

Prime Minister

My intention is

to accept. Would you

CONSERVATIVE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL

Have a word with


John Cole. no

1. Anthony Eden was the first Patron of the Conservative Friends of Israel.
2. Since his death, the post of Patron has remained vacant.
3. Following Andrew Devonshire's defection to the S.D.P. Hugh Fraser succeeded him as President. Michael Latham is now the Chairman.
4. Michael Latham telephoned today to say two things:-
 - (a) That he was deeply disturbed that Douglas Hurd had met a delegation from the Arab League which included a member of the P.L.O.
 - (b) That he wondered whether, if an invitation was extended to you, you would agree to become Patron of the Conservative Friends of Israel (an office now vacant, and having no duties attached to it).
5. We share a real concern about the effect on the Jewish vote of the policies of H.M.G. I fear that the Foreign Office will advise you not to become Patron of Conservative Friends of Israel.

.../...

6. However, any such objection by the Foreign Office is illogical, in that you are a Founder Member of the Conservative Friends of Israel and have referred to this in messages you send to them.
7. How, please, should I reply to Michael Latham?

9th July 1982



IAN GOW

John Coles

Conservative Friends of Israel

1. Herewith my note to the Prime Minister dated 9th July.
2. I concede my own prejudice in that I am a Conservative Friend of Israel.
3. I would like the Prime Minister to agree to accept the vacant post of Patron, and you will see that she is inclined, herself, to accept.
4. May she do this, please?

12th July 1982

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'IAN GOW', with a stylized flourish above the letters.

IAN GOW

PRIME MINISTER

Conservative Friends of Israel

Ian Gow has shown me the attached minute.

I have not mentioned this to the FCO but I think you would want the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's advice before taking this further.

Meanwhile my own view is that you should decline this invitation, for the following reasons:

- (a) Where there is a major dispute, with countries friendly to Britain involved on both sides (and with, in my view, a good deal of right on both sides), I do not think that the Prime Minister should be conspicuously attached to either. My view would be precisely the same if you were invited, as you probably would be if you accepted this invitation, to be patron of the Council for the Advancement of Anglo/Arab Understanding.
- (b) The present Government of Israel has undertaken actions of which you disapprove - the annexation of the Golan and the massive onslaught on the Lebanon - and to accept patronage of the Conservative Friends of Israel in these circumstances would be bound to be regarded as inconsistent with the stand you have taken (though I know that in logic a distinction can be made).
- (c) Saud, Quaboos, Mubarak, Hussein etc would take it amiss.

With Arab feeling as it is at present - and with many friends of Israel also deeply disturbed - I must recommend that you do not accept this invitation.

JE

12 July 1982

(Pending)

IG spoke

Later am

HL

Pending
'A'

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

12th July 1982

Thank you for having telephoned on
Friday.

I hope to be able to let you have a
reply to the question which you put to
me, very shortly.

IAN GOW

Michael Latham Esq MP

Latham

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

5th August 1982

Conservative Friends of Israel

I have discussed this with the Prime Minister.

We think that now is not an appropriate moment, but that it may well be appropriate later on.

May we please keep in touch about this. I have shown to the Prime Minister the July edition of the Monthly Magazine issued by the London Office of the P.L.O.

Her reaction was the same as yours.

Now that the Recess is upon us, I hope that you will not think it presumptuous of me to thank you for your unfailing helpfulness during this past year.

Jane sends her love to you both and please give mine to Caroline.

IAN GOW

Michael Latham Esq MP

FROM MICHAEL LATHAM M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PERSONAL &
CONFIDENTIAL

9th August 1982

Dear Ian,

Please forgive me for not signing this personally but I am at home and my secretary has read your letter over the telephone to me. I am just about to depart on holiday but I wanted to get this off to you.

On the Israel question, I think on reflection that we are probably right not to take any steps now. But the position in question can remain as it is at present - i.e. vacant. Perhaps we can reconsider the matter when times are calmer.

Thank you very much for your kind good wishes. I do hope that Jane, yourself and your family have a really good holiday, which is so well deserved. Alas, Caroline and I will not be able to see you in your beautiful County this year. We are off to Oxfordshire for a week on Wednesday, and after that all four of us are going to Gibraltar for a week.

With every good wish,

Yours ever,

Michael Latham
Dictated by Michael Latham
& signed in his absence.

Ian Gow Esq. M.P.
Private Office of the Prime Minister,
No. 10 Downing Street
London S.W.1.