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Introducing CFI

Parliamentary Group

Chairman:	Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP
Vice-Chairmen:	Guto Bebb MP; John Howell OBE MP; Andrew Percy MP
Officers:	Bob Blackman MP; David Burrowes MP; Oliver Dowden MP; Mike Freer MP; Matthew Offord MP; Chloe Smith MP; Dame Angela Watkinson DBE MP; Heather Wheeler MP
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Foreword

Andrew Heller
Chairman, CFI

Stuart Polak CBE
Honorary President, CFI

We are pleased to report that CFI has gone from strength to strength under the guidance of our distinguished new Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP.

The Conservative Party displayed its steadfast support for the State of Israel time and again during the last Parliament. From record levels of trade and the UK-led EU-wide proscription of Hezbollah's military wing, to the countless Ministerial visits to Israel and the Prime Minister's landmark speech in the Knesset, the support came in both word and deed. At its moment of need during Summer 2014, the Prime Minister, Government, and Party, spoke decisively in support of Israel's right to self-defence against Hamas terror attacks. These are the actions of a truly committed friend.

In the run-up to the General Election, CFI campaigned in as many as 12 target seats around the country. In addition to our series of hugely successful Action Days in London, the team also spent three weeks on the road campaigning in constituencies from North Wales to the Midlands. CFI is delighted to welcome so many new Members of Parliament to the Conservative benches and we look forward to working with them all over the coming months and years.

The strength of the UK-Israel relationship was highlighted once again in September 2015 when Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a high-profile visit to London. CFI were delighted to cosponsor a special parliamentary briefing with PM Netanyahu, attended by 35 Conservative parliamentarians.

Delegations to Israel and the Palestinian

Territories continue to form the cornerstone of CFI's activity. During the Summer Recess, CFI were joined in Israel by nine newly elected MPs and a whole series of delegations are planned with the new intake of Conservative MPs in the coming year.

In July 2015, CFI's Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP, led CFI's new team of Parliamentary Officers on a high-profile delegation to Israel. The delegation, which featured

“CFI is delighted to welcome so many new Members of Parliament to the Conservative benches.”

a full itinerary of political and security briefings, included a meeting with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin.

In June 2015, CFI led a delegation of 15 Conservative Future members to Israel, in coordination with the Embassy of Israel. The delegation was the first in a new programme of fact-finding visits to Israel for younger activists and offers an exciting new way to introduce the Conservative Party's future leaders and opinion formers to the country.

We were pleased to welcome Prime Minister David Cameron to our Annual Business Lunch back in December 2014. Addressing the 700-strong audience, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his support for Israel, stating: "What an incredible nation this is – and we are a true friend".

In July 2015, CFI held a farewell lunch for the departing Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Daniel Taub. The lunch was attended by over 85 MPs, Peers and key supporters. The Ambassador was presented with a letter from Prime

Minister David Cameron who personally thanked him for his efforts to strengthen the relationship between the UK and Israel, and for his "crucial role in the shared democratic values that both of our countries hold dear". We would like to thank Daniel for his years of dedicated service and wish him the best of luck for the future.

At Conservative Party Conference in 2014, 400 delegates packed into a CFI Reception with Foreign Secretary

Philip Hammond. The annual event has become somewhat of a highlight on the political calendar.

CFI also continue to hold briefing events in Westminster with acclaimed Israeli politicians, academics and journalists, including Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom.

We would like to thank the Professional Team at CFI for their hard work, alongside our newly established Parliamentary Group led by Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP, who we know will be pivotal in leading CFI's efforts in Parliament.

If you would like further information about any of CFI's activities please visit our recently redesigned website (www.cfoi.co.uk) and follow us on Twitter (@CFol) for the latest news.

Thank you for your interest in CFI.

We do hope we can count on your support.



Prime Minister David Cameron in Jerusalem

CFI and Israel According To...

**Rt. Hon.
David Cameron MP
Prime Minister**

"With me as Prime Minister you have a strong friend of Israel, someone who believes in Israel's right to defend itself and someone who won't blow in the wind when there's pressure on these things".

Jewish News, May 2015

"As PM, putting yourself in the shoes of the Israeli people, who want peace but have to put up with these indiscriminate attacks - that reinforces to me the importance of standing by Israel and Israel's right to defend itself".

Jewish Chronicle, April 2015

"When Israel is under attack from rockets or terror tunnels - you will never be alone. As I said in the Knesset, I will always stand up for the right of Israel to defend its citizens, a right enshrined in international law, in natural justice and fundamental morality".

CST Annual Dinner, March 2015

"Let us be clear: there is no moral

equivalence between an Israeli government that wants to defend its people and its territory against attack, and terrorists that want to kill as many people as they can with the weapons and the bombs and the missiles that they throw over Israel's borders. And this country will always be a staunch friend of Israel".

**10 Downing Street Hanukkah Party,
December 2014**

"Israel is a vulnerable country and yet, against all odds, it has become an oasis of freedom where the call to prayer mingles with church bells, and where Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, echo down narrow streets. And it's a symbol of success, supplying Britain with a sixth of our prescription medicines and developing the processors that we use in our laptops. And Israel is a country with more start-ups per capita than any other country in the world. What an incredible nation this is - and we are a true friend".

**CFI Annual Business Lunch,
December 2014**

"During the Summer, Hamas rained down rockets on Israel, built extensive

tunnels to kidnap and murder, and repeatedly refused to accept ceasefires. As Prime Minister Netanyahu said, and I agree with this, every word: "Israel uses missile defence to protect its civilians. Hamas uses civilians to protect its missiles". There can never be any equivalence between the two.

**CFI Annual Business Lunch,
December 2014**

"I've been a friend of Israel through thick and thin. I believe in Israel - and that belief is rock solid. It is an extraordinary nation - and even more extraordinary when you think where it is".

**CFI Annual Business Lunch,
December 2014**

"This amazing organisation [CFI] - bigger today than I have ever seen it - works both ways. This group is a friend of the Conservatives. For the past 40 years, CFI has been there for this Party, bringing us together, getting behind our candidates and taking people to Israel, because nothing comes closer to helping you understand that country than actually visiting".

**CFI Annual Business Lunch,
December 2014**

Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP Home Secretary

"It is worth restating the threats faced by Israel because they are considerable. There are the familiar but deadly threats from Hamas and Hezbollah. The collapse of Syria that has spawned ISIS and threatens to destabilise Lebanon and Jordan. The instability of the wider region. And the threats issued to Israel by Iran. No democratic government could, in the face of such danger, do anything but maintain a strong defence and be prepared to deploy it if necessary. That is why I – and the whole British Government – will always defend Israel's right to defend itself".

**CFI Parliamentary Reception,
September 2014**

Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond MP Foreign Secretary

"We are absolutely clear that Israel has a right to defend itself. We are absolutely clear that there is no justification at all



for the rocket attacks that have been launched out of Gaza into Southern Israel".

**CFI Party Conference Reception,
October 2014**

"It is important to me that the Conservative Party has a good relationship with Israel and with CFI. You do a great job for the Party and I want to thank you for everything that you've done and even more for everything that you will do in the future".

**CFI Party Conference Reception,
October 2014**

Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP Business Secretary

"I have no tolerance for cultural boycotts of Israel... Whether cultural, educational or divestment, the answer is the same... Boycotts are a form of the oldest hatred in the world".

**Board of Deputies Election Hustings,
March 2015**

Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP Northern Ireland Secretary

"The political establishment in this country has been tested... Are we really

friends of Israel or are we not? I believe the Conservative Party has passed that test with its staunch support for the State of Israel. I don't believe the Liberal Democrats have passed that test. And I certainly believe that Ed Miliband and Labour have well and truly failed that test... The truth is that Labour failed Israel at their time of need".

**CFI Party Conference Reception,
October 2014**

Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP Parliamentary Chairman, CFI

"It has been a great pleasure to visit Israel once again with CFI alongside so many colleagues. Our itinerary has afforded us an insight into the many faces of Israel; from the country's vibrant democracy, to the scientific advances of the Weizmann Institute, and the gift of life that Save A Child's Heart has given to almost 4,000 children with cognitive heart defects from Gaza, the West Bank and beyond. Israel can rest assured that it has a steadfast friend in the Conservative Party, and my fellow CFI Officers and I have renewed determination to support Israel in Parliament and showcase its remarkable achievements".

CFI Israel Delegation, July 2015



Autumn 2015

Conservative Friends of Israel *Informed* magazine

It gives me great pleasure to contribute once again to the Conservative Friends of Israel's annual *Informed* magazine. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved with CFI for the great work that you do for our party.

I would especially like to thank CFI for the huge contribution that you made to our General Election campaign. I am well aware of the long hours and incredible amount of hard work put in by members of CFI in target seats up and down the country during the campaign. I am proud to be associated with such an impressive organisation and incredibly grateful for everything that you did to help us secure the first majority Conservative government for nearly 20 years.

With me you can be assured that you have a Prime Minister whose belief in Israel is unbreakable and whose commitment to Israel's security will always be rock solid. I will always stand up for the right of Israel to defend its citizens and will continue to work to promote liberty, democracy, enterprise and prosperity, all part of the stories of both our countries.

While challenges remain in the Middle East and around the world, the ties between Great Britain and Israel remain strong and are getting stronger. We can be proud that our trade has doubled in a decade and is now worth £5 billion a year. We can also take pride that we are reaping the rewards of our shared commitment to driving the growth of hi-tech start-ups through the world leading partnerships between our scientists, academics and hi-tech specialists.

Over the year ahead we will remain resolute in tackling threats to our common security. Whatever the challenges abroad, there can be no excuse for those who want to promote anti-Semitism and extremism. It goes to the heart of Britain's national moral character. We are a tolerant country but one in which tolerance will never be abused to justify prejudice of any kind. With that in mind, I welcome all CFI do to promote fairness, respect and tolerance between different faiths and different communities.

So thank you, once again, for your continued and much valued support. This comes, as always, with my very best wishes to Conservative Friends of Israel for the year ahead.





Message from Eitan Na'eh, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Israel

The coming year heralds the end of a period of change. While elections have reshaped the political landscape in both Britain and Israel, conflict continues to scar the face of our region, with a shifting balance of power creating both new threats and new opportunities for peace.

It has also been a period of transition for the relationship between Israel and the UK. Earlier this year, Israel bid farewell to Ambassador Matthew Gould, after four years that saw the establishment of the exceptional UK-Israel Tech Hub, and welcomed Ambassador David Quarrey, who has already shown his intent to go on expanding our partnership in new and creative ways.

Concurrently, our Embassy said *shalom* this summer to Ambassador Taub. The tributes he received from friends across the UK, including from the Prime Minister, David Cameron, are testament to the enormous scope of the connections he built as well as the ideals he embodied, and we are eager to build on his work under the leadership of a new ambassador in the near future.

Last but not least, we have seen a changing of the guard at CFI. We are deeply grateful to former Parliamentary Chairman James Clappison for his unfailing support throughout his Commons career. At the same time, we are delighted to welcome Sir Eric Pickles, who demonstrated extraordinary commitment to both Israel and the Jewish community in Britain in his ministerial career, and look forward to cooperating closely with him in his new role.

Despite this flux, the fundamentals have remained the same: the remarkable growth in bilateral trade, the strength of our shared ideals of liberty and democracy, and above all the depth of the friendship between our two nations. In David Cameron, we are fortunate to work with a Prime Minister who has not only advanced cooperation with Israel in every field, from curing cancer to cybersecurity, but also demonstrated the courage to stand up to extremism, and highlight the destructive intentions of those seeking to undermine the legitimacy of our State.

Of course, there has been one other perpetual lodestar: the indefatigable Stuart Polak, and his incredible team at CFI. In particular, we would like to thank James Gurd for his continuous support, and to offer our deepest gratitude and best wishes to Nathalie Tamam as she departs for pastures new.

Through both trips to Israel and briefings here in the UK, CFI continues to have an immeasurable impact on our bilateral ties, facilitating not only first-hand experience of the challenges we face but genuine exchanges of knowledge and ideas between our leaders and parliamentarians. As we prepare to enter the next chapter in the life of our Embassy, we know that we can always rely on the dedication of CFI, and anticipate working together to bring our countries still closer in the years ahead.

Eitan Na'eh
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of Israel



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September 2015

My first six weeks in Israel have been busy, challenging and enjoyable.

In my first week, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond arrived for important talks focusing on Iran. Since then, I have met a multitude of people from Israel's diverse communities, politicians from across the political spectrum, local leaders, NGO heads, tech entrepreneurs and Israelis from all walks of life.

I visited Israel's south to meet Israelis living on the frontline to hear their experience of years of rocket fire and the latest threat – terror tunnels. I went north to meet with local Arab leaders to understand the issues they face.

I had a profoundly moving visit to Yad Vashem. And I had the honour of presenting my credentials to President Reuven Rivlin.

My priorities for the next four years are to grow our partnership in science, technology, trade and investment; work with Israel on shared security threats; and try to help find a way to make progress towards peace.

First, our bilateral relationship in science, education, technology, trade and investment has never been stronger. But we are only scratching the surface of the potential. Two-way trade in goods reached US\$5.8 billion in 2014, up eight percent on 2013. There was a significant increase in the number of Israeli companies interested in raising capital on the London Stock Exchange. 26 Israeli companies set up or expanded operations in the UK.

With the British Council, we will by 2016/17 have funded over 100 new scholarships and fellowships for British and Israeli researchers. This cooperation is the best answer to those calling for boycotts.

Second, our work with Israel on tackling shared security threats has never been more necessary. With the Middle East in turmoil, it is even more important that we work closely together on shared challenges, including ISIL and Iran's nuclear programme.

Third, we must try to make progress towards peace. This has rarely been more challenging, but it remains an urgent priority.

We have a deep and multi-stranded friendship between the UK and Israel, which I want to sustain and deepen. The British Government will continue to stand firmly against any attempt to boycott or delegitimise Israel.

The new UK-Israel Parliamentary friendship group will build relations between Parliament and the Knesset. Such Parliamentary contacts are vital for thriving democracies such as the UK and Israel. I am delighted that since the election we have hosted two Conservative Friends of Israel delegations in Israel. I hope to see many more of them during my posting.

With best wishes,

David Quarrey
HM AMBASSADOR

UK-Israel Trade: The Golden Age

Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP
Business Secretary



Golda Meir, the original Iron Lady, once said that the people of Israel have only one complaint about Moses – that he led the Jews through the desert for 40 years, and then finally stopped at the one place in the Middle East that doesn't have any oil.

But necessity is the mother of invention and, over the past 67 years, Israel really has made business bloom in the barren desert. And that's been a huge benefit to Britain.

The total value of trade and services between our two countries is now well over £5 billion a year. Last year alone, 25 Israeli companies set up or expanded their operations in the UK. Israeli-owned CinemaCity amalgamated with the UK's own Cineworld. The Helios Energy Fund committed £30 million to set up 30 biomass installations in the UK. The Noy Fund announced plans to invest £50 million in UK waste-to-energy projects.

There are now over 300 Israeli companies with a physical presence here, responsible for thousands of jobs.

But this is not a one-way street. Great British businesses like HSBC, GSK, Barclays, Rolls-Royce and others have invested more than £1 billion in Israel.

Our exports to Israel are increasing rapidly, and the UK is now Israel's second biggest export market.

In addition, we've seen a significant increase in the number of Israeli companies showing interest in raising capital on the London Stock Exchange. Nine Israeli companies carried out IPOs

to support Israel as it exploits recent discoveries of natural gas in its waters – through strategic partnerships, project finance and supply chains.

And we must continue to work together on achieving medical breakthroughs – whether through BIRAX, the Britain-Israel Research & Academic Exchange

“The past few years have been a golden era for Anglo-Israeli business.”

on the LSE last year – second only to the UK itself.

So the past few years have been a golden era for Anglo-Israeli business. But what really excites me are the possibilities offered by the years to come.

We look towards Israel to benefit from its world-leading expertise in cyber security. And equally, we want

Partnership, or as GSK and Technion are doing, or the NHS and Teva Pharmaceuticals, through a £12.5 million joint research agreement.

It is a great relationship and I'm proud to say my department is working hard to boost Anglo-Israeli trade and investment. And, as Business Secretary, I'll do anything I can to support and promote it.



CFI Delegations to Israel

Oliver Dowden MP Hertsmere



I have always taken an interest in the Middle East and already had sympathy for Israel as an open, free and democratic country in a dangerous part of the world.

Nothing though beats the experience of actually seeing the situation on the ground. The first thing that struck me both flying into Israel and then standing in Jerusalem, was just how narrow the strip of land it occupies is. You can see the Mediterranean on one side and the Jordan Valley on the other. This starkly brought home to me the vulnerability of Israel's position.

This was reinforced as I stood in

Sderot in Southern Israel and saw how vulnerable Israeli citizens were to rocket attacks from Gaza. I could not help but imagine living in that town myself and thinking about how I too would want

“I would thoroughly recommend such a visit to any parliamentarian, regardless of their current views on the situation in the Middle East.”

to take steps to protect my family from these sorts of attacks.

I had a particularly moving visit to the Har Dov synagogue in Jerusalem, the site of a deadly terror attack against worshippers two weeks prior. A peaceful place of worship had been turned into a scene of unimaginable horror as four worshippers were brutally murdered. I was struck by the determination of those at the synagogue to continue with their lives and the whole country's search for a lasting peace in the face of continuing terror.

Visiting Israel gave me more than just an insight into the political situation. Watching the television news in the UK you get no sense of quite how vibrant, cosmopolitan and multicultural Israel is. Sitting in a café or bar in Tel Aviv, you could just as easily be sitting in a café or bar in the East End of London. This experience makes Israel as a country, and the concerns of its people, much more real and dispels many of the myths that one can subconsciously take in about the country.

Israel's incredible high-tech start-up scene is gaining global recognition. From cyber security to open government platforms, Israel is leading the way in many breakthrough technologies. I learned how through our

Embassy, Britain is both collaborating and learning lessons from Israel.

I am very grateful to have had this opportunity. The conversations that

CFI facilitated with political and military officials, academics and other figures from both the Israeli and Palestinian side was very impressive and greatly enhanced my knowledge of the region.

I would thoroughly recommend such a visit to any parliamentarian, regardless of their current views on the situation in the Middle East.

“Nothing beats the experience of seeing the situation on the ground.”



Oliver Dowden MP with rocket remains in Sderot



Oliver Dowden MP at the Western Wall

Suella Fernandes MP Fareham



During the Summer Recess, I had the great pleasure of visiting Israel and the West Bank with eight of my newly elected colleagues.

My week in the region was most illuminating; whether it was the visit to the Netiv Ha'asara moshav in Southern Israel, where families live under the

“Importantly, the itinerary afforded us the opportunity to hear from all sides and the many shades of opinion in between.”

constant threat of rocket fire from Gaza, or the visit to Rawabi and the Palestinian entrepreneurs trying to regenerate and invest in an area with high-levels of unemployment.

Our visit encompassed a thorough exploration of the military, diplomatic, political, economic, and social challenges facing Israel and the Palestinian Authority today.

For a country faced with so many existential threats, defence and security were recurring themes. Discussing the construction of the security barrier around the West Bank with Col. Dany Tirza was particularly absorbing as he described the realities of countless suicide bombings against civilians in Jerusalem and right across Israel during the Second Intifada. The security barrier continues to play a key role in thwarting terrorism, with 80 attempted suicide bombings prevented in 2014 alone.



Suella Fernandes MP with rocket remains in Sderot

Importantly, the itinerary afforded us the opportunity to hear from all sides and the many shades of opinion in between. Nothing in this region is simply black or white. In Ramallah, for example, we met

with businessmen who spoke of their everyday concerns, including restricted access to water in the area.

I was especially grateful for the time that Knesset Members of the Likud, Labor and Meretz parties made to speak to us about their experiences at the heart of the political system during Budget Day in the Knesset. The strength of Israel's democratic credentials was on show through the sheer scope of views expressed by the different political parties.

Our visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, where the shocking stories of the six million Jewish victims are preserved, was unspeakably poignant and impressed the need for remembrance and permanent vigil.

Amongst all the strife in the region and the needless loss of life through mindless terrorism, I was struck by the compassion, innovation, and hope of

the many people that I met. Common humanity prevails. Save a Child's Heart, a charity based at the Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, near Tel Aviv, provides free life-saving heart surgery to children from Gaza, the West Bank, and developing countries all over the world, who suffer with congenital heart disease. Here, we saw no division between Israeli and Palestinian but only charity and tenderness.

I have returned to the UK reflecting on the causes, effects, and complexities of an issue which has defined generations of politicians. I'm grateful to CFI for its professionalism, balance, and comprehensiveness in contributing to a peaceful and lasting solution through education and openness.



Suella Fernandes MP overlooking Jerusalem



Team CFI with Guto Bebb outside Conwy Castle

General Election Campaign Diary

In the run-up to the 2015 General Election, CFI was active at every level in campaigning for a majority Conservative Government. Team CFI spent three weeks on the road in various target seats across the UK and also held a series of hugely successful Action Days for Conservative candidates in London. Come rain or shine, Team CFI walked well over 100 miles as we canvassed and leafleted our way across the country.

Sunday 15th February: CFI Action Day in Harrow West and Harrow East

A busy day for CFI activists who were out and about with Hannah David in Harrow West and Bob Blackman in Harrow East. We are delighted that Bob Blackman was returned to Parliament on May 7th and there is plenty of Conservative support in Harrow West to build upon for the next election in 2020.

Sunday 8th March: CFI Action Day in Hampstead & Kilburn

CFI activists spent the day campaigning with Simon Marcus in the Kensal Rise area of his patch. Hampstead & Kilburn was the most marginal seat in the country and it was a tight race all the way to the end.

Sunday 29th March: CFI Action Day in Hendon

Despite a deluge, CFI and dozens of our

members were out in force in Hendon leafleting for Matthew Offord. Our feet were wet but our spirits remained high as we delivered thousands of rather soggy leaflets!

Friday 10th April: CFI Campaigning in Watford and Harlow

Team CFI were split between the Watford and Harlow seats campaigning



for both Richard Harrington and Robert Halfon. These excellent MPs increased their majorities by a significant amount - congratulations to them both!

Monday 20th April – Friday 24th April: CFI Campaigning in Aberconwy and Brigg & Goole

The CFI road trip began in beautiful North Wales with a couple of days of campaigning with Guto Bebb in Aberconwy. The weather was perfect, the local scenery spectacular, and Guto certainly proved to be a popular local MP! From Wales, we drove across the country to spend some time pounding the pavements with Andrew Percy in Brigg & Goole, in the counties of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Andrew's honest and down to earth style has earned him quite the following in the patch.

Monday 27th April – Friday 1st May: CFI Campaigning in Corby, Halesowen & Rowley Regis, Wolverhampton, and Loughborough

In Corby, the CFI team were joined by then Justice Secretary Chris Grayling and Jonathan Djanogly in campaigning for Tom Pursglove, now the youngest MP on the Conservative benches. CFI were then delighted to join James Morris in the West Midlands constituency of Halesowen & Rowley Regis where lots of leaflets were delivered and some very steep hills climbed! In Wolverhampton, the CFI team could barely move a few metres without Paul Uppal being stopped by constituents keen to have a chat. The team finished an exhausting week in Loughborough with Education Secretary Nicky Morgan who had an army of activists working to ensure the seat remained blue.

Sunday 3rd May: CFI Action Day in Finchley & Golders Green

CFI activists came out in force for our



largest Action Day yet with Mike Freer. Mike has worked very hard in the constituency and deserves the support he has built up.

Monday 4th May – Thursday 7th May: CFI Campaigning in Harrow East, Hendon, and Hampstead & Kilburn

Team CFI spent the last week busily campaigning across London with return visits to Harrow East, Hendon, and Hampstead & Kilburn. The level of support received on the doorsteps gave a strong indication that the pollsters

were wrong and it wasn't as close as they were predicting. On Election Day, CFI made one final push in Stanmore with Bob Blackman and arrived home just in time for *that* exit poll.

The CFI team had a wonderful time meeting hundreds of people across the country to talk about the Conservative Party's vision for a brighter, more secure future. Thank you to everyone who participated in our Action Days and congratulations to all the Conservative MPs elected on May 7th.





Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin

In Conversation with Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP

CFI's new Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP, is a long-standing friend of the Jewish State, having first visited the country in 1980. CFI's Deputy Director James Gurd sat down with the much respected Sir Eric to hear about his support for Israel and plans for the future as Parliamentary Chairman.

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

I joined CFI on the same day I became an MP in 1992. For me it is the great dividing line in politics: Israel is a democracy with freedom of speech, freedom under the law, and it offers the West a stable friend in a notoriously unstable region. No dictatorship, even a benign one, can come close to matching that.

What are your plans as Parliamentary Chairman of CFI?

I hope to build on the great work of

my immediate predecessors, James Arbuthnot and James Clappison. The clue is in the title - I intend to be a true friend of Israel. That is not to say that CFI supports everything the Israeli Government does - this is something we share with the Israeli electorate!

CFI will seek to emphasise the cultural, academic, and business relationship between our two nations. Those who advocate a trade boycott of Israel are also speaking for action that would damage the UK economy.

There is also a new sinister aspect of British politics that we must confront: the deliberate conflation of Israeli

opinion with Jewish opinion, so that British Jews are held accountable for actions of the Israeli Government. Who can forget the careless interview by the BBC, during the Charlie Hebdo march in Paris, of a Jewish French citizen who was asked to justify Israel's actions in Gaza? Sometimes it is sloppy journalism, but all too often it is a thinly disguised anti-Semitism.

“ Support for Israel remains strong within the Party. ”

How was your visit to Israel with CFI in July 2015?

It was great to be joined in Israel by CFI's new team of Parliamentary Officers so early in the new Parliament. We arrived a few days after the

signing of the Iran nuclear deal and this dominated discussions. Israel is seeking real tangible reassurances of Iran's intentions and the West's proposed reaction to any breaches of the agreement.

We saw the very best of Israel throughout the visit. From the extraordinary scientists working to bring their life-giving technologies to water

and welfare. Her calm determination for a peaceful future gave me hope.

What changes have you noticed within Israel since you first visited?

I first visited Israel in 1980 as the newly elected National Chairman of the Young Conservatives. 25 years ago it was a predominantly agricultural economy, whereas now it is more diverse with a

visiting Israel with CFI. However, there is no denying that support for Israel took a bit of a dent following the conflict within Gaza last year. Our job is to ensure that MPs and the wider Party have the fullest facts before them so that they can make their own mind up.

What makes the Conservative Party such a strong supporter of Israel?

Israel is an open, free, liberal society surrounded by states in which the rule of law is but a distant memory, and its voice deserves to be heard.

“Those who advocate a trade boycott of Israel are also speaking for action that would damage the UK economy.”

poor countries across the world, to the volunteers at Save A Child's Heart providing life-saving heart surgery to Palestinian children from Gaza and the West Bank. It is a side of modern Israel that is rarely reported.

What is your fondest memory of visiting Israel with CFI?

It was in Netiv Ha'asara moshav listening to a farmer talk about living next to the border with Gaza. She was a Londoner by birth, who emigrated when she was a girl with her parents. She married and settled in the Sinai only to see her thriving farm handed back to the Egyptian authorities as part of the Camp David Accords in 1978.

She resettled in Israel next to Gaza and set up a successful business, employing Palestinians. When the troubles came, bomb shelters were built. She and her family have a mere 15 seconds warning to hide from the near-daily Hamas rockets. Last Summer, their greenhouse took a direct hit, killing a worker inside. This brave lady had suffered more than most, but throughout it all had kept in touch with her former Palestinian workers, genuinely worried about their safety

fast-moving modern economy. This change can be measured by the astonishing fact that the world's largest register of new patents in 2014 was Israel.

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

Support for Israel remains strong within the Party. It is pleasing to see so many of the 2015 intake engaging and

What do you think the future holds for the State of Israel?

It is surrounded by chaos and violence, but the future of the Middle East is dependent upon a strong and vibrant Israel.

Years ago, I had the great honour of meeting Yitzhak Rabin who told me that Israel's future depended on the success of getting water out of the desert and blood out of the land. That still remains the case.





CF delegates in the Dead Sea

ELLIEVT

Conservative Future: Israel Delegation Diary

In June 2015, 15 Conservative Future (CF) members visited Israel in coordination with CFI and the Israeli Embassy. CF is the largest youth political organisation in the UK, with more than 15,000 members under 30. Many members go on to contest local and national elections. The trip received phenomenal levels of interest with 450 people applying for places, and CFI is developing a programme for further fact-finding tours.

CF's Internal Communications Officer, Ellie Vesey-Thompson, reflects on her memories of the delegation:

Monday 8th June 2015

The trip began with a crash course in the history of Israel with fascinating visits to the storied Old City of Jerusalem, the extraordinary mountaintop fortress of Masada, and the Dead Sea. The group lost itself in the sights, sounds and smells of Jerusalem's bustling markets and religious sites as we walked

through thousands of years of history. It's striking how much integration exists within the ancient walls, with mosques, churches and synagogues sitting side by side.

"For me the most poignant part of the trip was visiting Jerusalem. I had massively underestimated the religious significance of the city to Jews, Muslims and Christians. Our visit gave us an insight into why the city is the holiest city in the world, and of vital importance to those of all religions who share its space".

Ameet Jogia, Councillor for Canons Ward in Harrow

Tuesday 9th June 2015

Israel's tiny size was brought home as we made the short journey from Tel Aviv to the West Bank to visit Rawabi, the first Palestinian-planned city. It's a hugely

impressive project with great vision, and offers hope for a more peaceful future. In the vibrant Palestinian city of Ramallah we were joined by a group of young Palestinian business owners for some animated discussions. It was fascinating to hear about the emerging Palestinian start-up sector and criticism of corruption within the Palestinian Authority.

After a wonderful tour of the Knesset, we met Col. Dany Tirza, who was appointed to oversee the construction of the security barrier. Many of us were surprised to learn that a mere 5% of the barrier is actually a concrete wall – contrary to the images seen on TV. I was really pleased to hear that Dany hopes that the barrier can soon be removed, and that he wants to be the person to remove the first part of it. We met with a group of young political activists from across Israel's political spectrum for a brilliant debate over dinner, which was a real highlight.

“The most informative part of the trip for me was our tour of the security fence by Col. Dany Tirza. As he explained the lengths to which he and others had gone to protect human rights and consider the views of people on the ground, the need for such security measures remained clear, even with the injustices that it may partially cause”.

Michael Kusznir, Chairman
Conservative Future Scotland

and its support for international terror groups, dominated our dinner with a representative from the British Embassy.

Thursday 11th June 2015

We spent our final day in the north of Israel with IDF briefings at the Lebanon and Syria borders where we learned of the country's unenviable strategic challenges. Seeing Hezbollah flags being proudly displayed by homeowners just a few short miles away, and actually witnessing rocket barrages inside Syria just across the border was an eye-opening experience and made it very clear that the threat of terrorism and conflict is real and all around. Back in Tel Aviv, the group seized the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful beaches, with a dip in the sea and a casual chat about everything we had seen and experienced over the week (along with a quick beer or two!).

“As a 23-year-old, having the chance to stand on the Lebanese border with a female IDF officer who was my age, who told us about her instrumental role in keeping



Church of the Holy Sepulchre

the borders of Israel safe, really helped put things in perspective for me as I began to see things through her eyes”.

Catherine Hennigan, Goldman Sachs analyst

Wednesday 10th June 2015

Our trip to Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial left the whole delegation very emotional and led to a quiet journey to the IDF Headquarters in Tel Aviv, where we heard about Operation Protective Edge and discussed the difficulties posed by warfare within civilian areas. At the Peres Center for Peace we learned of programmes bringing together Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs and Palestinians to promote friendships and build the bonds needed for a long-term peace. The topic of Iran's nuclear programme,

I am delighted that we have been able to provide members of CF with the chance to visit Israel and see the reality for themselves, and I am incredibly grateful to CFI. It is impossible to truly understand either side of the conflict without actually witnessing or experiencing it first-hand. This first CF trip proved highly successful and interesting to the whole group, and I am extremely excited about giving even more CF members this invaluable opportunity.



CF delegates at the Knesset



Prime Minister David Cameron addressing the Knesset

Conservative Party: Israel and the Jewish Community

During the last Parliament (2010-2015), the Conservative-led Government consistently showed its commitment to the important bilateral relationship with Israel, as well as support for the UK's Jewish community. Here are their top ten accomplishments:

1. Supporting Israel's Right to Self-Defence

Conservatives, from the Prime Minister down, have been steadfast in their support for Israel's right to defend itself in the face of attacks from terrorist groups. In March 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron said: "When Israel is under attack from rockets or terror tunnels – you will never be alone. I will

always stand up for the right of Israel to defend its citizens, a right enshrined in international law, in natural justice and fundamental morality".

2. PM David Cameron Visits Israel

Prime Minister David Cameron demonstrated his "unbreakable" solidarity with Israel with a rousing speech to the Israeli Knesset in March 2014, on his first official visit to the country as Prime Minister. The PM spoke at length on a number of issues, including: Israel's security concerns; his abhorrence at international attempts to delegitimise Israel; and his vision of a future peace. During the visit, Prime Minister Cameron signed deals with top Israeli medical and pharmaceutical

companies, bringing in £70 million investment to the UK. A series of senior Ministers and Secretaries of State also made official visits to Israel, including Home Secretary Theresa May, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, and then Education Secretary Michael Gove, resulting in a number of bilateral agreements.

3. Record Levels of Bilateral Trade

Ties between Britain and Israel continue to flourish and bilateral trade has now reached a record £5.1 billion. With as many as 300 Israeli companies operating in the UK, Israel is now the UK's fourth-largest individual trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa.

4. Strong Opposition to BDS

Conservatives have been steadfast in their opposition to the hardline Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. At CFI's Annual Business Lunch in 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron said: "Unlike Labour, we in this Party oppose boycotts. And let me remind you of what I said to the Knesset: Delegitimising the State of Israel is wrong, it is abhorrent and together we will defeat it". The following year, Business Secretary Sajid Javid said: "I have no tolerance for cultural boycotts of Israel... Whether cultural, educational or divestment, the answer is the same... Boycotts are a form of the oldest hatred in the world".

5. A Developing Cyber Relationship

In March 2015, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP, then Minister for the Cabinet Office, announced three UK-Israel academic collaboration ventures to receive joint cyber research funding. £1.2 million of joint funding was pledged to fund a bilateral cyber research programme and will result in British and Israeli

academics working together on specific areas of research into the growing global cyber threat.

6. Flourishing High-Tech Partnerships

The UK-Israel Tech Hub was launched in October 2011 to promote a partnership in technology and innovation between the two countries. The Tech Hub focuses its activities in sectors where the UK and Israel have complementary strengths, including digital, biomed, cleantech, and finance. To date, these activities have included sector-specific business delegations between the UK and Israel, conferences, workshops and events, as well as bespoke programmes for leading companies, and raising awareness of business opportunities.

7. Resolute Against Anti-Semitism

Conservatives have taken a strong stance against anti-Semitism, vowing not to turn a blind eye to the threats the UK's Jewish community face. In March 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron pledged: "We are going to fight anti-Semitism with everything we have got. There will be no excuses. No exceptions. No justifications". The Government made a series of new



CFI Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP and Home Secretary Theresa May at rally against anti-Semitism

funding announcements in 2015, totalling £11.5 million, for protection of Jewish community buildings and schools which have been identified as potentially vulnerable. An additional £1.5 million was announced to help fund a new Community Security Trust Mission Control Centre, which will include a closed-circuit television command and control, and the ability to respond rapidly to those who need help. This follows the £2 million per annum already provided for security at Jewish state schools.

8. Amending Universal Jurisdiction Law

Just one year after taking office, the Conservative-led Government changed the UK's Universal Jurisdiction law to

ensure that Israelis were able to travel to the UK without fear of arrest for spurious war crimes claims. The change in law guaranteed that the UK's justice system could no longer be abused for political reasons and finally wiped away a blot on the landscape of UK-Israel relations.

9. A Promise to Remember the Holocaust

In 2015, the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission reported its findings which were accepted in full. The recommendations stated that Britain should have a striking and prominent new National Memorial to the Holocaust and a world-class Learning Centre at the heart of a campus driving a network of national educational activity. Alongside this, there will be an urgent programme to record and preserve the testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators, and the establishment of an endowment fund to secure the long-term future of Holocaust Education in the United Kingdom.

10. 90+ Conservatives Participate in CFI Delegations

In the last Parliament, CFI took over 90 Conservatives, from across the Party, on delegations to Israel and the Palestinian Territories, a testament to the commitment shown by the Party to understanding the complexities of the region.



Prime Minister David Cameron and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at 10 Downing Street



IsraAID on the front line of Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone

IsraAID: Fighting Ebola

Shachar Zahavi
Founding Director, IsraAID

IsraAID is an Israeli NGO that provides life-saving relief and long-term support to countries following natural or man-made disasters. Since our inception in 2001 we have been providing assistance in 27 countries around the world and become synonymous with effective, rapid response to humanitarian crises. Working hand in hand with local governments and communities, we specialise in sending necessary equipment, professional teams of medical personnel, search and rescue teams, post-trauma experts and community mobilisers, to help affected communities to recover and move from destruction to reconstruction, and eventually, sustainable living.

Following the initial emergency period, IsraAID will shift to long-term programmes, accompanying communities and governments as they strive to build a better tomorrow. We offer long-term training and support programmes using Israel's unique know-how in the fields of psychosocial support, education, health, agriculture and food security, and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Today, we conduct ongoing programmes in much of Africa, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Haiti, Iraq, and Jordan.

In Sierra Leone, the Ebola crisis has had massive and devastating consequences, with over 10,000 suspected to have been infected and more than 3,000 dead. And even as the disease's devastating

“ Since its inception, the State of Israel has stood proudly as a beacon of humanitarian endeavours. ”

physical effects decrease, widespread stress and trauma in the affected countries is only beginning to surface.

One of the fundamental challenges of the Ebola outbreak is the stigmatisation of the disease, and the discrimination faced by the families of victims and survivors themselves. Families of infected patients have been completely isolated by their communities, and some have even resorted to violence. The Ebola outbreak is putting enormous strain on the general population, as fear and stress are fomenting unrest and mistrust. Long-term risks of PTSD and secondary trauma for health workers are also becoming serious concerns as the disease continues to spread across West Africa.

IsraAID's psychosocial programme is designed to provide concrete tools and coping mechanisms for those individuals

spearheading the battle against Ebola. Partnering with the office of the First Lady of Sierra Leone and the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, we are helping lead a National Taskforce aimed at integrating psychosocial support into the health system by training health workers, social workers, security forces, service providers, and the general population. In 2014 and 2015, IsraAID will send over 30 experts in PTSD prevention and stress management to West Africa.

These Israeli professionals will conduct intensive training for local social workers, health workers, and other service providers to equip them with practical tools in stress management and trauma prevention techniques. The programme is based on IsraAID's world-renowned holistic approach developed and

implemented after disasters in Haiti, Japan, South Sudan, Jordan, and other countries around the world.

Since its inception, the State of Israel has stood proudly as a beacon of humanitarian endeavours. Driven by a profound and genuine humanitarian conscience, Israel's international aid programmes have benefited millions across the world and we at IsraAID are proud of the part that we play in this important task.



IsraAID search and rescue team in Nepal



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Israel: A Democratic Beacon

Mike Freer MP
Finchley & Golders Green



One of the tests of any advanced democracy is how representative it is of its people. In the modern world, this test becomes all the more important as countries diversify and move towards strong inclusive societies where the rights and beliefs of minorities are recognised, protected and celebrated.

The Middle East isn't a region that springs to mind as a beacon for democracy and equality. One country is the exception - Israel. Israel is a vibrant, boisterous democracy; as any visitor to the Knesset can testify. A country that is not just proudly a Jewish State, but a country proud to welcome, support and celebrate diversity.

In Israel you will find churches, mosques, and synagogues, jostling side by side. Look at any of Israel's neighbours and see if that coexistence is replicated.

Key to Israel's claim to be the Middle East's strongest democracy is its advancement of ethnic minority representation. While the UK struggles to ensure we have black, Indian, Muslim and Hindu MPs - the Knesset has Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian and Druze representation. Arabs make up around 1.7 million of Israel's eight million citizens and hold 14% of seats in the Knesset. Arab citizens of Israel enjoy more political rights than their neighbours in Arab countries. Of course, challenges remain on

the integration of Arab citizens of Israel, but, as the OECD notes, the employment rate amongst Israeli Arabs is improving and school class sizes are reducing. As more Israeli Arabs are elected to the Knesset, the situation can only improve.

The Jewish MKs are no less diverse. The diverse backgrounds and beliefs of Israeli Jews are represented in the Knesset with the Orthodox Judaism of

the Middle East's first openly gay parliamentarian in 2002, Uzi Even, who also successfully fought for the rights of LGBT people to serve openly in the military.

In a region where women are forced to wear the niqab, or banned from driving cars, Israel enshrines women's equality. My predecessor in Finchley, Margaret Thatcher, was of course our only female premier. Israel, however,

“ Israel is a vibrant, boisterous democracy; as any visitor to the Knesset can testify. ”

UTJ (United Torah Judaism) and the more liberal religious beliefs of Meretz, with many more between. Linguistic differences are also reflected, with Yisrael Beiteinu drawing much of their support from the many Russian speakers in Israel.

The varied nature of Israel's political parties reflects the multiplicity of political views held by all Israelis.

In a region that sees gay men thrown off the top of buildings and stoned, Israel hosts one of the world's largest Gay Pride events in Tel Aviv. Each year, about 100,000 people from Israel and around the world, celebrate equality and diversity. Israel elected

had already elected its very own Iron Lady as Prime Minister in 1969 making Golda Meir the world's fourth woman to hold the highest office of any country. The Israeli Parliament leads the way on the advancement of women's rights, too. In the Knesset, 23% of MKs are women, which is around the same as in the UK. It is often forgotten that women are a greater percentage of the workforce in Israel than in the UK, USA, the Netherlands and Germany.

Israel's complex ethnic and religious composition is reflected in the diversity of its politics. It is for this very reason that Israel is rightly held up as a beacon of democracy in one of the world's most troubled regions.





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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the UK

The strength of the UK-Israel relationship was highlighted once again in September 2015 when Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a high-profile visit to London.

During his visit, PM Netanyahu was welcomed to 10 Downing Street by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. The two leaders spoke at length about the record bilateral trade between the countries, as well as the threat of Islamist extremism, and the challenges posed by Iran's nuclear programme.

PM Cameron asserted: "Britain remains staunch in our defence of Israel's right to exist and right to defend itself".

Israel's Prime Minister spoke of the deep ties the two countries share in the field of technology, observing: "The future belongs to those who innovate. Britain and Israel are two great centres of technology. Israel is a global hub of innovation, especially

in cyber security. And I think that if we pool our resources together we can offer a better future and great prosperity".

CFI were delighted to host a special cross-party parliamentary briefing with PM Netanyahu, attended by 35 Conservative parliamentarians and chaired by CFI's Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP. Sir Eric said: "As the elected leader of the only functioning democracy in the Middle East, it is only right and proper that we celebrate our two nations' shared values – liberty, democracy and the rule of law".

Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed his commitment to restarting peace negotiations with the Palestinians: "I'm willing right now, without any preconditions, any preconditions whatsoever, to sit down with President Abbas and negotiate this peace. I'm willing to go to Ramallah... Anytime. Anywhere. Now. Without preconditions".



Prime Minister David Cameron welcomes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to 10 Downing Street

Thanking the parliamentarians for their continued support of Israel, he said: "I thank you for the constancy of your friendship sometimes under difficult travails". He also spoke of the "remarkable bond between Zionism and Britain... So many of our traditions are linked and so much of our history intertwined".

The Israeli Prime Minister's visit to the UK follows the great success of Mr Cameron's landmark visit to Israel in March 2014 where he gave a much-celebrated speech to the Knesset in Jerusalem.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses parliamentarians

We are proud to support CFI in their crucial role and wish them continued success

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UN and the NUS: The Israel Obsession

Sedef Akademir
Research & Events
Officer, CFI



In recent years, many Israelis have increasingly come to the conclusion that the world is unfairly hostile to Israel, no matter what it does. One

need only look at the UN's voting track record in targeting the Jewish State to understand the reasoning behind this sentiment.

The UN and its many bodies have a long history of singling out Israel more than any other country in the world. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself has admitted that a prevalent anti-Israel bias exists within the organisation.

Take 2014, when the UN General Assembly adopted 20 resolutions singling out Israel for criticism and only three resolutions on the rest of the world combined. In May 2015, the United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) passed a resolution that isolated Israel as the chief violator of health rights in the world. More recently, in July 2015, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) voted to adopt a one-sided resolution on last year's Operation Protective Edge conflict, which failed to include any mention of Hamas or its central role in the conflict.

Israel, like any other country, should not be exempt from criticism. Indeed, much of the harshest criticism comes from within the country itself - evidence

of the healthy and thriving democracy that Israel possesses.

However, it is equally bewildering to see the same process play out repeatedly: in which a democratic, tolerant state faces a series of unabashed judgments from nations at the UN with the most abysmal human rights records. Among nations to vote in favour of the WHO's anti-Israel

bias was epitomised most tragically by the National Union of Students (NUS), who in June 2015 opted to embrace Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel, but simultaneously rejected a motion to condemn ISIS.

It is both necessary and important to highlight these absurdities for what they are and amplify our voices in support

“The UN and its many bodies have a long history of singling out Israel more than any other country in the world.”

resolution in May 2015 included Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Brunei, Russia, and Qatar.

This irony of this is apparently lost on officials from these countries, the UN, and much of the world's media. These regimes are rarely condemned by the UNHRC and need not worry about UN resolutions.

The same distortion was reflected during last summer's Operation Protective Edge conflict in Gaza, which received near to 24/7 back-to-back coverage across British news channels for 50 days – yet we have seen nowhere near the same level of intensity in focus towards the Yemeni civil war, or even the civil war in Libya.

And where, for example, was the global outcry when Egypt's military this year demolished over 2,000 houses in Rafah for the creation of a buffer between the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip? If Israel had taken the same measures, the response would have been all too predictable.

The stupidity of virulent anti-Israel

of Israel. We must also continue to shine a light on the phenomenal work that Israelis do in so many areas, from tech innovation to global humanitarian aid, and advancements in medical research; reminding the public, as well as BDS activists, that this is the true face of Israel.

For our part, CFI is continuing to work with Conservative MPs and the Government to counter all attempts to delegitimise Israel, and build on the existing ties between Israel and Britain.



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Palestinian Authority Incitement

Guto Bebb MP, John Howell OBE MP, Andrew Percy MP
Vice-Chairmen, CFI

John F. Kennedy once said: "Peace does not rest in the charters and covenants alone. It lies in the hearts and minds of all people". As MPs with an interest in the Middle East, we optimistically look forward to the day when Israel and the Palestinians reach a peace agreement with one another. But we must not forget Kennedy's important words.

For too long now, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has allowed incitement and hate education to continue unchecked in the Territories. Concerned MPs have written about this issue and debated it in the Commons over the course of the last Parliament. We have urged the British Government to

take action as the PA has taken British silence as a green light to maintain these counterproductive practices.

Palestinian incitement takes many forms, ranging from the denial of Israel's right to exist and depiction of all of modern Israel as part of a Palestinian state, to the glorification of notorious Palestinian terrorists, and even the practice of paying monthly salaries to convicted terrorists in Israeli jails.

While PA officials readily speak to Western audiences of their determination to reach an agreement with Israel, a different message is presented to their domestic audience and little attempt is made to educate Palestinian society towards peace and coexistence with Israel.

The examples are vast and far-ranging, from young children reciting poems on PA TV that brand Jews as "barbaric monkeys" and the "most evil among creations", to official PA celebration of terrorists like Dalal Mughrabi who led the 1978 bus hijacking attack, in which

of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, an internationally proscribed terror group. There can be no justification for the promotion of such hate and violence.

Furthermore, the PA continues to actively reward terrorism by paying monthly salaries to Palestinian prisoners convicted of terror offences - paying an estimated £90 million annually to convicted terrorists. These monthly salaries are paid to around 5,500 convicted terrorists, ranging from £230 to as much as £2,000 for those serving a 30-year sentence.

Contradicting its assurances to the international community, internally the PA is shameless about its part in rewarding acts of terrorism. During a 2013 rally in honour of released terrorists, held under the auspices of PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, then PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake, mocked European donors for not wanting to fund terrorists' salaries: "The Europeans want their money that comes to us to remain clean - not to go to families of those they claim to be

“The PA is shameless about its part in rewarding acts of terrorism.”

38 Israeli civilians, including 13 children, were killed. Earlier this year, the PA celebrated the anniversary of this terror attack by dedicating a monument in a Ramallah square to Mughrabi. Youth football tournaments, sponsored by the PA, have even been named in 'honour' of terrorists.

On a visit to Bethlehem in the West Bank during the 2015 Summer Recess, we were appalled to discover that posters around the city proudly displayed a heavily armed young Palestinian 'martyr'

terrorists. They need to renounce this occupation mentality. These [prisoners] are heroes, self-sacrificing fighters, and fighters who fought so that we could live in dignity".

Britain is on target to give £343 million in aid to the PA between 2011 and 2015 and the UK contributes £30 million each year into the PA's so-called general budget. Only since March 2013, has the UK ensured that money donated to the PA's general budget goes via the World Bank and into a special bank account



Bethlehem poster in memory of Palestinian terrorist Mahmood Awad



“Aid and funding should be conditioned on the willingness of the PA to crack down on incitement.”

that is used to pay the salaries of specific PA civil servants. Nonetheless, by providing money for the PA to spend on these salaries, we are effectively freeing up funds for the PA to spend as it sees fit, and, regrettably, this includes salaries to convicted terrorists.

The dedication of monuments and the paying of salaries as a reward to these despicable people should not be tolerated by Western governments and aid donors.

Of course there are problems with extremism on both sides of the debate. The July 2015 arson attack on two homes in the Palestinian village of Duma by religious Jewish extremists that killed an 18-month-old Palestinian infant and his parents served to underline this point. We welcomed, however, the robust condemnation of this abhorrent terror attack by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and members of the Israeli Government. A strong response of this kind should be an expectation not an optional extra.

Prime Minister David Cameron has been clear in all of his speeches on the Middle East Peace Process that Palestinian incitement will not be tolerated. However, Government policy remains confused, inexplicably flip-flopping between outright denials that the problem exists, or claiming it isn't widespread, and on occasion even admitting there is an issue but stating there is very little that can be done about it. For too long the PA have been given

a free pass in this matter, with little to no consideration given to the long-term damage it is doing to the prospects of a lasting peace.

Now is the time for clarity in our policy towards this sort of activity. Each incident of incitement must be condemned unequivocally and DfID aid and funding should be conditioned on the willingness of the PA to crack down on incitement.

The Canadian Government has led the way by stopping all donations to the PA's fungible general budget and instead targeting donations to specific projects where funds cannot be misappropriated. The UK should consider following suit and adapting policy to demonstrate to the PA that this sort of activity will not be accepted. As one of the largest contributors of aid to the PA, the UK stands to wield significant leverage here.

The UK has a vested interest in promoting peace among the Palestinian population since no peace agreement will be able to guarantee peace in the medium- to long-term if a generation of Palestinians are growing up indoctrinated to hate Israel and the Jewish people.





Prime Minister David Cameron and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at UK-Israel Tech Hub event in Jerusalem

The UK and Israel: A Match Made in Heaven

Jon Medved
CEO and Founder,
OurCrowd

As modern science has recently borne out, old married couples really do begin to look like each other over time. And while UK-Israel relations tell a story of a steadfast although occasionally testy marriage, certain recent trends in commerce between the countries shows that there is a macroeconomic analogue to this human phenomenon.

Each country's comparative advantage is clear. In traditional finance, London is undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with, sitting in a consistent neck and neck battle with New York for the coveted title of the world's top financial capital. When it comes to innovation and entrepreneurship, on the other hand, the eyes of the world are on Tel Aviv. The synergy of its buzzing atmosphere and entrepreneurial culture is the creative energy which feeds the city's unparalleled early stage innovative ecosystem.

According to a recent report, however, one spouse is beginning to look a lot more like the other. Indeed, Israel is becoming an increasingly important financial player, having moved up 11 places last year to 21st on the list of global financial centres. While banking giants Citigroup and Barclays have been operating in Israel for a while, they have recently taken the initiative to capitalise on the environment in which they find themselves. In short, banks, including British ones, are making 'Aliyah' to embrace innovation.

Citigroup, for example, has followed the lead of New York and London's fintech innovation labs by establishing its own accelerator programme in Tel Aviv.

From the Prime Minister down, the UK Government is committed to a stronger research and innovation partnership with Israel. This is why 2014 was a record year for trade between the two countries. According to the UK Government, British exports to Israel have grown steadily. Israel is the UK's fourth-largest market in the Middle East and North Africa region.

At the same time, and perhaps because of this increase in UK financial activity in Israel, Tel Aviv is turning to London as the gateway to Europe and the rest of the world. This is, of course, unsurprising. According to London and Partners, 40% of the world's top companies with a regional or global HQ in Europe

“From the Prime Minister down, the UK Government is committed to a stronger research and innovation partnership with Israel.”

Barclays has also developed an in-house R&D centre in Tel Aviv, attracting some of the sharpest minds to pioneer the upcoming technologies.

are in London. As an international trading city with a high concentration of headquarters and corporate functions, all in close proximity, London

is the perfect environment for global businesses. Add into the mix the fact that London was voted the 'world's most influential city' by Forbes, ranked the 'leading city of opportunity' by PwC, and recorded more incoming foreign direct investment (FDI) projects than any other European city in 2014.

This has all resulted in a renewal of commercial vows, of sorts, between the countries. Indeed, exports from Israel to the UK increased by 4.8% last year while exports flowing in the other direction increased by a whopping 12.9%.

The coupling of British investment and Israeli technology provides an important synergistic boost to both countries

platform, this one relies on its promise of generating returns on investment that exceed traditional investment vehicles.

And while not every investment in crowdfunding will result in a return on investment (ROI) equivalent to investing in Facebook before it became a \$200 billion public company, the platform certainly does provide ground floor investment opportunities that traditionally have only, unfairly, been within the purview of a select few: large companies, institutional investors and extremely high-net-worth investors.

The UK, forever a pioneer in the finance sector, has wasted no time in embracing the platform. For example,

Israel to identify and invest in the next wave of transformative companies with potentially sizeable returns.

To facilitate the rational deployment of crowdfunding capital in Israel, certain companies have come to the fore. OurCrowd, a company with offices in Jerusalem, New York and Sydney, with a UK office in the works, has grown a community of 10,000 investors from 110 countries in order to take advantage of the fertile tech space in Israel. In fact, 70% of OurCrowd's portfolio companies are based in Israel, including almost a dozen U.S. companies.

OurCrowd is now also targeting dealflow in the UK. Its last UK investment was in a company called Borro, a lending platform for clients who invest in or facilitate the trade of luxury assets. As of February 2015, it was the largest equity crowdfunding round in history. OurCrowd's Israeli investments are also making waves in the UK. Already providing their augmented reality technology to Littlewoods, the Israeli startup Cimage recently announced their new partnership with the UK's leading retailer, John Lewis. Together, they have created a virtual showroom in John Lewis's flagship Oxford Street store.

“The UK and Israel make for excellent partners in research and innovation, business and trade.”

in the increasingly fierce international commercial and trade arenas. It also bolsters each country's bid for global influence and recognition, both of which are integral to their respective economic successes.

the crowdfunding market in the UK has now become the second-largest after that of the U.S. According to Forbes, Europe's alternative finance sector grew by 144% last year, but remains completely dominated by the UK.

And it is not just the institutional financial powerhouses that are looking to Tel Aviv. Consider the curious case of crowdfunding. As with any investment

Following the lead of Citibank and Barclays in the traditional financial sector, crowdfunding investors from the UK and the U.S. are now turning to



Jon Medved, Israeli venture capitalist

The UK and Israel make for excellent partners in research and innovation, business and trade – and though the U.S. is considered Israel's greatest ally, Israel is increasingly looking to work with London's young and energetic tech industry as opposed to Silicon Valley.

As outgoing Israeli Ambassador to the UK, H.E. Daniel Taub, recently said: "It has been a good feeling to know that relations between the two nations are probably as good and as strong as they have ever been".

Mazel Tov, and may the marriage last!

The Children of Operation Protective Edge - One Year On

Einat Shazar
Projects Manager, CFI



The ways in which children react to war, and the length of time in which the traumatic effects stay with them,

go unnoticed all too often. It has been extremely hard for children on both sides of the Israel-Gaza border, on differing levels, as a consequence of Hamas's continuing attacks on Israel. However, I hope to shed some specific insight into the traumas experienced by Israeli children during Operation Protective Edge, six months after, and finally, one year on.

My family live in Kibbutz Be'eri which is a mere 3 miles from Gaza. IDF bases were situated close by, and whenever Hamas fired rockets, Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system would fire an interceptive rocket. Simultaneously, the IDF would respond with artillery to target the specific location the rocket came from. This meant that each time

Hamas fired a rocket, a warning siren and three loud rocket sounds were heard in the Kibbutz – a painful daily routine.

My cousin has told me that every time this occurred her three-year-old daughter, Gefen, would run to the safe room and cover her ears. To this day she remains extremely sensitive to any noise, including a knock on the door. A few months after the war, her six-year-old brother, Maayan, began asking questions about Gaza and terrorists. He developed fears (especially before bedtime) imagining that rockets would blast through his window, or that a terrorist would enter their house at night.

Six months later, records show that 1,000 Israeli children were admitted to therapy. Unfortunately, many more have been deprived of the chance due to a lack of therapists, while other cases

whether children were even in a state of trauma or post-trauma. Some of the effects at this stage included children who went back to sleeping with their parents in bed, or even leaving their shower door open so that they could hear potential rocket warning sirens and make an immediate escape.

One year on, 40% of children in Sderot, the Israeli city closest to the Gaza border (also known as 'the bomb shelter capital of the world'), suffer from some form of fear, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. During a visit to Sderot on a CFI delegation, I was deeply struck to discover that children who suffered trauma throughout their formative years are now turning 18 and beginning their military service – a concept and reality which is acutely fear-provoking for them, and therefore exceptionally challenging to deal with. Therapists have detailed how some

“**The impact of the constant barrage of Hamas rockets on children is far deeper than meets the eye.**”

go unreported. Therapists have pointed out that at times it was unknown

children have developed new fears, insomnia, and behavioural problems at school. Young adults have also been found to be wetting their beds or speaking like a toddler, whereas some teenagers can become more aggressive.

The impact of the constant barrage of Hamas rockets on children is far deeper than meets the eye. It is heartbreaking to learn of such realities which children face under these unique circumstances.



Israeli nursery children during Hamas rocket attack

The IDF: Israel's Melting Pot

Tanyah Murkes
Israel Liaison, CFI



As anyone who has been to Israel can attest, seeing soldiers from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) walk around the city or sit in a coffee shop isn't an unusual sight. On the contrary, in a country where national or military service is obligatory for most of its citizens, IDF soldiers are just part of our daily scenery.

So much so that when I boarded the train and took my seat next to a bunch of soldiers I didn't give them a second look. It was only when they started speaking amongst themselves and got ready to depart the train that I got curious. The soldiers were speaking in Arabic to each other and Hebrew with other soldiers in the seats behind us. As they left the train they wished each other Shabbat Shalom (a peaceful Sabbath), and the Arabic-speaking soldiers wished their friends behind us a meaningful fast – it was Tisha B'av, the fast that marks the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. It was a unique reminder that Jews and Arabs can not only coexist, but are integrated in each other's lives in Israel.

Arab and Jewish children playing together in their neighbourhood is a sight rarely portrayed in the media. Jewish weddings where the guests of honour are a Muslim family who helped the bride's grandmother don't make it on the evening news. Jews and Arabs often work together and our lives are

intertwined in the small geographical space that is Israel.

While there is indeed much more that Israel can do to be a more inclusive society, Arab citizens - who constitute more than one-sixth of Israel's population - still see their future in Israel.

“Arab and Jewish children playing together in their neighbourhood is a sight rarely portrayed in the media.”

A poll conducted in 2014 by Statnet research institute, headed by Israeli Arab Yousef Makladeh, shows that the vast majority of Arabs living in Israel, as well as in the West Bank, would rather live in Israel than in a future Palestinian state – 77%.

Since its establishment, the IDF has been dubbed 'the melting pot of Israeli society'. It enables people from different segments of society to interact regardless of their background. It may surprise some, but non-Jews from Israel's Muslim, Druze, and Christian communities serve in the IDF alongside their Jewish peers. These soldiers

swear fealty to the State of Israel on a copy of the Quran or the New Testament instead of the standard Hebrew Bible.

Muslim and Christian Arab Israelis are not required to serve in the IDF, but there are many who volunteer. In 2013, there were over 200 Muslims serving in the

IDF and over 300 in the reserves, as well as 140 Christian Arabs. In 2012, 4,000 Druze Israelis served in the IDF with close to 10,000 soldiers in the reserves. A growing number of Bedouin are also enlisting, with over 1,400 Bedouin Muslim soldiers serving in 2012 and an additional 1,500 in the reserves.

It is undeniable that many of these individuals identify deeply with the State and enlist out of a duty to defend their homeland. In times characterised by turmoil within society and in the region, these practical and daily signs of coexistence offer a cautious beacon of light and optimism.



CFI's Calendar: 2014-2015

September 2014



Home Secretary Theresa May addresses CFI Annual Parliamentary Reception

- CFI Annual Parliamentary Reception with Home Secretary Theresa May, attended by 250 CFI members and 50 parliamentarians
- Matthew Offord MP raises concerns to Prime Minister David Cameron about anti-Israel boycotts and the rise in anti-Semitic incidents in UK
- Mike Weatherley MP writes letter to Prime Minister David Cameron highlighting problem of anti-Semitism in his constituency of Hove

October 2014



Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond addresses CFI's Conservative Party Conference Reception

- CFI's Conservative Party Conference Reception with Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond and Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Daniel Taub, attended by over 400 delegates
- CFI exhibition stand at Conservative Party Conference a hub of activity, with over 130 new members signing up
- Parliamentary Briefing with Avi Hasson, Israel's Chief Scientist

November 2014



Oliver Dowden MP at the Western Wall

- Hertsmeire MP Oliver Dowden and CFI join then Cabinet Office Minister, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP, on a cyber security-orientated delegation to Israel
- CFI attends Jewish Care Breakfast with MPs and former Foreign Secretary William Hague at Mansion House
- Numerous Conservative MPs express concern about Iran's nuclear programme in House of Commons

March 2015



CFI breakout session at We Believe in Israel 2015

- CFI coordinate breakout session at We Believe in Israel 2015 with Bob Blackman MP, Mike Freer MP and Matthew Offord MP, and Conservative Chief Whip Michael Gove gives keynote speech to plenary session
- Lord David Trimble joins CFI for annual AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington D.C.
- CFI Action Days in Hampstead & Kilburn with Simon Marcus and Hendon with Matthew Offord
- BICOM Israel Election Night party, cosponsored by CFI, attended by five Conservative MPs

April 2015



CFI campaigning with Guto Bebb MP in Aberconwy

- Team CFI spend two weeks campaigning in eight constituencies across the UK, including Aberconwy in North Wales, Brigg & Goole in Yorkshire, and Halesowen & Rowley Regis in the West Midlands
- The Daily Express publishes article on the Palestinian Authority's payment of salaries to convicted Palestinian terrorists, featuring a statement from CFI's Vice-Chairmen Guto Bebb MP and Andrew Percy MP, as well as James Morris MP
- Southampton University withdraws support for controversial anti-Israel conference following criticism from former Treasury Minister Mark Hoban MP and Caroline Nokes MP

May 2015



Stuart Polak receives his CBE award from HRH The Prince of Wales

- CFI Director Stuart Polak receives CBE for political services to Conservative Friends of Israel
- Team CFI spend final week of General Election campaign canvassing and leafleting in five constituencies across London and Essex
- Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP announced as CFI's new Parliamentary Chairman and a new team of 11 Parliamentary Officers is formed
- Parliamentary Briefing with Brigadier General (Res.) Michael Herzog on Iran's nuclear programme

December 2014



Prime Minister David Cameron addresses CFI Annual Business Lunch

- CFI Annual Business Lunch with Prime Minister David Cameron attended by over 150 Conservative MPs and Peers, including 13 Cabinet members, and 600 businesspeople
- Seven Conservative MPs participate in Westminster Hall debate to express concern at anti-Semitism in UK
- Conservative MEP Charles Tannock condemns EU court decision to remove Hamas from list of proscribed terror organisations

January 2015



Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP in the House of Commons

- Conservative MPs raise concerns to Home Secretary Theresa May about increasing anti-Semitism, including Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP, Bob Blackman MP, and Matthew Offord MP
- James Clappison MP, then CFI Parliamentary Chairman, leads Westminster Hall debate to mark Holocaust Memorial Day
- Conservative Peers voice opposition to Palestinian unilateralism in House of Lords debate

February 2015



CFI activists campaigning with Bob Blackman MP

- CFI Action Day in Harrow East and Harrow West for Hannah David and Bob Blackman
- Parliamentary Briefing on Israel's General Election with Yossi Shain, Professor of Political Science at Tel Aviv University and Georgetown University
- Conservative MPs contribute to cross-party report into anti-Semitism in the UK, including Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt MP and Graham Brady MP

June 2015



Conservative Future Delegation at the Knesset

- CFI coordinate a Delegation for 15 Conservative Future members to Israel
- Parliamentary Briefing with Israel's Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom attended by 50 parliamentarians and key CFI supporters
- Parliamentary Lunch with Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Daniel Taub, with 35 Conservative MPs, including 17 newly elected Conservative MPs
- CFI Vice-Chairman Guto Bebb MP leads Westminster Hall debate criticising emerging nuclear deal with Iran, featuring contributions from more than 15 Conservative MPs

July 2015



CFI Delegation with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin

- CFI's Parliamentary Chairman, Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP, leads CFI's Parliamentary Officers on a high-profile parliamentary Delegation to Israel
- CFI hold a farewell lunch for departing Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Daniel Taub, attended by over 85 MPs, Peers and key supporters
- Iran-P5+1 nuclear deal condemned by more than 10 Conservative MPs, including former Defence Secretary, Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox MP

August 2015



CFI Delegation with Ambassador David Quarrey

- Israel Delegation for nine newly elected Conservative MPs
- National Union of Teachers withdraw controversial anti-Israel education pack following criticism by CFI's Parliamentary Chairman and Vice-Chairmen
- CFI Vice-Chairman, John Howell OBE MP, writes letter to Amnesty International condemning tweets inciting against Israel
- Media coverage of CFI activities in The Daily Telegraph, The Times, Daily Express, ConservativeHome, the Jewish Chronicle and Jewish News



HRH Prince Charles presents Stuart Polak with his award

Congratulations, Stuart!

The CFI Directors, Executive Board and Professional Team would like to congratulate our Honorary President Stuart Polak on receiving his CBE award and his elevation to the House of Lords.

Stuart, who has led CFI for 25 years, was awarded the CBE for political services to Conservative Friends of Israel. The award was presented by His Royal Highness Prince Charles in a formal ceremony at Buckingham Palace, in May 2015. Just four months later, it was announced that Stuart would also be appointed to the House of Lords as a Conservative Peer in the Autumn of 2015.

Born in 1961 in Liverpool where he grew up and was educated, Stuart began his career working for the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1984 as Education Director. In 1989, he was appointed as only the second Director of Conservative Friends of Israel.

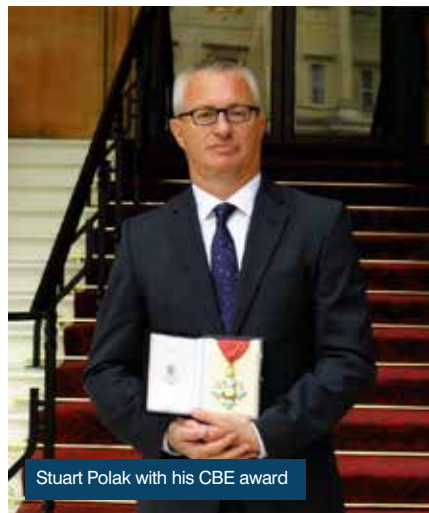
Over 25 years, Stuart has coordinated and led more than 150 CFI delegations of politicians to Israel and through this he has developed extensive relationships with MPs, Peers, MEPs and advisers throughout all levels of the Conservative Party.

Stuart's notable achievements are a culmination of the work he has done, over many years, in both strengthening and developing the Anglo-Israeli relationship. They are also recognition of the significance and success of CFI as an organisation. The whole team at CFI celebrate these richly deserved accomplishments.

Stuart has paid tribute to the support of his family, his colleagues and his mentors: "On receiving the news, I thought about the many people in the political and communal world that helped me over the years. But specifically, three giants in UK-Israeli relations who taught me so much

and are no longer with us - my friends and mentors, Cyril Stein, Leonard Steinberg and David Lewis. These honours recognise the work of CFI and it has been a privilege working with our terrific Executive Board and, in particular, the small but dedicated Professional Team".

Congratulations, Stuart!



Stuart Polak with his CBE award

We say yes...



...to our Jewish Community

We are proud of our community's many achievements. From schools to synagogues, from cultural centres to public celebrations of Jewish life, we have much to cherish.

CST (Community Security Trust) protects all of this. We are proud to do so, standing up to antisemitism; and facilitating all aspects of Jewish life. We invite you to join us in our work, continuing a strong tradition of Jewish self-defence and helping to build our Jewish future.

CST thanks Sinai Jewish Primary School and Seed for the use of this photograph.

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