

BRIEFING FOR UK – ISRAEL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Monday 22 February 2016, 1 Carlton Gardens

Agenda

09:45	Participants Arrive
10:00-10:10	Opening remarks
10:10-11:00	Global trends
11:00-12:00	Regional issues: [REDACTED]
12:00-12:30	European Union issues
12:30-14:00	Lunch discussion: Bilateral Partnership [REDACTED]
14:00-15:00	Gaza and the future of the MEPP
15:00	End

STEERING BRIEF

This is the first UK-Israel strategic dialogue both for you and for your counterpart, Dore Gold, Director General of the Israeli MFA. [REDACTED].

Gold was in Berlin and Moscow last week. He will be joined by Mr Gilad Cohen, Deputy Director General MFA and Mr Shimon Shapira - Head of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet. From the Embassy, Chargé D'Affaires Eitan Na'eh and Spokesperson Yiftah Curiel will attend.

The dialogue falls in the week following two ministerial visits. Mr Ellwood has conducted foreign affairs work in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Matthew Hancock, MCO, has also led a business and cyber delegation. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

The bilateral relationship is strong. Trade is at record levels (\$7 billion in 2014). There have also been some significant deals in both directions recent months, notably the selection of Rolls Royce to provide the engines for the Dreamliner fleet (which will be the UK's largest single export to Israel). Elbit, together with Kellog, Brown and Root, its UK joint venture partner, has been awarded a contract valued at approximately £500 million for the delivery of the UK Military Flight Training Systems programme. We welcome the strong dialogue we have on regional issues, [REDACTED].

Since the start of October a wave of attacks have left 27 Israeli citizens dead, as well as 175 Palestinians (many of whom were assailants). We have publicly condemned the attacks, and publicly and in private called on leaders from both sides to refrain from incitement. [REDACTED].

You will be joined throughout by HMA Tel Aviv and Near East Department. Simon Gass and Neil Crompton will attend from the beginning of the event to 13:45. Director Strategy and DNSA Gwyn Jenkins will join until 12:30. You will give the opening remarks, after some informal introductions. You will also lead on the UK/EU session.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Area C

The Oslo accords divided the West Bank into three administrative areas (A, B and C) under different jurisdictions. Area A is under full control of the Palestinian Authority and consists primarily of urban Palestinian areas. Area B is under Palestinian civil control and shared Palestinian and Israeli security control. Area C consists of 60% of the West Bank and is exclusively controlled by Israel.

Area C remains largely off-limits for Palestinian use, the PA is unable to deliver basic services there and PA security forces are not allowed access. [REDACTED]

The UK supports UNRWA to provide essential services to refugees living in Area C. We also support the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide free legal support and advice to vulnerable families and communities in danger of risk of displacement. A further £900,000 in UK funding has been allocated to provide planning support to Palestinian communities in Area C.

Prisoners

We continue to raise our concerns about Israel's excessive use of administrative detention. Under international law administrative detention should only be used as a preventative rather than a punitive measure and only in cases where security concerns make it absolutely necessary. Israeli use of administrative detention has declined in recent years. However, NGOs express concerns that the practice is used routinely, rather than as an exceptional measure, that it is used as an alternative to criminal proceedings when there is insufficient evidence.

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Background

- The situation on the ground remains bad and violence continues on an almost daily basis. From 1 October to 5 February, there have been 168 Palestinian deaths, including 32 children, and over 16,476 injuries (including 5183 from live fire or rubber bullets). There have been 24 Israeli fatalities and 298 injuries, and two foreign national fatalities, as a result of terrorist and other attacks targeted at Israelis. We continue to urge all sides to encourage calm, take steps to de-escalate, and avoid any measures which could further inflame the situation. We have also condemned all incitement to commit violence and attacks, whoever the perpetrator, whoever the victim.
- [REDACTED].
- There have been a number of settlement announcements over the past several months. On 20 January, the Israeli Higher Planning Committee's meeting approved 158 new units: 34 new units in Etz Ephraim, 60 new units in Alon Shvut, 28 new units in Carmel to replace mobile homes, 5 new units in Rechalim, as well as 31 mobile units in Rechalim which will likely later be converted to new housing units. The Committee also agreed the retro-legalisation of 88 existing units (27 in Carmel, 61 in Rechalim). The 158 units advanced to the next stage in the multi-stage process of finally approving settlement units, which ultimately culminate in the issuance of tenders to build the units, and construction. There has not yet been final approval for these units. According to Peace Now, the move marks the end of an 18-month lull in approvals for new settlement units in the OPTs. The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 22 January 2016 to express concern at the Government of Israel's decision of to declare 385 acres of land in the West Bank 'as state land'. Mr Ellwood expressed concern in public comments and in Parliament at the Government of Israel's decision of 6 January 2016 to approve the extension of the Gush Etzion settlement.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Terminology: Occupied Palestinian Territories

[REDACTED]

Line to take: We want to see a sovereign and independent Palestine alongside a secure Israel. The UK has not yet bilaterally recognised a Palestinian State. We reserve the right to do so at a moment of our choosing and when it can best help bring about peace.

[REDACTED]

Jerusalem and Israel's capital

Issue: The UK and EU regard Jerusalem as a Corpus Separatum, whose final status has yet to be determined. We call for this to be resolved through negotiations, with Jerusalem to be the capital of two states – Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders.

Although Israel maintains that Jerusalem is its capital city, this claim is not recognised by the UK and the international community. The UK, like other countries, locates its embassy to Israel in Tel Aviv. The British Consul General in Jerusalem is not accredited to any country.

We consider East Jerusalem to be occupied territory. We are concerned about Israel's actions in East Jerusalem which seek to change its demographic nature, including: settlement construction, house demolitions, access restrictions and removal of residency rights from Palestinians. We regularly make these concerns clear to the Israel authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem bilaterally, and in cooperation with EU partners.

It is the UK's position that a solution to Jerusalem must be sought as part of a negotiated settlement. This solution should enable Jerusalem to be a shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian States.