

For immediate release



**Conservative Friends of Turkey and Westminster North Conservative Association jointly hosted a drinks reception on Tuesday, June 23 at Sofra - Covent Garden**

**Guest speakers were Shadow Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP and Westminster North parliamentary candidate Joanne Cash**



***Dr. Liam Fox MP:***

***"No country is more strategically important [to our national security] today than Turkey."***

***"Turkey is enormously important because of its geopolitical position, its role in energy security and this is all being put at risk because of the anti-Turkish feelings, even xenophobia in the EU."***

***"Those who don't want Turkey in the EU want to look at what the alternatives would be if Turkey was not westernised and an EU member, but instead was looking backwards toward the Middle East and Russia."***

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Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT) and Westminster North Conservative Association jointly hosted a drinks reception on Tuesday, June 23 at Sofra - Covent Garden. It was attended by over 70 guests, including Consul General Bahadir Kaleli, First Counsellor Serra Kaleli and Counsellor Sadik Arslan of the Turkish Embassy, Eric Ollerenshaw (chief of staff of Baroness Warsi - Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion and Social Action), Cllr Adrian Croshaw of Enfield, Cllr Paul Seeby of Broxbourne, co-founders of the Conservative Friends of Turkey Cllr Ertan Hurer and Dr Onur L Cetin, and owner of the Sofra Restaurant chain Huseyin Ozer.

The keynote speaker of the evening was Dr Liam Fox MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Defence. His speech opened with a reminder of the dangers of nuclear proliferation, particularly in the Middle East. "In order to protect ourselves" he began, "we need to build partnerships... to look to countries that are of strategic benefit. **And no country is more strategically important to us today than Turkey.**" He went on to talk about Turkey's importance as a staunch ally of NATO, its geopolitical significance and crucial role in energy security and concluded **"all of this is being put at risk because of the anti-Turkish feelings in the EU."** To cries of 'hear hear' from the guests, Dr. Fox concluded by saying **"Those who don't want Turkey in the EU want to look at what the alternatives would be if Turkey was not westernised and an EU member, but instead was looking backwards toward the Middle East and Russia."**

The second guest speaker was Joanne Cash, the Conservative Party's parliamentary candidate for the key marginal seat of Westminster North. She is a leading barrister in the field of libel and privacy law and a regular commentator on legal issues on television and radio. She expressed her delight at the co-operation of CFT and Westminster North Conservative Association and the success of the event. Raffle tickets were sold at the event to raise money for her campaign.

CFT will be constantly working to increase awareness of Turkey's role in tackling global security challenges, and to emphasise Turkey's importance as an ally of the UK.

#### **About the Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT):**

CFT promotes strong ties between Turkey and the Conservative Party at all levels. CFT aims at regular communication with its broad membership base, acting as an impartial source of information on many topics concerning Turkey. CFT has more than 200 members, including 2 peers from the House of Lords, 20 Members of Parliament, 3 Members of the European Parliament, many Tory activists and representatives from business and civil society organisations. [www.cfot.org.uk](http://www.cfot.org.uk)