

2017

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YEAR IN REVIEW

CFI ANNUAL BUSINESS LUNCH 2017



CFI hosted its Annual Business Lunch on 11th December 2017, which was addressed by Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP and attended by 700 people, including 170 Conservative parliamentarians and nine Cabinet members.

Addressing one of CFI's largest ever events, Mr Gove underlined his staunch support for Israel and condemned "dark and furious" activism against the Jewish State. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who received a standing ovation for his speech, described the CFI Annual Business Lunch as "one of the biggest events in the political calendar for any parliamentarian".

The Secretary of State described Israel as "a light to the world", which he prays "burns brightly for all time". He added that "no greater success story could have been invented, and no greater source of hope could have been imagined than the creation, preservation and present thriving of the world's one and only Jewish state".

"This lunch has become so important and valued because it brings together all of us as friends at a special time of year, a time of gift giving, and it gives us the opportunity to give thanks for a truly special gift, the State of Israel".

Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP



CENTENARY OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

2017 was a year of great significance for the UK-Israel relationship - the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Britain played an integral role in creating a homeland for the Jewish people, and on 2nd November the UK and Israel together celebrated one of the most defining moments of our shared history, with Prime Minister Theresa May hailing the UK's "pioneering role" in the creation of Israel.

CFI joined the governments of the UK and Israel in celebrating this milestone. At a parliamentary reception to mark the centenary, co-hosted by the Board of Deputies, CFI, Labour Friends of Israel, and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson hailed the "miracle of Israel" and stated that the creation of the country is "one of the greatest political triumphs of the 20th century". The reception was attended by more than 150 parliamentarians, diplomats, senior civil servants, and Jewish community leaders.

In the House of Commons, over 20 Conservative MPs commemorated the landmark moment in a Westminster Hall debate on the Balfour Declaration centenary, which was led by CFI Officer and Conservative MP for Hendon, Dr Matthew Offord.

To mark the Balfour Declaration, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu joined Prime Minister Theresa May in London at the Government's invitation, where the two leaders marked the occasion "with pride".

Joining the two leaders were 100 Conservative parliamentarians who co-signed a CFI-coordinated letter celebrating the Balfour Declaration published in the Daily Telegraph. Signatories of the letter included Rt. Hon. Mark Harper MP, Rt. Hon. Baroness Neville-Jones DCMG, Rt. Hon. Lord Trimble, Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP, and Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale MP.

The centenary completed a year of celebrations, culminating in a dinner co-hosted by the current Lord Balfour and Lord Rothschild. Addressing guests at the dinner, Prime Minister May hailed the Balfour Declaration as "one of the most significant letters in history. A letter which gave birth to a most extraordinary country. And a letter which finally opened the door to helping make a Jewish homeland a reality".

"We are proud of our pioneering role in the creation of the State of Israel".

Prime Minister Theresa May



Lord Balfour, PM Theresa May, PM Benjamin Netanyahu, and Lord Rothschild look at the Balfour Declaration



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DELEGATIONS



CFI parliamentary delegation in Sderot



Delegates in front of Israel's Knesset



Delegates at i24NEWS

FEBRUARY 2017

CFI coordinated a high-profile delegation to Israel and the West Bank with four senior Conservative MPs and two Conservative Lords, where Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles planted a tree at the Yad Kennedy Memorial in the Aminadav Forest in Jerusalem to mark his knighthood. The CFI delegation featured a full itinerary of political and security briefings, giving the group a first-hand look at the latest situation in Israel, as well as cultural and historical visits. The MPs received security briefings in the Gaza border town of Sderot in southern Israel, where they saw the remains of Hamas rockets. They viewed the entrance to a Hamas cross-border attack tunnel, found leading into the Netiv Ha'Asara community on the Gaza border during the 2014 conflict. In the West Bank, the delegates visited the first Palestinian-planned city of Rawabi, and met with Palestinian businesspeople and a senior member of the Palestinian negotiations team.

APRIL 2017

CFI led a delegation of seven senior members of the Conservative Christian Fellowship to Israel and the West Bank, in the first visit of its kind. The delegation visited numerous Christian sites, including a tour of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The group met with Israeli and Palestinian politicians in Jerusalem and Ramallah, and participated in a series of high-level strategic briefings. In Tel Aviv, the group met with British Ambassador to Israel, H.E. David Quarrey, who gave an introduction to some of the most pressing issues facing the region. The delegates also received security briefings on Israel's northern border with Lebanon where Hezbollah is reported to have embedded an estimated 150,000 rockets into villages close to the border. In Holon, the group visited Israeli NGO Save A Child's Heart, where the delegates met children from developing countries around the world receiving life-saving heart surgery.

AUGUST 2017

CFI led its first-ever delegation of Welsh Conservatives to Israel and the West Bank, with six Assembly Members. In Tel Aviv, the group met with representatives of the Israel-Britain Chamber of Commerce to discuss opportunities for further trade cooperation between Israel and Wales. The delegates also visited i24NEWS, an Israeli international news channel broadcasting in French, English and Arabic, where they were briefed by the Head of Arabic News about the channel's progress since its founding in 2013. In Jerusalem, the group visited Magen David Adom's (national ambulance service) dispatch centre, where they learned about Israel's highly advanced emergency response protocols. The delegation paid a moving visit to Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem and laid a wreath in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

16

delegations CFI took to Israel and the West Bank from May 2015-December 2017 for over

119

Conservative MPs, peers, senior party officials, and activists.

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

Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP



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GENERAL ELECTION 2017

In the run-up to the 2017 General Election, the CFI team spent four weeks travelling across the UK to campaign for the Conservative Party, visiting 23 constituencies.

The CFI team hit the campaign trail for Conservative candidates in marginal seats in **London, Wales, the South Coast of England, and the Midlands**, walking over 160 miles come rain or shine, delivering leaflets and talking to thousands of voters on the doorstep. CFI welcomed the election of Theresa May as Prime Minister, and congratulated new Conservative MPs.



CFI Action Day in Hampstead and Kilburn

NOTABLE EVENTS



Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles addresses CFI Parliamentary Reception



Conservative Lords meet Israeli Ambassador and Indian High Commissioner



Michael Gove addresses CFI Conservative Party Conference Reception

JANUARY-JUNE 2017

CFI's 2017 began with our Annual Parliamentary Reception in January, which was attended by over 250 supporters, including 50 parliamentarians. CFI hosted the first ever UK-Israel Parliamentary Friendship group video conference between parliamentarians across parties in the Knesset and the Houses of Parliament. Conservative MPs and supporters attended a joint event between CFI and the Conservative Muslim Forum with Israeli coexistence NGO Merhavim. CFI spent much of the spring season campaigning for the Conservative Party ahead of the June 8th General Election. CFI thanked its "greatest friend" Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles following his announcement to step down as MP for Brentwood and Ongar after 25 years of service.

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2017

In July, CFI Honorary President Lord Polak CBE and CF India Founding Chairman Lord Popat met with Israeli Ambassador H.E. Mark Regev and Indian High Commissioner H.E. Y.K. Sinha to hail trilateral ties and to mark Indian Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to Israel. In her letter to readers of CFI's redesigned *Informed* magazine, Prime Minister Theresa May pledged "to repay the trust" the Jewish community placed in the Conservative Party at the election. CFI announced its new Parliamentary Group, with former Cabinet minister Rt. Hon. Stephen Crabb MP becoming Parliamentary Chairman in the House of Commons, and Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP, John Howell OBE MP, and Andrew Percy MP confirmed as Vice-Chairmen, as well as Officers from all corners of Britain.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2017

CFI had another strong showing at Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, with Environment Secretary Michael Gove addressing more than 500 Conservative parliamentarians, activists, and supporters at CFI's Reception. Mr Gove praised Israel for its "amazing" achievements since the Balfour Declaration: "The desert has bloomed. Israel has become an economic and a technological powerhouse". CFI welcomed Deputy Ambassador of Israel, Sharon Bar-Li, by hosting a lunch in Parliament which was attended by over 40 Conservative MPs and Lords. CFI hosted numerous briefings to mark the Balfour Declaration centenary, with senior parliamentarians, diplomats, and supporters in attendance.

