

# INFORMED

magazine

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# INFORMED

magazine

2013/2014



"Let me explain it this way. We have five apples the Inland Revenue want six."

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# Introducing CFI

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# Foreword

**Andrew Heller**  
Chairman, CFI

The past year was incredibly busy and productive for the Conservative Friends of Israel.

We are delighted to report that CFI has expanded its programme of parliamentary delegations to Israel and the Palestinian Authority; with as many as 20 Conservative parliamentarians visiting.

In October 2012, the Lords and Commons Cricket Club visited Israel for a landmark cricket tour, in coordination with CFI. The cross-party trip offered a completely different way of introducing MPs to Israel, combining an original mix of sport and political fact-finding.

CFI's delegation in November 2012 coincided with Operation Pillar of Defence, giving four Conservative MPs an immediate insight into the security threats facing Israel. In the aftermath of Israel's General Election in February 2013, CFI led a delegation of four Conservative MPs, one Member of the Scottish Parliament and one Welsh Assembly Member.

In July 2013, CFI were joined by former Secretary of State for Defence, Rt Hon Liam Fox MP, for a short delegation that included meetings with high-level Israeli officials.

CFI remain convinced that delegations are the best way for parliamentarians to gain a better insight and understanding of the issues facing Israel. As the Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, observed in his keynote address to the CFI Annual Business Lunch 2012: "seeing really is believing".

Our major campaigns in Parliament

**Stuart Polak**  
Director, CFI

and with Government have continued with success. CFI has campaigned hard to increase awareness of Palestinian Authority-sanctioned incitement against Israel and the PA's rewarding of terrorism via its policy of paying salaries to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails convicted of terror offences.

The Conservative-led Government has continued to strengthen its bilateral relationship with Israel. Throughout Operation Pillar of Defence the Government asserted that Hamas bore "principal responsibility" for the violence and strongly condemned rocket fire into Israel from Gaza. The focal point of the bolstered

**“CFI remain convinced that delegations are the best way for parliamentarians to gain a better insight and understanding of the issues facing Israel.”**

relationship has been record-breaking levels of UK-Israel trade.

At Conservative Party Conference 2012, 400 delegates packed into the CFI Reception with the Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon William Hague MP. The year's bumper events schedule also included a fascinating Q&A with Stanley Fischer, outgoing Bank of Israel Director. With the 2015 General Election on the horizon, CFI is preparing an exciting series of events in support of the Party's 40/40 campaign.

CFI were pleased to welcome the Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, as the keynote

speaker at our Annual Business Lunch in December 2012. The Prime Minister praised CFI's "important work" before an audience of 140 Conservative MPs, Peers and MEPs, and 550 businesspeople.

CFI also coordinated the second annual Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue in London, in December 2012. We were joined by over 80 senior parliamentarians and decision makers from the participating countries.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Parliamentary Chairman, Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP, for his steadfast support and for playing such a pivotal role in

leading CFI's efforts in Parliament over the last seven years. James will be leaving Parliament at the end of this term and we wish him every success for the future.

We must also thank the professional staff at CFI for their hard work, alongside our Parliamentary Group, who will be led by our new Acting Chairman, James Clappison MP.

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)).

Thank you for your interest in CFI.

**We do hope we can count on your support.**



# CFI and Israel According To...



Prime Minister David Cameron at CFI Annual Business Lunch

## Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Prime Minister:

"It is a fantastic job that you [CFI] do in getting people out to Israel – because seeing really is believing. It's only when you visit the Lebanese border as I have done, when you look through binoculars and see the Hezbollah flags just hundreds of yards away, that you can really understand the fear that so many Israelis live with day in, day out. It is vital, important work that CFI does in getting MPs out there on the ground in Israel and I think everyone wants to thank you for that". **CFI Annual Business Lunch, December 2012**

"Let me end by reiterating where I stand – and that is with Israel. We stand with Israel when it is attacked. As a friend of Israel, I will always stand by the Jewish people... I look forward to the day when the relationship between our two countries – between Britain and Israel – is about prosperity more than about security, to the day when the Jewish people can see

the future not with uncertainty but with real hope, and as a friend of Israel I will work with you till that day comes". **CFI Annual Business Lunch, December 2012**

"With me, you have a Prime Minister whose belief in Israel is unbreakable and whose commitment to Israel's security is non-negotiable". **UJIA Annual Dinner, October 2012**



Foreign Secretary William Hague with Israeli President Shimon Peres

## Rt Hon William Hague MP, Foreign Secretary:

"We understand the pressures and difficulties faced by Israel. We know that...Israel's neighbourhood today looks more uncertain and even more fraught with difficulty. We never lose sight of those, we will never waver in our support for peace and security for Israel and we will have no truck ever with those seeking to delegitimise Israel". **CFI Party Conference Reception, October 2012**

"The UK and Israel are close friends and allies and I attach great importance to our bilateral relationship. Our collaboration on high-tech and science is second to none and we [have] affirmed the UK and Israel's cooperation on security issues, including Iran. As a friend and ally, Britain is fully committed to Israel's security needs". **FCO Statement, May 2013**

## Rt Hon George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer:

"The British people support the right of the people of Israel to live in peace and in security alongside a state for the Palestinian people. And that will be the policy of any Government of which I am a member". **CST Annual Dinner, March 2012**



Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne at CFI Annual Business Lunch

## Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office:

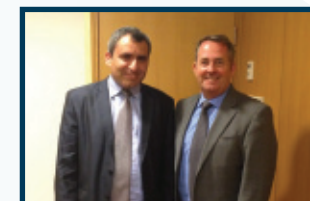
"I came to Israel because I had heard about the amazing cyber and digital innovation here. My visit has not disappointed. I have met start-ups, visited the Technion, and been briefed by the Israeli Government. What I have seen is immensely impressive. The UK and Israel are natural partners on cyber and digital... There is so much we can do with and learn from each other... I look forward to taking this cooperation to the next level". **Jerusalem, Israel, May 2013**



Cabinet Office Minister Francis Maude and British officials with British Ambassador to Israel Matthew Gould and President of the Technion Peretz Lavie

## Rt Hon Liam Fox MP:

"My trip to Israel, organised by the fantastic team at CFI, came at a particularly important time. A tour by the architect of the security barrier reminded us of the threats faced by Israel in a geographical neighbourhood currently beset by conflict, violence and strife. Meetings with senior government representatives highlighted the fact that Israel has an opportunity to steer the political process towards a two-state solution. It is vital for Israel's friends to voice both their support and to discuss frankly any areas of concern". **CFI Israel Delegation, July 2013**



Rt Hon Liam Fox MP with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Ze'ev Elkin

## Sajid Javid MP:

"I am a proud, British-born Muslim, and I love my country more than any other place on earth. But, if for some reason I had to leave with my young family, and I was told that I must go and live in the Middle East, where would I decide to go? ... There is only one place I could possibly go: Israel. The only nation in the Middle East that shares the same democratic values as Britain. The only nation in the Middle East where my family would feel the warm embrace of freedom and liberty". **CFI Annual Business Lunch, December 2012**



Sajid Javid MP at CFI Annual Business Lunch

# A Message from the Prime Minister



Autumn 2013

## CFI Informed Magazine

I am pleased to be able to contribute to *Informed* magazine yet again, and to take this opportunity to thank all those involved with the Conservative Friends of Israel for the great work you do for our Party.

CFI plays a key role promoting Conservatism, campaigning for democratic governance throughout the world, and strengthening the close ties that bond Britain with Israel. I am proud to support Conservative Friends of Israel and I applaud you on the terrific work you do.

It is a turbulent time in world affairs. The crisis in Syria continues to develop, while the painstaking work of making a success of the transitions in Tunisia, Libya and Yemen goes on. Egypt has entered its own turbulent times. We strongly support the people of these countries as they seek to fulfil their aspirations for political and economic progress. At the same time our commitment to keep the pressure on Iran's nuclear programme remains unwavering.

These are testing times. But there is hope in the midst of this turbulence. We salute the courageous steps that have been taken to restart negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians and stand ready to do all we can to support a lasting peaceful settlement.

While challenges remain in the Middle East and around the world, the ties between Great Britain and Israel remain strong and are getting stronger. As we continue to work side by side in tackling threats to our common security, we will continue to develop our people-to-people links. CFI is a bridge that makes this possible.

Thank you for your invaluable support.

# A Message from H.E. Daniel Taub

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לשכת השגריר  
שגרירות ישראל  
לונדון

## *Message from HE Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's*

Over the past two years, developments in a volatile and violent Middle East have taught us all, from expert to layman, the value of humility. We have learned how little we can predict developments in the countries of our region, and more than this, how limited our capacity can be to affect and control them.

But the fact that we cannot control everything does not absolve of our responsibility to work to affect those aspects of our environment which we can influence. Over the past twelve months, in an environment of overwhelming uncertainty, the British Government has proven its commitment to navigating our complex geopolitics with principled and determined leadership.

In leading the international effort to have the military wing of Hezbollah designated a terrorist organisation within the European Union, Prime Minister Cameron and Foreign Secretary Hague achieved a significant success in confronting one of the most destabilizing actors in our region, while the British government continues to be in the forefront of the international campaign to prevent the catastrophic danger of an Iranian nuclear weapon capability.

The British government has also shown deep friendship to Israel in other ways too. I had the opportunity of accompanying Foreign Secretary Hague to Israel for the signing of an agreement deepening and broadening our cooperation in scientific research, and more generally our trade partnership continues to flourish. The Government was also vocal in its support for Israel's right to defend herself against attacks from Gaza during operation Pillar of Defence.

The bond between our two countries and the strong ties between our two governments are in no small measure due to the tireless efforts, devotion and dedication of the Conservative Friends of Israel. Working both in the halls of Westminster and on the ground on trips to Israel, CFI ensures that MPs gain a deep understanding of Israel, with both its challenges and its opportunities. Despite limited resources, CFI's small, committed staff led by Stuart Polak does remarkable work, maintaining and building a relationship that is as important now as it ever was.

This year marks a transition for CFI, with the retirement of James Arbuthnot MP from the position of Parliamentary Chairman. For seven years, James has guided CFI in Parliament brilliantly, passionately speaking out on Israel's behalf. During my two years as Israel's Ambassador, I have consulted James on numerous occasions. I have always found his counsel to be honest, direct, helpful, and sprinkled with an extraordinary sense of wit and humour. I know that he will continue to be a committed member of CFI and look forward to working with him in the future. I wish nothing but success to acting Chairman James Clappison and look forward to working more closely with him.

In the coming year Israel and Britain will face complex challenges. But whatever these challenges will bring, I am confident that CFI will continue to foster our relationship and that the Conservative Party will continue to stand with Israel. I look forward to strengthening the friendship and ties between our countries and wish you all a successful party conference.

Daniel Taub  
Ambassador of Israel to the Court of St James's



# Visting the Start-Up Nation

**C**abinet Office Minister, Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, led a high-tech delegation to Israel in May 2013. The Conservative Minister spoke to CFI about his impressions of the country.

*You have been a long-time supporter of the State of Israel and have always maintained a balanced approach to the region. What has made you a friend of Israel for so many years?*

I have always strongly supported Israel. It's hard not to be attracted to a country which has achieved so much in a few decades. Israel faces many challenges. The coming years will be crucially important – but it remains a vibrant, liberal democracy in a troubled region, and an important ally of Britain.

*You recently visited Israel. What were your impressions of the country?*

I visited Israel and the Palestinian Territories at the end of May 2013. Sadly it was only a short trip but I had the chance to visit Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, and attended meetings in Hebron and Ramallah. What struck me most in Israel was the palpable energy and dynamism – it's hugely impressive. I couldn't believe how much had changed in the decade or so since my last trip.

While there, I read Dan Senor and Saul Singer's "Start-Up Nation". I found that much of what I saw, and the conversations I had with business leaders, ministers and officials, brought to life aspects of that excellent book.

In Tel Aviv I was impressed by the work



Rt Hon Francis Maude MP

the UK-Israel Tech Hub is doing, and saw the potential for cooperation and trade across so many areas.

*Your trip had a special focus on cyber and digital innovation. What do you think the UK and Israel can learn from each other in this area?*

Israel has something of a Silicon Valley feel. There's a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that's palpable. The culture supports people who want to try out new ideas. Sometimes these ideas will succeed. But even if they fail, all is not lost. If you are going to fail, fail quickly and move on.

Learn the lessons and pick yourself up and try again.

**“The potential for cooperation with Israel is enormous.”**

I had for a long time been concerned that Whitehall can be far too risk averse – sometimes it's important to try new things even if they might fail. This bias to inertia stifles the creativity of people who would otherwise be developing all kinds of pioneering ideas.

But Britain also has many excellent start-ups, particularly in the digital and cyber field. The potential for cooperation with Israel is enormous.

*In Israel you visited the successful Technion. In what way did this serve to underscore the importance of education as the key to an innovative and dynamic society?*

Technion was a very impressive place. I was fascinated to see the links between the university and start-up businesses. I'm very keen to support more links between universities in Israel and the UK: there's a great deal to work on together.

A rigorous and effective education system is absolutely essential for any country that wants to succeed. The reforms Michael Gove is introducing will begin to ensure that the next generation of Brits have the best possible preparation for the workplace.



The 4040 Campaign support MPs and Candidates in the 80 most marginal seats that the Conservatives must retain or gain to secure a working Conservative majority at the next General Election.

The Conservative Party and affiliated groups such as CFI are working hard to support efforts in these seats but need your support to ensure Conservative victories in these vital seats.

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**£2,500 pays for an 8 page campaign magazine to all voters in a target seat**

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**£30,000 pays for a campaign manager in a target seat for one year**

Please help us support this important campaign to help return a Conservative majority Government in 2015, to keep the country on the right track.

Thank you for your support.



For more information please contact  
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# CFI Delegations to Israel

**Paul Uppal MP**  
Wolverhampton South West



To say that my visit to Israel in November 2012 was eventful would be a serious understatement.

The week leading up to our visit had been marked by renewed rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel, but events quickly escalated after our arrival.

During a meeting with Israeli officials mobile phones began to ring. Something was clearly going on. In response to the extended missile barrages on its sovereign territory, Israel had launched



CFI Delegation in Galilee

about the escalation in tactics from both Hamas and the IDF. This led to a dramatic moment when our evening meeting in Tel Aviv was cancelled and our bus

was over half a century ago. For the population of Israel, dealing with the terrorist threats surrounding the country is a way of life.

I have always been interested in the Middle East. I had read widely but never visited the region. My contributions to this debate will now be based on real experiences with Israelis and Palestinians. Visiting the region has enabled me to broaden my comprehension and understand one of the most complicated and protracted conflicts the world has ever seen. CFI are to be credited with such an excellent, informative and balanced visit.

turned around. Warning sirens were sounding in Tel Aviv. The city's massive population was in the line of fire of rocket attacks for the first time since 1991.

The next day we were met by the sound of rocket sirens in Jerusalem - an experience I will never forget.

As the rockets continued to fall, it dawned on me how strategically vulnerable Israel remains. Israelis are stoic about the circumstances under which they live, but only at a painful stretch of the imagination can Brits understand what this is like. The last time we faced such a threat



CFI Delegation at the Israel-Lebanon border

**Nick de Bois MP**  
Enfield North



In the February 2013 recess, I accepted the opportunity to join a CFI delegation to Israel, along with my colleagues Mike Freer MP, Paul Maynard MP, and Martin Vickers MP.

With a general election just one month earlier, February was an exciting time to visit. Such are the quirks of Israel's electoral system, that when we visited, Benjamin Netanyahu was only halfway into his two months of negotiations to form a new coalition government! An impassioned discussion with newly elected cross-party MKs in the Knesset, gave our group a valuable insight into Israel's new political landscape and the vibrancy of its democracy.

Israel's legitimate security concerns left a lasting impression on me. A visit to Sderot in southern Israel, where the threat of indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza necessitates

bomb shelters on every street, brought home the very real dangers Israeli citizens face daily. Undoubtedly, to understand the issues in the region it's important to first grasp the geography and proximity of the region.

The group benefitted from an itinerary that gave us the freedom to explore all sides of the debate. In the West Bank, we met with Dr. Sabri Saidam, senior advisor to PA President Mahmoud Abbas, and Palestinian businesspeople. We also visited the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim to learn about the status of the controversial E1 area of East Jerusalem. I believe maintaining a balanced understanding of the issues facing the people in this region is crucial, and we can only get that from open dialogue with as many people as possible.

**Israel's legitimate security concerns left a lasting impression on me."**



CFI Delegation with Dr. Sabri Saidam in Ramallah

I was also pleased to have the opportunity to see the great coexistence work being done by the Peres Center for Peace. The Israeli President's charity runs a hugely successful football programme that brings together young Arab and Jewish Israelis, as well as Palestinians. The powerful sight of these children making

friends gave me great hope for a peaceful future. The role of civic society in many troubled parts of the world is becoming increasingly important and influential.

As this was my first visit to Israel, I wasn't quite sure what to expect but ended up having a hugely interesting visit. I am very grateful to CFI for providing such a balanced itinerary, which leaves me better informed.



CFI Delegation in Jerusalem



CFI Delegation interviewed at the Israel-Lebanon border



# PA Incitement: Prisoner Salaries



**Guto Bebb MP**  
Aberconwy



**Gordon Henderson MP**  
Sittingbourne & Sheppey



**Philip Hollobone MP**  
Kettering



**Andrew Percy MP**  
Brigg and Goole

While the Palestinian Authority's incitement against Israel, Jews and the West is well-documented, its practice of paying monthly salaries to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails convicted of terror offences has largely passed beneath the radar.

leading PA officials. Prisoners' Affairs Minister, Issa Karake, has gone as far as to explain that prisoners are supported "out of esteem for their sacrifice and struggle". His deputy, Ziyad Abu Ein, identifying Palestinian prisoners as "our joy", pledged that even if financial support to the PA ended, the payment of salaries and

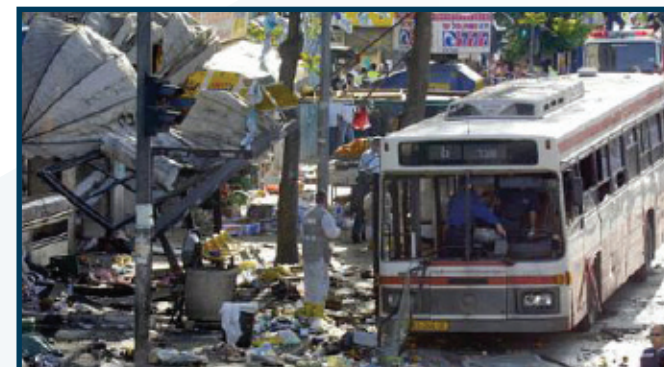
the British taxpayer. The payments come from the PA's general budget, into which the UK contributes more than £30 million each year.

Building on our long-running campaign to raise awareness about PA-sanctioned incitement, we have focused our efforts on the issue of prisoner salaries in Parliament. Our work has included a series of written and oral questions to Foreign Office and International Development Ministers. We have met with British Ministers and officials, and have made direct representations to both Israeli and Palestinian officials. The issue was raised at length in a Westminster Hall debate in March 2013, featuring contributions from

The PA pays a monthly salary, ranging between £250 and £2,150, to prisoners serving multiple life sentences for involvement and facilitation of deadly acts of terrorism, including suicide bombings.

The policy ensures that the value of one's salary is based on the length of one's jail sentence. The longer the time in prison, the higher the salary. To put it crudely, these payments are performance related and, in total, the PA is paying salaries of approximately £3 million each month to as many as 5,500 Palestinian terrorists in Israeli prisons.

Evidence of this unsavoury practice is on sound footing as the payments have been publicly discussed by



Convicted Palestinian terrorists are receiving a monthly salary from the PA

a number of our Conservative colleagues. The Daily Mail also covered the story, revealing that many Palestinian prisoners are paid more than the average UK worker.

We have strongly objected to DfID's continued categorisation of these payments as 'social assistance' and 'welfare'. PA legislation covering the payments explicitly uses the Arabic term 'ratib', which translates as 'salary'. The PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs has publicly dismissed the UK's classification of the prisoners' salaries as 'social assistance', as an incorrect 'rumour'.

DfID's contention that the PA makes these 'welfare payments' to "households who have lost their main breadwinner" seems commendable. But the PA clearly doesn't intend salary payments to act as a safety net for struggling spouses. Unmarried prisoners receive the same basic salary as those who are married and have children. Furthermore, the PA pays a separate stipend to married prisoners with children, since the prisoner is not obligated to give his salary to his family.

Additionally, DfID assurances that UK aid money is used to pay the salaries of PA civil servants meeting defined eligibility criteria, and not prisoners, negates the fact that the PA's general budget is fungible.

The UK has a proud history of distributing foreign aid to those most in need, including the Palestinians. But it is our contention that UK donations should be spent on



Conservative MPs attend parliamentary briefing on PA incitement with Itamar Marcus, Director of Palestinian Media Watch

specific projects where it cannot be misappropriated, and does not risk freeing funds for the PA, within their general budget, to spend on this unsavoury practice.

The Government rightly hold Israel to account when Israeli policies stand in the way of peace in the region. By the same reasoning, it is imperative that they adopt

We worry that no peace agreement will hold in the medium- to long-term as long as the Palestinian populace is taught to think that terrorism can and will be rewarded.

While we are pleased that our work has prompted the British Government to take a more active stance on the matter, much more needs to be done. The Palestinians

**The PA's failure to deliver on its commitment to end incitement explicitly undermines the principles and conditions on which the peace process is built."**

a similar policy with regard to the Palestinians. After all, the PA's failure to deliver on its commitment to end incitement explicitly undermines the principles and conditions on which the peace process is built.

will take any British silence as a green light to continue this practice. We must insist, as policy, that the PA stops financially rewarding terrorism.



# Blacklisting Hezbollah: A False Distinction

James Gurd  
Parliamentary Manager, CFI



After years of stalling, the EU has finally blacklisted Hezbollah, the Iranian-funded Lebanese terror group. While commendable, the move was undermined by the bewildering decision to merely proscribe the group's 'military' wing; a failure to acknowledge the true face of the 'Party of God'.

The UK's Conservative-led Government deserves praise for taking a decisive lead. British efforts were, by all accounts, instrumental in the EU's unanimous decision to proscribe Hezbollah's military wing. Not only did they initiate the proscription process, but also saw it through, lobbying wavering EU partners. Without British efforts it is likely that Hezbollah operatives would still be acting with impunity throughout Europe.

“Separating Hezbollah into so-called 'military' and 'political' wings is an artificial exercise.”

Hezbollah's ties to terrorism have long been known. The destruction of Israel remains Hezbollah's very raison d'être. In defiance of international sanctions, Hezbollah has acquired a deadly arsenal of 60,000 to 100,000 long-range rockets along the border with Israel.

The Shi'ite group also threatens the security and interests of the West. Until 9/11, Hezbollah held the notorious distinction of being responsible for more American deaths than any other terrorist organisation. Hezbollah now plays a key role in Syria's civil war, bitterly fighting to preserve its ally, President Bashar al-Assad.

Hezbollah's appalling attack on young Israeli tourists at the Bulgarian resort of Burgas proved the ultimate catalyst for proscription. A terror attack on European soil had claimed the lives of five Israelis and a Bulgarian national. Europe could no longer turn a blind eye.

However, it would be complacent in the extreme to think that the proscription of Hezbollah's military wing will shut down its terror activities on European soil once and for all.

Partial proscription enables Hezbollah's 'political' wing to continue fundraising and recruitment activities throughout Europe. Classifying Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation in its entirety would immediately cut off this lifeline. Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah openly concedes that a European blacklist would "destroy" the organisation, since it would "dry up the sources of finance, end moral, political and material support, stifle voices".

Separating Hezbollah into so-called 'military' and 'political' wings is an artificial exercise. Both the political and military elements within Hezbollah report directly to the same leader: Nasrallah. Hezbollah

itself insists that its military and non-military activities are indivisible.

Nasrallah has openly mocked the distinction made by the EU: "I suggest that our ministers in the next government be from Hezbollah's military wing". Second-in-command, Naim Qassem, stated unequivocally: "Hezbollah has a single leadership... The same leadership that directs the parliamentary and government work also leads Jihad actions in the struggle against Israel".

Hezbollah has comprehensively subverted Lebanon's political system, institutions, security, and social cohesion, and its invasion of Syria has brought the conflict to an increasingly volatile Lebanon. There is simply no evidence that decades of European diplomacy has moderated the group in any way. Far from destabilising Lebanon, a full proscription would give Lebanon's struggling moderates a timely boost.



Hezbollah soldiers displaying weapons arsenal

The EU has taken a step in the right direction. At a time of great regional uncertainty, it is imperative that Western states take a principled stand. The proscription of Hezbollah in its entirety by both the EU and the UK would send a desperately needed signal of strength.

# Coalition Government: Israel's PR Problem

Nathalie Tamam  
Deputy Director, CFI



Golda Meir joked that "in Israel, there are three million prime ministers". She was right. In Israel, everyone has six opinions on any given topic, and seemingly six times the average vocal cord strength with which to express them.

Perhaps the fact that Israelis are confronted with so many globally significant issues, right on their doorstep, provides some explanation. Quite clearly, a natural side effect of this is the multi-party system that dominates the Israeli political scene.

Coalition politics has always been a feature of political life. The parties with the most seats have sought to form intricate and difficult coalitions, often with those on the opposite side of the political divide. Sometimes it doesn't seem to matter if their political, religious and social beliefs totally contradict - until the coalition breaks that is, at which point three million experts are heard to exclaim: "Well, that was inevitable".

Proportional representation with a low threshold has created an extremely 'pure' form of democracy that has perhaps taken consensus too far and made it awkward for governments to make important decisions. Leadership has been rendered redundant, as charismatic and principled prime ministers have been held back by their coalition partners.

Perhaps this is best described as 'checks and balances on steroids', but it has rendered political decision making increasingly difficult. While this can be a good way of limiting unnecessary state intervention, in a country that is grappling with important and significant economic issues, as well as that of its very survival, it can also be damaging.

For eight endless weeks after the Israeli elections in January 2013, Benjamin Netanyahu scrambled to form a coalition that would provide stability for the country, maintain party unity and that he himself felt was satisfactory. Israel now has a broad-based coalition which alongside the Likud Beiteinu party, includes Tzipi Livni's Hatnua party and Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid party - both centrist parties - as well as Naftali Bennett's Jewish Home party, a right-wing, national religious party.

On the Peace Process, already the Coalition appears divided. Likud Beiteinu, Hatnua and Yesh Atid have pledged to pursue negotiations with the Palestinians and are committed to working towards a two-state solution. But Jewish Home has reservations. How this

“In Israel, there are three million prime ministers.”

Prime Minister Golda Meir

may affect the Coalition moving forward will no doubt be very interesting to observe. Already we see Israel's Labor Party hinting at a willingness to step into the Coalition if required. Labor leader Shelly

Yachimovich has said that her party would support Netanyahu's efforts in renewing negotiations with the Palestinians.

But despite their apparent differences there is agreement within the Coalition on a range of other issues, including electoral reform and a pledge to ensure that ultra-Orthodox communities complete



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yair Lapid

national army service. On these increasingly important issues left and right are united and have pledged significant reforms.

It will require all of Netanyahu's skill as a political operator to negotiate and maintain the broad coalition he has formed. But for Netanyahu, the next term is make or break. Forming

a government of 'national unity' may finally give him the domestic mandate and international leverage he needs to be a strong leader for Israel, in what will certainly be very challenging times ahead.

# In Conversation with James Arbuthnot MP

**T**he Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP recently stepped down as Parliamentary Chairman of CFI's Parliamentary Group after seven years of loyal friendship and service. CFI's James Gurd sat down with the Defence Select Committee Chairman to hear about his support for Israel and memories of his time with CFI.

**Why is Israel important to you and why have you been a friend of Israel for so long?**

My feeling about Israel is the same as the thing that drives me most in politics, and that is the issue of fairness. If I feel someone or something has been treated unfairly, a demand for justice wells up inside of me. Israel has been unfairly treated by the international community for decades. It seems unfair to me that a people could go through what the Jewish people experienced in the Holocaust and be accepted as a nation by the UN, only to then spend the rest of time trying to fight off being driven into the sea.

**Why did you decide to engage with CFI?**

I began articulating my support for Israel when I was first elected to the House in 1987. I got on extremely well with Stuart Polak (CFI Director) and was impressed by his even-handed approach.

My first visit to Israel came in the lead-up to the First Gulf War. As we arrived all the tourists were leaving

because they thought it was going to be a dangerous place to be. We were made to feel tremendously welcome and it was a wonderful visit. CFI handled it exceptionally well because they ensured and insisted that we also had really high-level Palestinian representations, so that we saw both sides of the argument. We were then allowed to make up our own minds about the rights and wrongs of the various arguments. I thought that was really impressive and built up my knowledge.

**What is your fondest memory of visiting Israel with CFI?**

During my visit preceding the First Gulf War I had such a feeling of solidarity with Israel that when the trip came to an end, I almost felt like I was deserting at a time when the country was preparing to be on the receiving end of Saddam Hussein's Scud rockets.

A lot of people in the UK somehow have a vision of Israel as some sort of continuous warzone, but

**“Support for Israel within the Conservative Party has been broad, strong and steadfast throughout my time as an MP.”**

actually, if you walk the streets of Tel Aviv, it feels much more secure, stable and friendly than parts of London. There is also something wonderfully Jewish about the overwhelming hospitality and the family nature of Israel. The sun helps as well!



Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP at CFI Annual Business Lunch

**What is the state of support for Israel amongst your parliamentary colleagues and why should they support Israel?**

Support for Israel within the Conservative Party has been broad, strong and steadfast throughout my time as an MP. It is undoubtedly stronger in the Conservative Party than it is in Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Conservative MPs should support Israel because it is in an extraordinarily important strategic

position. Israel is also a country which shares our values; the rule of law, freedom of speech, and looking after those that are least able to look after themselves. If we did as well as Israel does in those respects we would be stronger than we currently are.

**How have UK-Israel relations improved during your time with CFI?**

Relations have certainly improved. The main improvement came from a long-running, CFHed campaign to change Universal Jurisdiction legislation. When Israeli General Doron Almog was threatened with arrest at Heathrow in 2005, I wrote to the then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw expressing my dismay. The risk of incarceration for any senior Israeli visiting this country, possibly to negotiate peace, would appear to me so counterproductive that we needed to change the law. The current Government enacted this change and I am really proud of that. CFI was undeniably one of the main drivers of that change.

**What changes have you noticed within Israel during your time as Parliamentary Chairman?**

Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was a brave move for which it received absolutely no credit. People forget that shortly after withdrawing, Israel began to suffer rocket attacks. It was hardly surprising that Israel reacted strongly to those rocket attacks and the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit. Against this backdrop, Israel has unjustifiably become the aggressor in the eyes of the international community.

**What do you see in the future for Israel?**

The Arab Spring has shown us that Israel is not at the heart of the Middle

East's problems, though for decades it was assumed to be. The region's biggest problem is the autocracies that give insufficient weight to the human needs of their people. That is never something that could be levelled at Israel. Israel always leans over backwards to deal with the human needs of its people. Some would say that Israel doesn't do this with relation to the Palestinians, and sometimes those accusations have some credibility, but in my view all Israel wants to do is live in peace and security. If its neighbours would allow it to do so then the lives of the

Palestinians would be immeasurably enhanced.

**What advice would you give to your successor as Parliamentary Chairman?**

I would advise my successor to enjoy it. Be your own person. Recognise that there are things about Israel you can criticise and are wrong, but of which country can you not say that?

Recognise that Israel is a wonderful country which is enormously supported by CFI and its most impressive staff.

**“Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was a brave move for which it received absolutely no credit.”**



Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP with Prime Minister David Cameron and H.E. Daniel Taub at CFI Annual Business Lunch



# Parliamentary Cricket Tour Diary

**Nigel Adams MP**  
Selby and Ainsty



Israel isn't the first country you think of when recalling the great cricketing nations. But as team captain of the Lords and Commons Cricket Club (LCCC), I am always on the lookout for interesting places for the team to tour. During an earlier trip to Israel with CFI, I had heard how cricket was being used to bring together Israeli and Palestinian children and set about raising awareness of this incredible work.

And so, in October 2012, the cross-party LCCC visited Israel for a landmark cricket tour, in coordination with CFI and the Israel Cricket Association (ICA).

I was joined by colleagues: Bob Blackman MP, Crispin Blunt MP, Richard Graham MP, Graham Jones MP, Mark Lancaster MP, Karl



Richard Graham MP and James Morris MP preparing to bat against Young Ashdod CC



Lords and Commons Cricket Club in Tel Aviv

McCartney MP, James Morris MP, and Guy Opperman MP.

## Thursday 11th October

A busy first day for the team as we travelled down south to see some of the ICA's highly regarded peaceful coexistence cricket programmes.

In the morning we visited Sderot, where we heard about the effects of ongoing rocket fire from Gaza and saw the remains of rockets that had landed throughout the town.

From here, we headed to Hura in the Negev to see the Cross-Border Cricket Project which has proven extremely popular amongst local Bedouin children. After an extravagant lunch beneath a traditional Bedouin tent, the group imparted some cricketing wisdom during an impromptu training session at a local school. This promptly backfired as we were

resoundingly beaten by the Hura Youth Cricket Club!

In Be'er Sheva, we saw the inspirational Cricket4Peace project; the first cross-border peace building project to use cricket to bring together Israeli and Palestinian children from disadvantaged communities. It was a privilege to see how sport can bring communities together and we were delighted to donate cricket gear provided by the England and Wales Cricket Board.

## Friday 12th October

The LCCC got its first proper run out as we played an Israel Cricket Association Invitational XI, chosen by the Chairman, Stanley Perlman, at Israel's National Athletics Stadium. Going into the match, the parliamentarians had been most worried about contending with the heat of Tel Aviv, but we found the



Nigel Adams MP giving cricket advice in Be'er Sheva

artificial cricket strip tougher going. The unusual wicket proved the ICA XI's secret weapon as they delivered an unreachable 20 Over target of 300. I'm not one to point fingers, but one of my esteemed colleagues dropped a straightforward catch from a handy Sri Lankan which didn't help our cause – especially since the chap went on to score a century!

Despite the result the team greatly enjoyed the occasion and was impressed with the high standard of the opposition.

## Saturday 13th October

We travelled to Ashdod to face off against Young Ashdod CC, the reigning domestic champions. Young Ashdod was a team of cricket-mad Indian-Israelis and possessed the country's best young spin bowler. Former England Test Captain John Emburey, who joined us for the tour,

took the highly tuned British athletes through their paces in a warm up session, offering valuable advice on fielding. The parliamentarians put in a much improved performance, but came up short again. Mark Lancaster MP delivered a Player of the Tour performance, taking three wickets and wicket-keeper Guy

Opperman MP was a constant thorn in the opposition's side.

With Israel's national press in attendance and British Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Matthew Gould, overseeing the proceedings, the match created a real buzz in the town.

## Sunday 14th October

On our final day, the team took the opportunity to visit the historic city of Jerusalem. Yad Vashem was a profoundly moving experience and was no less affecting for those of us visiting for a second time. We finished with a whistle-stop tour of the Old City; the vitality of which was ever apparent as we navigated through its bustling markets and places of worship.

The whole team would like to thank CFI for arranging such a varied and fascinating tour.



Lords and Commons Cricket Club at the Western Wall in Jerusalem

# Iran: A New Hope

Alec Shelbrooke MP  
Elmet and Rothwell



Iran's nuclear ambitions up to now have been of the greatest concern to us all and not least Israel.

Israel's calm and mature response to a country whose President declared that he wanted "to wipe Israel off the map" is to be applauded. But now, the election of President Hassan Rouhani perhaps presents a strategic opportunity to try and row back Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The most striking thing about the Iranian presidential election was that all of the candidates, no matter how conservative or radical, criticised President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for their country's economic woes, and in the words of President Rouhani, he "brought our country to its knees".

However, actions speak louder than words and for the time being the prospect of real change in Iran remains slim. After all, Rouhani helped Ayatollah Khomeini found the regime in 1978 and has been a continuous supporter of the Islamic Revolution. He has been actively involved in advancing Iran's development of nuclear weapons and served as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator under President Mohammad Khatami from August 2003 until October 2005.

But while we remain cautious, there is evidence to believe that some hope is not misguided. Sanctions are hitting Iran hard. Their wide-ranging and all-encompassing nature has made daily life for the average Iranian a struggle. Iran

finds itself in a situation tormenting leaders across the Middle East; the uprising of the people due to poor economic conditions.

Iranians clearly wanted their country back on its feet and all election candidates recognised this.

But perhaps the clerics have also realised.

**“Make no mistake, Ayatollah Khamenei has been the driving force behind Iran's nuclear aspirations.”**



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani

When all is said and done, maintaining power is always the priority.

Make no mistake, Ayatollah Khamenei has been the driving force behind Iran's nuclear aspirations. Former President Ahmadinejad was merely a willing puppet to push the programme forward. The election of Rouhani and the prevailing economic difficulties could provide the clerics with the perfect opportunity to row back on their nuclear programme,

get the sanctions eased and re-establish some stability within Iran, while still saving face domestically.

So amongst all the Iranian posturing and bluster, how can the West leverage this into real progress on the nuclear issue? The sanctions have been successful at pushing Iran into a corner and they must continue

for as long as Tehran refuses to halt uranium enrichment. However, if Iran does make positive movements on this front, the West should be ready to respond in kind.

The carrot and stick approach that has always been doggedly pursued must continue into this new administration. If Iran plays ball, so will the West. A pragmatic and patient approach will be vital and if we play it right, perhaps it will usher in an era of greater stability in the Middle East.

# Israel and the Council of Europe

James Clappison MP  
Hertsmere

Israel embodies the values we should stand for. It is an oasis of freedom, democracy and human rights in a very challenging neighbourhood.

These principles have shaped my work as a British delegate to the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly. Tasked with upholding and promoting human rights and democratic principles throughout Europe and beyond, the Assembly convenes four times a year to discuss and investigate human rights matters.

Frustratingly, the Assembly spends a disproportionate amount of time debating and censoring Israel. A number

**“Israel is an oasis of freedom, democracy and human rights in a very challenging neighbourhood.”**

of outspoken individuals use the Assembly as a platform to throw wild accusations at Israel and condemn the country at every opportunity. These individuals are happier reiterating grievances than

achieving a peaceful solution to the Middle East Peace Process.

I have the pleasure of serving alongside a number of my Conservative colleagues in the British delegation to the Assembly, including Brian Binley MP, Robert Walter MP and Dame Angela Watkinson MP. Together, we strive to create a more reasoned debate and ensure that Israel's voice is properly heard.

The need for balance is all too apparent. In a recent session, I felt compelled to highlight that outside observers might find it strange that the Assembly was debating a report on the Middle East that concentrated almost exclusively on



James Clappison MP at CFI Annual Members Reception

portrayed as the primary obstacle.

Though good friends of Israel, we are not uncritical of the Government of Israel and we are able to speak frankly to Israeli representatives when necessary. The Israeli-Palestinian situation requires, above all, an even-handed approach that recognises the legitimate interests of both sides. Only through full and frank negotiations, in which the legitimate expectations and aspirations of both sides are realised, can we reach the comprehensive peace agreement required.

My Conservative colleagues and I have worked hard to redress the balance. But there is much more to be done. It is now incumbent on us to seize the initiative and proactively highlight Israel's remarkable democratic credentials and respect for human rights.





# Fact File: Operation Pillar of Defence

## Why Operation Pillar of Defence Started

- Operation Pillar of Defence was an eight-day Israeli military operation against Hamas in November 2012 (14th-21st).
- The operation was launched in self-defence following a significant escalation of cross-border attacks and rocket fire into southern Israel by Hamas and other Gaza-based terror groups.
- The goal of Israel's operation was clearly defined as removing a strategic threat to Israeli citizens; destroying Hamas' store of long-range missiles and deterring future terror attacks.
- Gaza rocket fire in 2012 was at the highest level since the end of Operation Cast Lead (January 2009), with 2,327 rockets and 230 mortar shells launched.

## Hamas Rocket Attacks

- Hamas and other Gaza-based terror groups indiscriminately fired more than 1,500 rockets towards Israel in just eight days; killing six Israelis and injuring 240.



Rockets launched from Gaza into Israel between 2005-2012



Hamas rockets fired towards Israel

- As many as 900 of these rockets reached Israel, with a number exploding in urban areas, causing extensive damage to civilian buildings.
- Hamas targeted Israel's largest cities, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, for the first time with long-range Iranian-supplied rockets (Fajr-5 and M75 rockets).

## Hamas War Crimes

- Hamas commits a double war crime when it intentionally directs rocket fire at Israel's civilian population and deliberately locates weapons storage facilities and rocket launch sites within

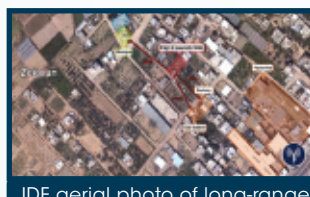


Apartments in Rishon LeZion destroyed by Gaza rocket

population areas, thereby using Palestinian citizens as human shields.

## IDF Operations

- The Israeli Air Force carried out around 1,500 pinpoint air strikes against military targets in Gaza during Operation Pillar of Defence, inflicting severe damage on Hamas and its military capabilities.
- The IAF targeted 980 underground rocket launchers, 140 smuggling tunnels, 42 Hamas operational bases, and 26 weapon manufacturing and storage facilities.



IDF aerial photo of long-range rocket launch site in Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza

- The operation significantly reduced the rocket launching capabilities of Gaza-based terror organisations and hampered their weapons build-up capabilities.
- 177 Palestinians were killed in IAF airstrikes – 120 of whom were engaged in terror activities, according to the IDF.

## Israel's Strategic Vulnerability

- Hamas' rockets now threaten over four million citizens in Israel – over half of the country's population.



- Hamas' firing of Iranian-made Fajr-5 rockets into Tel Aviv increased the number of Israelis within Hamas' range from one million to over four million.
- Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system intercepted 420 rockets during Operation Pillar of Defence, preventing them from hitting populated areas of Israel, saving countless lives.



## Conservative Support

- The Government steadfastly supported Israel throughout Operation Pillar of Defence with assertions from Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague that Hamas bore "principal responsibility" for the violence and strong condemnation of rocket fire into Israel from Gaza.
- In the Commons Statement on Operation Pillar of Defence there was near-

unanimous support from the Conservative benches, when 22 Conservative MPs spoke in support of Israel.

- A letter coordinated by CFI and signed by seventeen Conservative MPs, welcoming the Government's support for Israel, was printed in the Daily Telegraph.
- Helpful op-eds were placed on conservative websites written by MPs that had seen first-hand the deteriorating situation during a CFI delegation to Israel.

**For the population of Israel, dealing with the terrorist threats surrounding the country is a matter of existence... Israel's right to defend itself should remain of primary concern for Israel... This escalation started with the abuse of the trust of the people of Gaza and the use of the Strip as little more than a launching pad for an ideological war."**

John Howell MP, The Commentator, November 2012

# Israel's Balancing Act

Tanyah Murkes  
Israel Liaison, CFI



**D**uring the February 2013 Conservative Friends of Israel delegation to Israel, we hosted a dinner

with two Israeli journalists on the opposing sides of the political spectrum. The conversation quickly became heated, with both

parties in Israel representing various social groups and political views. Members of the Knesset (Parliament) come from different backgrounds and reflect different factions within society.

In the current 120 member Knesset there are twelve Arab MKs, including Druze and Bedouin MKs. In parliamentary debates, Arab MKs

Jewish concept whereby through performing good deeds one is helping to improve the world. Israel has taken on this concept as an integral part of our interaction with the wider world. In recent months, hundreds of Syrian citizens who have been wounded in Syria's civil war have been brought to Israel for medical care.

The debate over the character of the State of Israel remains as relevant today as it was one hundred years ago and the question of what comes first, Jewish or democratic values, can reach boiling point.

Today, proposals to draft the ultra-Orthodox into the army, is something that continues to divide Israelis. What is more important; equality of civil obligations or maintaining a community's traditions? To me striking the balance between traditional and democratic values is the key to maintaining such a unique and special State.



Israeli democracy in action

*This article was the first instalment of CFI's 'Voices from Israel' email series for our members. Each month CFI showcases a different 'Voice from Israel'; a personal perspective by an Israeli on current affairs, politics, society and culture.*

often publicly call for an Intifada (violent uprising) against the State of Israel. How many countries in this region, or anywhere else in the world, would accept such statements as a regular part of political discourse?

With this in mind, Israel strives and at times struggles to maintain a balance between its core values and traditions, passed down through generations, and the dynamics of a modern Western country. The State of Israel is both a Jewish and democratic State, and can only exist with these two central tenets at its core. While a challenge to maintain at times, the beauty and uniqueness of Israel derives from each of them.

The concept of 'Tikkun Olam' is a good example of this balance. Tikkun Olam, which literally translates to "repairing the world", is a

sides arguing about the issues most important to them. While the centrist's comments were perhaps more moderate, the left-wing journalist was critical of the Israeli government and its policies.

The debate could be seen as a reflection of a division within Israeli society, but I believe it was an insight, not only into the passion Israelis have for the future of our State, but for democracy in action. I couldn't imagine a similar debate taking place in public in any other country in the Middle East, and one of the things I cherish most about living in Israel is the knowledge that my voice can be heard regardless of my sex, religion, and social standing.

This diversity can be seen in almost every aspect of Israeli life, and especially within the Israeli political system. There are twelve political

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

## What CST does

**CST's mission is to ensure the physical protection and political defence of British Jews. CST strives to:**

- Facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism and antisemitic terrorism.
- Represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- Work in closest partnership with all levels of the Police and Government.
- Promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism and antisemitism.
- Promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research to benefit both the Jewish community and wider society.

**CST offers its services free of charge; costs are met by donations from the Jewish community.**

**[www.thecst.org.uk](http://www.thecst.org.uk)**

**London** (Head Office) **020 8457 9999**  
Emergency 24-hour pager 07659 101 668

**Manchester** (Northern Regional Office) **0161 792 6666**  
Emergency 24-hour number 0800 980 0668

**CST\_UK** **Community Security Trust**





# In Conversation with Jonathan Medved

**Leetal Stark**  
Projects Manager, CFI



In June 2013, CFI were pleased to host a parliamentary lunch with one of Israel's leading venture capitalists, Jonathan Medved. Previously named by the New York Times as one of the 'Ten Most Influential Americans' to have impacted Israel, Medved has invested in over 100 companies, helping twelve reach valuations in excess of \$100 million. Medved has a unique and interesting insight into Israeli business and innovation, which he was all too happy to share with CFI.

## **What factors have allowed Israel to flourish into such an economically successful nation?**

Spirit and culture. Issues such as innovation or entrepreneurship are driven by human will, as expressed in a collective sense, which is essentially a factor of culture. In Israel, we've created an entrepreneurial culture which embraces risk because we live in a pretty risky place, which you don't need the day's headlines to remind you. When you compare that risk with the risk of starting a company and losing your job or losing your investor money, they simply don't compute.

Factors such as the role of our military also play a part. Every young Israeli is expected to complete national service, irrespective of class. You therefore have the best and brightest of this country competing;



Jonathan Medved, Israeli venture capitalist

and together they learn about this entrepreneurial culture.

## **What impact has Israeli innovation and technology had on everyday life in Britain?**

Many products which people use have everything to do with Israel. They can range from your cell phone or iPad, which has critical storage technology from Israel, to your Kindle, with an

second most important economy; but in terms of innovation, the 600 start-up companies that are getting venture capital financing each year put Israel in a totally different league.

This is what makes the people who promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement so ludicrous. If they were honest with themselves, they would recommend that everyone go live in a cave. You

**“In Israel, we have created an entrepreneurial culture which embraces risk.”**

Israeli built operating system. These products also include your laptop or PC, which have a chip from Intel designed in Israel. You simply can't imagine a world of technology today without Israel's huge contribution. When you look at where things are coming from, it's either coming from Silicon Valley or from Israel. Everyone else is playing catch up.

I'm not saying that Israel is the

simply could not use any social network, any search engine, the internet itself, any computer or cell phone and any number of medical devices, because critical components of them all have come from Israel.

I honestly believe that BDS is a movement of a large bark, loud noise but very few people making that noise. We should not be reactive

to BDS. We have to be proactive about creating and furthering UK-Israel business ties.

## **Going forward, how can Israel strengthen her business links with the UK?**

The values of the UK as a democracy and a multicultural society can combine with Israel to create more innovation together. We are now in a situation where the Governments of both countries are very focused on innovation. Prime Minister David Cameron and his leadership, including the Foreign Secretary, are attuned to the role that innovation plays.

However, the number of missions and people who are coming back and forth needs to increase radically. It is one thing to read an article in this magazine; the other is to bring investors from both countries to each other's countries. We need to have more seminars and more frameworks where people are getting to know each other. Ultimately, even with great communication technology, there's nothing like seeing the reality face-to-face.

## **Is Israel optimistic about its economic future?**

Israel's economy, even during the depths of the global financial slowdown, did not contract. Israel is one of the few economies in the world that actually continued to grow, albeit at a slower pace.

Israel is now over eight million people and when you think about how far Israel has come since establishing independence in 1948, the growth is remarkable. Every year, there are another 140,000 Israelis

in terms of health care efficiency. Israel is the second most educated population in the world after Canada, in terms of percentage of people who have college degrees. We have a lot to be proud of and a

**“The 600 start-up companies that are getting venture capital financing each year put Israel in a totally different league.”**

added to the country; that's like another city. Israel's birth rates and life expectancy are now some of the highest in the developed world. We're also one of the happiest countries, according to the Gallup Poll which ranks Israel as seventh in the world.

So, we have a lot of reasons to be optimistic: our economy is good and we have good health. Israel has just been named fourth in the world

lot to be happy about. However, one cannot be blind and close their eyes to the rest of the world. We're living in a region where there's huge turmoil and instability.

Israel will continue to innovate and continue to build with our partners, despite the risks. In fact, these risks give us the ability to take the relatively small risks of starting a company and trying to create true innovation.



The changing face of Tel Aviv

# Britain, Israel and the Global Race

Jessica Lee MP  
Erewash



**W**hat does Barclays share in common with Intel, Cisco, and Microsoft? The land of milk and honey.

As a modern powerhouse of innovation, Israel plays host to the research and development centres of the world's largest multinationals.

Barclays' decision to open a R&D centre in Tel Aviv reflects a growing trend amongst British businesses to engage more closely with the Jewish State. The result: business

Israel is playing a sizeable role in the UK's path to economic recovery. Large-scale Israeli projects provide thousands of jobs for British workers.

Israeli ingenuity is even good for the health of the British public, with Israel's Teva Pharmaceuticals providing the NHS with one in six of its prescription medicines, making it the NHS' largest supplier of generic drugs.

The potential for further growth is clear. UKTI expects bilateral trade to top £4 billion by 2015, but we're on course to both meet and exceed that target much earlier.

High-tech has fast become the cornerstone of the Conservative-led Government's commitment to strengthening bilateral trade with Israel. Senior Government officials have led a series of high-profile business delegations to the 'Start-up Nation'. The UK-Israel Tech Hub launched by the British Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Matthew Gould, is doing an exemplary job of promoting the UK as the European partner of choice for Israel's burgeoning tech companies.

The growth in bilateral trade between our nations make calls for a boycott of Israel seem all the more misguided. Any boycott would hinder the UK's ability to play a positive role in the peace process, but it would also be detrimental to our economic interests.

Britain is competing in a global race. If we are to thrive, we must develop close and lasting bilateral ties with the world's forward-thinking, modern economies. With the Government so firmly committed to working more closely with Israel on innovation and technology, the future looks bright for both countries.



Research and development hub in Tel Aviv

Israel's astonishing high-tech boom presents many great opportunities for British companies. Promising Israeli start-ups can benefit hugely from the international marketing capabilities and product development expertise offered by British companies. Partnering together, Israel and the UK will nurture the leading tech companies of tomorrow.

I know from my own constituency of Erewash (located in the East Midlands between Derby and Nottingham), that high-tech engineering is a growth sector, with a mixture of new start-ups and long-standing companies continuing to flourish.

**Partnering together, Israel and the UK will nurture the leading tech companies of tomorrow."**

relations between the United Kingdom and Israel are stronger than ever.

UK-Israel bilateral trade reached an all-time high of £3.81 billion in 2012; a remarkable 60% increase in just a decade. Israel has become the UK's largest individual trading partner in the Near East and North Africa. The UK is Israel's second largest export market and is only surpassed by the United States.

Significantly, Israel is one of the top 20 countries investing in the UK, with its investments exceeding those of Brazil, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. With as many as 300 Israeli companies operating in the UK,

# Israel-Turkey: Restoring an Old Friendship

Sedef Akademir  
Research and Events Officer, CFI



**A**s Israeli-Palestinian peace talks embark once more, Israel's other alliances in the region, particularly with one-time staunch ally Turkey, have also come under the spotlight.

Israel and Turkey share a history of strong relations in a multitude of areas, most notably military cooperation, tourism, and

The relationship hit rock bottom after Israel's raid of the Mavi Marmara flotilla in 2010, in which nine Turkish nationals died after trying to break the Israeli naval blockade of Gaza. The flotilla was organised by the Islamist NGO the IHH and openly backed by the Turkish Government, with some ruling party MPs aboard the ship. Diplomatic fallout between the two countries after the incident was vast and relations have never recovered, despite Israel's efforts

**Turkey's AKP is a good example of the dangers of embracing the so-called 'moderate Islamists'."**

trade. Importantly, both countries hold democratic values in a region where autocracies dominate.

In recent years, the relationship has soured and been increasingly tested. But as Israel continues to find itself surrounded by potentially hostile neighbours, strong regional allies remain few and far between and Israel's new political reality has compelled it to try and reconnect with the Republic of Turkey.

Strained relations began in January 2009 when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stormed off the stage at the World Economic Forum in Davos after a heated debate on Gaza with Israeli President Shimon Peres. During the now infamous 'One Minute' incident, Erdogan lashed out at Peres, stating, "you know very well how to kill".

While some analysts believe that positive cooperation with Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia's Ennahda party is possible, the jury is still out as to whether Western democracies can really work with them. Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) is a good example of the dangers of embracing the so-called 'moderate Islamists'.

Upon Erdogan's election, numerous liberal journalists and EU politicians alike hailed Erdogan as a force for democracy and progression in the country, much to the despair of Turkish secularists and supporters of Israel. Yet within a decade, the AKP's authoritarian brand of political

Islam has transformed a proudly secular and increasingly democratic Turkish society into a far more openly religious state, with intolerance and anti-Semitism on the rise.

Fuelling this has been Erdogan's repetitive tendency to direct incendiary and conspiratorial remarks towards Israel; most notably declaring Zionism to be a "crime against humanity". In 2009, he spoke the words "thou shalt not kill" in Hebrew in a speech to his party's supporters; a gesture that appealed to his core electorate.

Erdogan has claimed that the firing of rockets from Gaza were "reasons Israelis fabricated to attack innocent people". Most absurdly, Israel has also been accused by Erdogan of engineering Egypt's military coup, and the AKP blamed the anti-government Gezi protests which rocked Turkey in the summer of 2013 on the "Jewish diaspora".

Taking all this into consideration, is the restoration of Turkish-Israeli relations therefore beyond all hope? Among some positive news is that tourism between the two countries is increasing once more, and economic ties have strengthened over the past year with an increase of 56% in Turkish exports to Israel, and a 22% increase in imports from Israel. Nonetheless, as the numerous and repetitive anti-Israel gestures on the part of the Erdogan government reveal, the road to reconciliation is likely to be a difficult one.



# CFI's Calendar: 2012-2013

## September 2012



Alistair Burt MP addresses CFI Annual Members Reception

Annual Members Reception at House of Commons Terrace with Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt MP, and H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel, attended by 120 Conservative MPs and over 150 CFI members

## October 2012



Rt Hon William Hague MP addresses CFI Party Conference Reception

Conference Reception with Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon William Hague MP and H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel, attended by over 400 delegates

CFI coordinates Lords and Commons Cricket Club tour to Israel for nine cross-party MPs

CFI Lunch for Conservative MPs with Director of Palestinian Media Watch, Itamar Marcus

## November 2012



CFI Delegation in Galilee

Israel Delegation for four Conservative MPs during Operation Pillar of Defence

22 Conservative MPs speak in support of Israel during House of Commons Statement on Operation Pillar of Defence

The Daily Telegraph publishes letter signed by seventeen Conservative MPs condemning Hamas rocket attacks on Israel

## December 2012



PM David Cameron addresses CFI Annual Business Lunch

Annual Business Lunch with Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP at the Westminster Park Plaza Hotel, attended by 140 Conservative parliamentarians and 550 businesspeople

CFI coordinates Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue in London, attended by over 80 senior parliamentarians and decision makers

## January 2013



Sunday Times letter excerpt

The Sunday Times publishes letter signed by 43 Conservative MPs expressing "shock" at "objectionable" Gerald Scarfe cartoon about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Parliamentary Briefing with Israel's Deputy Military Advocate General, Colonel Eli Bar-On

## February 2013



CFI Delegation in Jerusalem

Israel Delegation for four Conservative MPs, one Member of the Scottish Parliament and one Welsh Assembly Member

Gordon Henderson MP leads Westminster Hall Debate about incitement in the Palestinian Territories

CFI staff campaign in Eastleigh during the by-election alongside Conservative MPs

## March 2013



Guto Bebb MP and Andrew Percy MP join CFI for annual AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington D.C.

CFI leads delegation of Conservative MPs to memorial ceremony to mark the tenth anniversary of the death of H.E. Shlomo Argov, Ambassador of Israel

2009 Israel Delegation reunion dinner

## April 2013



Baroness Thatcher with Shimon Peres in Israel

CFI statement remembers former Prime Minister Baroness Thatcher's strong support for Israel and the Jewish community

CFI coordinates breakfast for supporters with Treasury Minister, Sajid Javid MP

## May 2013



Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP

CFI coordinates lunches for supporters with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP and Treasury Minister, David Gauke MP

CFI host a table for Conservative MPs at UJIA Sports Night 2013 at Wembley Stadium

## June 2013



Stanley Fischer addresses CFI Reception

CFI coordinates Reception for MPs and supporters with outgoing Governor of the Bank of Israel, Stanley Fischer

Parliamentary Breakfast with Israeli venture capitalist, Jonathan Medved

## July 2013



Nick Boles MP addresses CFI Annual Members Reception

Annual Members Reception at House of Commons with Planning Minister, Nick Boles MP and H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel

Israel Delegation with former Defence Secretary, Rt Hon Liam Fox MP

Parliamentary Briefing for 20 MPs with H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel

## August 2013



CFI Informed Magazine 2013/14

CFI prepares for publication of 2013/2014 edition of Informed Magazine

CFI prepares for Conservative Party Conference

CFI prepares for Delegations to Israel in October and November 2013

## Baroness Thatcher and Israel

In April 2013, CFI was saddened to hear of the passing of former Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher at the age of 87.

Baroness Thatcher was always a strong supporter of Israel and the Jewish community. Her staunch defence of freedom and liberty perhaps explains her genuine admiration of Israel as the only democracy in an autocratic region; something that she felt should be fought for and protected.

This was clearly reflected in her commitment to the Conservative Friends of Israel. She served as the Honorary President of our North London Area Council throughout her time as MP for Finchley and even as Prime Minister. As an active member of the Council, regularly attending CFI events, she is remembered fondly by those who worked with her.

Baroness Thatcher was also a founding member of the Finchley Anglo-Israeli Friendship League, the first association of its kind to be formed in the country.



Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with Prime Minister Shimon Peres in 1986

"Israel must never be expected to jeopardise her security: if she was ever foolish enough to do so, and then suffered for it, the backlash against both honest brokers and Palestinians would be immense – 'land for peace' must also bring peace".

Israel's leading political figures mourned the passing of Baroness Thatcher. President Shimon Peres identified Baroness Thatcher as

and power to help us in trying to make peace". Recalling the Israeli-Jordanian peace talks in the late 1980s, President Peres said that Baroness Thatcher had "served as a source of knowledge and wisdom to me and to the King of Jordan. We knew we could trust her council and dedication".

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who attended Baroness Thatcher's funeral, remembered her as a "great leader, a woman of principle, of determination, of conviction, of strength; a woman of greatness".

Britain has lost a great leader, but her legacy will never be forgotten and her staunch belief in Israel will always set the tone for future Conservative Party Leaders and Prime Ministers in years to come.

"an extraordinary leader, a true and dedicated friend of Israel and a personal friend of mine". Peres stated that the former British Prime Minister "stood by us [Israel] in times of crisis and used her influence

In 1986, Baroness Thatcher made a landmark visit to Israel - the first by a serving British Prime Minister.

Baroness Thatcher spoke strongly of her support for Israel's security:

**Baroness Thatcher was always a strong supporter of Israel and the Jewish community. ”**

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