

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

12th March 2021

Jean Comfereant,

RE: ISRAEL AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Israel and the United Nations (UN); your comments upon which I have read with interest.

I am proud of the UK's role in the birth of the state of Israel, with whom the UK shares a deep and meaningful relationship. I welcome the UK Government's strong commitment to promoting trade and business ties with Israel and its strong opposition to the Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions Movement. I also have every confidence that the UK's trading relationship with Israel will continue to go from strength to strength in the years to come.

Our close friendship with Israel does not prohibit our criticism of some Israeli policies, or our recognition of Israel as a thriving democracy and an example to the rest of the world for overcoming adversity. Nor does it stand in the way of the UK acting in honest accordance with our clear and long-standing position, that is, the commitment to a two-state solution, where two equal and sovereign states live side by side in peace and mutual respect. The UK regularly calls upon all sides to desist from engaging in activities that undermine this end; and this is reflected in the UK's voting record at the UN and in our diplomatic activity in general.

The UK has been a major contributor to the UN since its inception seventy-five years ago, occupying a prominent role within it, and defending wholeheartedly its role as a place where issues of international concern can be discussed productively and respectfully.

To be clear, none of the above should be construed as resulting from a bias against Israel. On the contrary, the UK regularly raises issues of concern in a wide range of countries, via the UN and bilaterally, including with our closest and most longstanding allies, of which Israel is one.

As such, I do not think it is appropriate for me to write to the Foreign Secretary, who I know to be a strong supporter of Israel, to the effect you suggest, and I hope this substantive response offers you a clear explanation of my position.

I was grateful too for the invitation to attend the virtual seminar with Hillel Neuer of the UN on the 3rd March, but I am afraid I was unable to attend owing to previous parliamentary commitments.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE