful coexistence NGO Merhavim.
- Conservative MPs express concerns about Iran's regional aggression in a debate in Westminster Hall led by Matthew Offord MP.



## APRIL 2017

- CFI leads delegation of seven senior members of the Conservative Christian Fellowship to Israel and the West Bank.
- CFI thanks "greatest friend" Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles as he announces that he is to stand down as MP for Brentwood and Ongar after 25 years of service.
- CFI Vice-Chairman John Howell OBE MP praises UK Government's action on antisemitism.



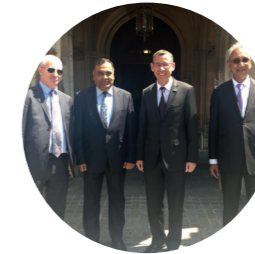
## MAY 2017

- CFI team hits campaign trail for Conservative candidates ahead of the June 8th General Election in London, Wales, the south of England, and Midlands.
- Conservative Party releases statement reiterating its "zero tolerance approach" to antisemitism and "counterproductive and damaging" anti-Israel boycott.
- CFI welcomes UK vote against UNESCO motion denying Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem.



## JUNE 2017

- CFI continues campaigning for Conservative candidates across the UK until June 8th.
- CFI welcomes election of Theresa May as Prime Minister, and congratulates new Conservative MPs.
- CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE writes to Home Secretary Amber Rudd to call on Government to proscribe Hezbollah as a terror organisation in its entirety, following waving of Hezbollah flags in London on Al Quds Day.



## JULY 2017

- CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE and CF India Founding Chairman Lord Popat meet with Israeli Ambassador and Indian High Commissioner to hail trilateral ties and to mark Indian PM Modi's trip to Israel.
- Conservative MPs underline staunch support for Israel in House of Commons debate on Israeli and Palestinian peace talks.
- Conservative MPs reiterate calls for UK Government to ban Hezbollah's 'political wing'.



## AUGUST 2017

- CFI leads first-ever delegation of nine Welsh Conservatives to Israel and the West Bank, including six Assembly Members.
- Redesign of CFI's annual Informed Magazine.
- CFI prepares for Conservative Party Conference.

# START-UP NATION

Since Israel was founded, an enormous number of inventions and innovations have emerged from the country, despite the challenges of geography, size and diplomacy.

## Technology for antivirus software

and personal firewalls originated in Israel.

The **algorithm** that is used today for sending emails was made by an Israeli who worked at the Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva in 1980.

## Mobile phone technology

was developed in Israel, where the first mobile phones were manufactured.

The **chipset of 4G devices** are developed by the Israeli company Altair.

**SMS text messaging** was pioneered by the Israeli companies Amdocs and NICE Systems.

Israeli inventor Benny Landa revolutionised the world of **digital printing** when his Rehovot-based company, Indigo, launched the E-Print 1000 in 1993, enabling printers to print directly from a computer file.

The **USB flash drive** was developed and launched by M-Systems in 2000, a company founded by three Israelis.

## Intel Pentium and Celeron computer processor chips

which are used in desktop computers, laptops and notebooks, were developed in Israel.

Major technology companies, such as Google, Microsoft and Motorola, have their R&D centres in Israel.



CST wishes every success to all of our friends and colleagues at Conservative Friends of Israel.



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