

*This question has now been deferred.*

*①*

*MR 4 p.a.  
We will discuss this. I started the first Friday Israel*

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, Qaboos, Mubarak, Hussein etc would take it amiss.

*No.*

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.

*A.S.C.*



Prime Minister

CONSERVATIVE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL

*My intention is  
to accept. Would you  
Have a word with  
John Cole*

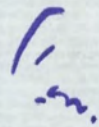
1. Anthony Eden was the first Patron of the Conservative Friends of Israel.
2. Since his death, the post of Patron has remained vacant.
3. Following Andrew Devonshire's defection to the S.D.P. Hugh Fraser succeeded him as President. Michael Latham is now the Chairman.
4. Michael Latham telephoned today 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