

NEWSLETTER

CFI hosts biggest ever Annual Business Lunch

CFI's biggest ever Annual Business Lunch took place on the 16th December 2014. Keynote speakers the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP, and Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Daniel Taub, addressed over 150 Conservative Parliamentarians, including 13 members of the Cabinet, and 600 key businesspeople. The Prime Minister received a standing ovation for his staunchly supportive speech from the 750-strong audience.

"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." **Prime Minister David Cameron, December 2014**

"I believe in Israel – and that belief is rock solid."



Prime Minister David Cameron and Ambassador H.E. Daniel Taub with CFI Board at Annual Business Lunch 2014



CFI Annual Business Lunch 2014 with Prime Minister David Cameron

In his speech, the Prime Minister underlined that he was a loyal friend of Israel, and that the Conservative Party "will always stand behind [Israel], the homeland of the Jewish people."

"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." **Prime Minister David Cameron, 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, where Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, echo down narrow streets. And it's a symbol of success, supplying Britain with a sixth of our prescription medicines, developing the processors that we all 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." **Prime Minister David Cameron, December 2014**

PRIME MINISTER DAVID CAMERON IN ISRAEL

“I will always stand up for the right of Israel to defend its citizens.”

Prime Minister David Cameron made his much anticipated first official visit to Israel in March 2014. The Prime Minister demonstrated his solidarity with Israel in a rousing speech to the Knesset where he underlined his “unbreakable” support for the Jewish State.

“On my last visit here, I took a helicopter ride heading north over Israel, looking right to the Jordan River and left to the Mediterranean Sea. I really appreciated for the first time just how narrow and vulnerable this land is... It gave me a renewed understanding of what it must be like to be afraid in your own home. So let me say to you very clearly – with me you have a British 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, a right enshrined in international law, in natural justice and fundamental morality, and in decades of common endeavour between Israel and her allies.” **Prime Minister David Cameron, Knesset, March 2014**



Prime Minister David Cameron addressing the Israeli Knesset

“With me you have a British Prime Minister whose belief in Israel is unbreakable.”



Prime Minister David Cameron with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

The visit also included bilateral meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then-Israeli President Shimon Peres, as well as an emotional ceremony at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum, where the Prime Minister laid a wreath of remembrance.

During his visit, the Prime Minister attended an event at Israeli pharmaceutical company Teva, and was pleased to welcome more than £70 million of Israeli investment into the UK. Prime Minister Cameron highlighted the fact that British-Israeli trade has “doubled in a decade and is now worth £5 billion a year.”

“Delegitimising the State of Israel is wrong. It’s abhorrent. And together we will defeat it.”

The Prime Minister was joined on his visit by five Conservative MPs; CFI Parliamentary Chairman James Clappison MP, David Burrowes MP, Mike Freer MP, Matthew Offord MP and Lee Scott MP.

DELEGATIONS



▲ FEBRUARY 2014

CFI led a delegation of four Conservative MPs, and two Parliamentary Candidates to Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The group included former Minister for Policing and Justice, Rt. Hon. Nick Herbert MP, Peter Bone MP, Robert Halfon MP, Simon Marcus, PPC for Hampstead and Kilburn, and Tom Pursglove, PPC for Corby. The group were given the opportunity to meet and hear from a range of top Israeli officials, and visited the Syria and Lebanon borders.



▲ MARCH 2014

CFI were delighted to take five Conservative MPs to join Prime Minister David Cameron on his first official visit to Israel. CFI's Parliamentary Chairman James Clappison MP, David Burrowes MP, Mike Freer MP, Matthew Offord MP, and Lee Scott MP, took part in additional meetings scheduled by CFI, including dinner with Ambassador Dore Gold and a meeting with Dr Yuval Steinitz, Israel's Minister for Intelligence and Strategic Affairs.



▲ APRIL 2014

CFI was accompanied by seven MPs for a tailored delegation about Iran. In a series of meetings with Israeli officials and experts, the group heard about Iran's nuclear programme, support for terrorism, and human rights abuses. The group included now Minister of State for Disabled People, Mark Harper MP, James Wharton MP, Guto Bebb MP, Robert Halfon MP, Andrew Percy MP, Michael Ellis MP, and Jack Lopresti MP. Following their visit, the MPs authored a CFI-published report on Iran's nuclear programme.



▲ ▼ MAY 2014

CFI organised a series of meetings for MPs that were in Israel, including Justice Secretary, Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP, Home Office Minister, James Brokenshire MP, John Howell OBE MP, and Bob Neill MP. The MPs met with British Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Matthew Gould, and visited the northern Galilee region of Israel, as well as the ancient Masada fortification and the Dead Sea.



▲ JUNE 2014

CFI led a delegation to Israel and the West Bank for five Conservative PPCs and parliamentary advisers, including Afzal Amin PPC, Craig Williams PPC, John Bell PPC, David Mackintosh PPC, and Derek Thomas PPC. The delegates received security briefings from the IDF on Israel's northern borders with Syria and Lebanon and met with some of Israel's leading officials and academics, such as Mark Regev, spokesperson for Prime Minister Netanyahu.



▲ JULY 2014

CFI coordinated a delegation of six Conservative parliamentarians to participate in the third annual Australia Israel UK Leadership Dialogue in Jerusalem. Parliamentarians in attendance included Sir Edward Garnier QC MP and Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones. Taking place amidst the tension and unease of Operation Protective Edge, the Conservative parliamentarians gained a first-hand understanding of the complexities of daily life in the area.



NOVEMBER 2014

CFI led a delegation to Israel for Oliver Dowden, PPC for Hertsmere, who joined Cabinet Office Minister, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP on his cyber-security oriented visit to the country. The pair visited the Har Dov synagogue in Jerusalem, the site of a deadly terror attack against worshippers a week earlier, paying their respects at the shiva of British-Israeli victim Rabbi Avraham Goldberg.



MPs regularly speak up for Israel in Parliament

MPs regularly stand up for Israel in Parliament, asking questions on issues such as Israel's security concerns; Palestinian incitement; the importance of direct negotiations; Israel's peace initiatives; the importance of rejecting terrorist groups and boycotts; and the Iranian nuclear threat. In December, ten Conservative MPs spoke of their support for Israel during a heated Westminster Hall debate on 'Palestine', countering a number of hard-line anti-Israel Labour MPs who made a series of polarising speeches.



MPs hold the Government to account on Iran

Conservative MPs continued to raise concerns in Parliament throughout the year about Iran's nuclear programme, as negotiations between the P5+1 and the Islamic Republic took place. In July, CFI published the report 'Iran's Nuclear Programme: Securing a Permanent and Comprehensive Nuclear Agreement', written by six Conservative MPs.

Conservative MPs voice opposition to Palestinian unilateralism

In October, 87% of Conservative MPs expressed opposition to Palestinian unilateralism when they chose not to support Labour MP Grahame Morris's controversial non-binding Backbench Business motion urging the Government to recognise a 'state of Palestine' outside of peace talks. The motion passed, with 75% of the Labour Party - including both front and backbench MPs - voting in favour of the motion. Over 100 Conservative members of the Government did not participate in the vote, in line with Government

policy not to interfere in Backbench Business. In total, only 44% of MPs in the House of Commons took part in the vote. Following the vote, Prime Minister Cameron reaffirmed the UK's opposition to unilateralism and prematurely recognising Palestinian statehood.

MPs campaign against anti-Israel boycotts

MPs have voiced strong opposition to any boycotts against Israeli and Jewish goods, and receive regular briefing from CFI on this important issue. In August, a number of Conservative MPs wrote to Prime Minister David Cameron to condemn the removal of kosher food from a central London branch of Sainsbury's supermarket.



EVENTS



JANUARY-MARCH 2014

In January, CFI hosted Matthew Offord MP and Rt. Hon. Lord Michael Howard at the Knesset's historic convening at Auschwitz-Birkenau to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day. In the same month, CFI hosted a briefing event in Parliament for over 40 CFI supporters and MPs with Chief Whip, Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP. CFI coordinated a series of parliamentary briefings for MPs, which included sessions with Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's Deputy National Security Advisor Eran Lerman and Israeli academic Professor Asher Susser.



APRIL-AUGUST 2014

On a visit to London in April, Dr Yuval Steinitz, Israel's Minister for Intelligence and Strategic Affairs, met with over 40 Conservative MPs, Peers and CFI supporters at a private breakfast briefing, speaking to guests about the status of peace talks, Palestinian Authority-sanctioned incitement, and Iran's nuclear programme. Over 20 MPs attended a CFI parliamentary briefing with H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel, in June. In the summer, CFI published the report 'Iran's Nuclear Programme: Securing a Permanent and Comprehensive Nuclear Agreement', written by six Conservative MPs.



SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2014

Over 250 CFI members and 50 Conservative MPs attended CFI's Parliamentary Reception in September. CFI was delighted to welcome Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP as the keynote speaker at the reception, alongside H.E. Daniel Taub, Ambassador of Israel. CFI had another strong showing at Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham, with Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond MP addressing a 400-strong crowd of Conservative parliamentarians, activists and supporters at CFI's reception.

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