

David Cameron's Speech at Annual dinner of United Jewish Israel Appeal

Monday 15 October 2012

“With me, you have a Prime Minister whose belief in Israel is unbreakable and whose commitment to Israel's security is non-negotiable.

I will always stand by the Jewish people. And it is humbling to be here tonight and to be called a friend.

Here in this room, we have many of the people who are determined to build the strongest possible relationship between Britain and Israel.

The business leaders who have taken our trade to well over \$8 billion a year and made Britain the second biggest export market for Israel in the world. [1]

The scientists who are taking forward an ambitious programme of joint research as part of the UK-Israel Life Sciences Council, which includes no less than four Nobel Prize winners.

The leading academics who are helping to forge new partnerships between Manchester and the Weizmann Institute, Oxford and Ben Gurion, Cambridge and Tel Aviv.

The hi-tech specialists who are making a reality of the UK/ Israel Tech Hub – the first of its kind in the world. [2]

And, of course, our two ambassadors – Matthew Gould and Daniel Taub who are doing so much to help build this partnership between our countries.

UJIA

Mick, Doug – you have made an inspirational contribution and I am sure that everyone will want to join me in paying tribute to your leadership and hard work over these past few years.

I am a big admirer of what the UJIA does both here in Britain and in Israel. Let me explain why. First, the Jewish community in Britain is a role model for successful integration because you understand that as well as being part of a community with a common faith you are also part of a wider community – that of our country.

You epitomise the philanthropic spirit that is so central to Jewish teaching and which sees so many Jewish people give generously – not just to Jewish charities but to all charitable causes.

And through your support for Jewish youth movements and educational programmes for young people at both Jewish and mainstream schools and through your Summer Tours to Israel for 16 year olds and gap year students [3] you

continue to show each new generation that it is possible to be both a proud Jew steeped in the values of the Jewish people and a proud British citizen.

Yes, you can love this country, take pride in its history, celebrate its Olympics, even cry with its football fans every other year. There is no contradiction between being a proud Jew, a committed Zionist and a loyal British citizen. [4]

In the past, governments allowed a flawed state multiculturalism that said we should encourage different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream.

I don't subscribe to that. And neither do you. I believe we have to end the passive tolerance of segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.

Let's be clear what that means. It means getting preachers of hate out of our country. It means proscribing organisations that incite terrorism. And it means zero tolerance for any form of anti-Semitism, especially on our campuses.

And to those in Britain's universities and trades unions who want to boycott Israel and consign it to an international ghetto, I say not only will this Government never allow you to shut down 60 years worth of vibrant exchange and partnership that does so much to make both our countries

stronger [5] but I also say this: we know what you are doing – trying to delegitimise the State of Israel - and we will not have it. [6]

SECURING ISRAEL'S FUTURE

I'm a fan of what you do in Israel too. The focus you have given to the Galilee has ensured that UJIA's funding reaches those communities that most need it.

And the projects you've supported touch the lives, not just of those directly involved, but of all Israel. The medical school in Safad which teaches Jews and Arabs alike. Western Galilee College, where more than 30 per cent of the intake is Arab, and almost half of that Arab women. Or, of course, the high school in Shlomi. There in the shadow of the hills from which Hezbollah launched its missiles [7] you brought an army of teachers and the hope of a new generation.

That is the vision, strength and courage on which our future depends. And that is what the UJIA is all about. Now, tonight I want to talk about three key steps to secure Israel's future.

Standing up to Iran.

Seizing the opportunities presented by the Arab Spring and the spread of democracy in the wider region. And making the hard choices needed to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians.

Let me take each in turn

IRAN

First, Iran. Let's be clear about the facts. Iran is flouting six United Nations resolutions. The Regime's claim that its nuclear programme is intended purely for civilian purposes is not remotely credible. [8]

And it has shown its violent agenda by exporting terror and violence to Iraq, to Syria, to Gaza, to Lebanon and to many peace-loving countries across the world. [9]

Iran is not just a threat to Israel. It is a threat to the world. [10] Now there are some who say nothing will work – and that we have to learn to live with a nuclear armed Iran.

I say we don't and we shouldn't.

But at the same time I also refuse to give in to those who say that the current policy is fatally flawed, and that we have no choice but military action. A negotiated settlement remains within Iran's grasp. [11]

But until they change course, we have a strategy of ever tougher sanctions. Just today, Britain has secured a further round of new sanctions through the EU [12] Foreign Affairs Council. And these relentless sanctions are having an impact no-one expected a year ago. [13]

They have slowed the nuclear programme. Iranian oil exports have fallen by 45 per cent. That's 1 million fewer barrels a day and \$8 billion in revenues lost every quarter. [14]

The Rial has plummeted—losing around half its value between May and September. Inflation is soaring – thought to be as much as 50 per cent. [15] And the Iranian Regime has had to establish an economic austerity taskforce to manage the pressure they have brought on their own people. [16]

Most significantly, there are signs that the Iranian people are beginning to question the Regime's strategy with even pro-regime groups protesting at the actions of the Government.

It's mind boggling that the leaders of a nation so rich in oil have succeeded in turning their country into a banana republic [17] desperately trying to put rockets into space while their people suffer.

The Iranian regime is under unprecedented pressure and faces an acute dilemma. They are leading their people to global isolation and an economic collapse. And they know it. [18]

They know too that there is a simple way to bring sanctions to an end. By giving the international community the confidence we need that they are not and will not develop a nuclear weapon.

I have said to Prime Minister Netanyahu that now is not the time for Israel to resort to military action. Beyond the unpredictable dangers inherent in any conflict, the other reason is this:

At the very moment when the Regime faces unprecedented pressure and the people are on the streets and when Iran's only real ally in Syria is losing his grip on power a foreign military strike is exactly the chance the Regime would look for to unite his people against a foreign enemy.

We shouldn't give them that chance. We need the courage to give these sanctions time to work. But let me also say this. In the long term, if Iran makes the wrong choice, nothing is off the table. **A nuclear armed Iran is a threat to Israel. And a threat to the world.** [19] And this country will work unwaveringly to prevent that from happening.

Open societies

Let me turn to the changing events in the wider region. I have no illusions about the dangers that political transition can bring in the Arab spring countries.

And I understand why instability can be a great cause for concern. I understand how dark things were for Israel when surrounded by enemies on every border. And I understand how Israelis feel when gas masks are handed out to families; and car parks are converted into bomb shelters.

But I passionately believe that what we are seeing through the Arab Spring need not be a new threat to Israel's security. Democracy and open societies are not the problem – they can be a big part of the solution.

Yes, there are those who believe that in a volatile region only an authoritarian strong man can maintain stability and security. But when brutal dictators suppress their people in the name of stability, the end result is a region that is more dangerous – not less. [20]

More dangerous because these regimes abuse the Palestinian cause to smother their own people's hopes and aspirations, dealing with frustration at home by whipping up anger against their neighbours, Israel and the West. And more dangerous too, because people denied a job and a voice are given no alternative but a dead end choice between dictatorship or extremism. [21]

Now, of course, many fear that elections can open the door to Islamist parties whose values are incompatible with truly open societies. But the answer is not to oppose elections. The answer is to respect the outcome of elections. And then judge governments by what they do. [22]

For example, there are big questions facing President Mursi in Egypt. We want to know if he will live up to his commitments to protect the rule of law for all citizens, defend the rights of minorities and allow women to play a full

part in society. And I challenged him personally on these points when I met him in New York last month.

But when he re-launches Operation Eagle to try and do something about the lawlessness in the Sinai, we should welcome that. And when he goes to Tehran and speaks the truth to that regime about its despicable actions in Syria in support of Assad, we should welcome that too.

But if the Islamists attempt to undermine the stability of other countries or encourage terrorism instead of peace and conflict instead of partnership then we must and will oppose them. And that is why we will not waver from **our insistence that Hamas gives up violence** [23] and that the rockets from Gaza must stop. Hamas must not be allowed to dictate the way forwards for Israelis and Palestinians.

Of course, the Arab Spring presents huge challenges. But if we can show the strength and courage to engage with new democratic governments, their chance to establish the building blocks of democracy, fair economies and open societies offers the greatest opportunity for stability and peace in a generation.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

That brings me to the Palestinian Territories and the peace process. We can't advocate democracy and open societies in one breath and then cite the need for stability as an excuse for why the Palestinians shouldn't renew their democracy too.

It's now seven years since Palestinians voted for a President and six since parliamentary elections. The Palestinian leadership needs to refresh its mandate and show it has the consent of its people, starting with municipal elections later this month. And it needs to resolve the situation in Gaza and restore to Palestinians a unified, leadership [24] able to deliver peaceful resolution of the conflict with Israel.

So Palestinian reconciliation and Palestinian elections are key points on the path to peace – because without consent there can never be credible negotiation. [25]

It will require great strength and courage to take the hard choices needed to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. [26]

And let me say this: I know it takes two to negotiate. So let me tell President Abbas something very clearly there is no path to statehood except through talks with Israel. [27]

So if the Palestinian plan is simply posturing with the UN rather than negotiating with Israel, Britain will never support it.

And let me say this to the Palestinians too. Britain will never support anyone who sponsors a football tournament named after a suicide bomber who killed 20 Israelis in a restaurant. We will not tolerate incitement to terrorism. [28]

But in the search for peace both sides have to make hard choices. And just as President Abbas has followed through his commitment to non-violence with real progress on the West Bank so Israel needs a real drive to improve life for ordinary Palestinians.

That means more support for economic development in the West Bank, **relaxing restrictions on Gaza** [29], ending the demolition of Palestinian homes, and yes, **it means meeting Israel's obligations under the Roadmap and under international law to halt settlement building**. [30]

Britain's position will not change. Settlements beyond the green line are illegal.

I know how hard the concessions needed for peace can be. But the truth is, time is running out for a two state solution – and with it Israel's best chance to live in peace with its neighbours.

CONCLUSION

Brett, in your introduction you said that **support for Israel** was in the DNA of the political party I lead. It is. But I believe it **is in the DNA of the country I lead** [31] too.

That is why **Britain will always stand by Israel, protect Israel, and work with Israel on the path to peace**. [32]

I long for the day when I can come to a dinner like this and not have to talk about the threats to Israel. I long too for the day when making statements in support of Israel is as unnecessary as going to see President Obama and saying I support America's right to exist.

For now, Israel will continue to face acute threats and a hard road to peace. But with strength and courage we can, together, stand up to Iran. We can, together, seize the opportunities presented by the spread of democracy in the wider region. And we can together take the hard choices needed to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. [33]

So let me conclude by wishing you all a slightly belated shana tova and let us hope that it will be a sweet year for the British Jewish community and the Jewish people in the State of Israel. And one which brings us closer to the peace and security for Israel that its people so richly deserve." [34]

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[1] So we have considerable leverage.

[2]

[3]

[4] The Zionist entity is a foreign military power – how can you be a true Zionist and a loyal British subject?

[5] Just exercising discretion and choice. Are you planning to rob us of that?

[6] Israel is doing a fine job of delegitimising itself.

[7]

[8] Is that what the intelligence agencies are saying?

[9]

[10] Is that what the intelligence agencies are saying?

[11] Why is the onus on the Iranians?

[12] It is still unclear what Iran has done wrong.

[13] Why aren't you making friends and trading with Iran? That's the classic and civilised way to influence other nations.

[14] That's going to hurt their women and kids.

[15] Again, that's going to hurt their women and kids.

[16] No, YOU brought that pressure on their women and kids quite needlessly.

[17] Such a silly remark from a leader whose country, the UK, is stuck in recession even without sanctions.

[18] Britain has been trying for decades to isolate Iran. Remember what did Britain do to Mossadeq's fledgling democracy? Remember the sanctions, blockades and overthrow? A recent study in Fallujah found that more than half of all babies born between 2007 and 2010 had a birth defect. US forces spent months denying the use of white phosphorus in the city before it was revealed by one of their own internal magazines (see [this](#)). In Basra, where Britain led the attack in 2003, the number of birth defects was a shocking seventeen times higher than prior to the invasion. "In the past seven years, the number of malformed babies born increased by more than 60 per cent; 37 out of every 1,000 are now born with defects." And how many times has a British foreign secretary or prime minister visited Iran since 1979, the year of the Revolution?

[19] Not nearly as threatening as nuclear armed Israel which refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty and submit to inspection and safeguards.

[20] Not forgetting brutal occupiers who suppress other peoples in the name of 'security'.

[21] Like the Palestinians?

[22] That would make a nice change – what chance did Britain give democratically elected Hamas to show how they could govern?

[23] Why? Self-defence against a brutal occupier is their right. When will Cameron insist on Israel giving up violence and withdrawing to 1949 borders?

[24] And Britain, the US and the UN need to restore to the Palestinians a unified territory on internationally recognised borders with unfettered movement of goods and people.

[25] There can be no peace under occupation or blockade.

[26] No, only common decency.

[27] That path leads nowhere. The correct path is through justice and law, not lopsided talks with the oppressor.

[28] But who are the terrorists and who are the freedom fighters?

[29] Relaxing restrictions? You mean ending restrictions and restoring unfettered access and movement.

[30] And don't forget all Israel's other obligations under international law. Reuters today report that Israel announced another 800 homes on stolen land in the West Bank. Hagit Ofran of the Israeli anti-settler group Peace Now, said construction could begin within a few months. "The government could stop the process before building begins but is taking advantage of the upcoming elections in order to

set facts on the ground and will make the possibility of peace with the Palestinians even harder to achieve," [she said](#).

[31] Nonsense.

[32] What "path to peace"? You haven't yet mapped out a credible path.

[33] That'll be the day!

[34] What they richly deserve is something else entirely.

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