

Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) and Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT) jointly hosted a reception and panel at the House of Commons on Monday, 30th November, 2009. Moderated by Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP, Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, the panel included the Turkish and Israeli Ambassadors to the United Kingdom, as well as Shadow Foreign Minister Keith Simpson MP. Around 100 guests attended the event including many MPs and Lords.



**Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP:**

- I cannot remember such a meeting in my parliamentary career, it is a unique event, many thanks to Conservative Friends of Turkey and Conservative Friends of Israel for this initiative

**HE Turkish Ambassador Yiğit Alpogan:**

- Our cooperation with Israel includes security, economic and cultural angles, it is a time tested relationship which went through difficulties before but has been uninterrupted

- We are ready to resume mediation between Israel and Syria

- We are grateful to UK's support in Turkey's EU accession, it is a cross-party support shared by the British public

- Turkey has always looked Westward. Those obstructing Turkey's EU process are now asking why Turkey is developing alternative policies turning to East and South - it is a very natural outcome

- When we become an EU member, we will use our contacts and influence in the region for the EU



**HE Israeli Ambassador Ron Prosor:**

- We have many common values with Turkey and we can't sacrifice our alliance to domestic political ups and downs
- There are things to do on both sides to get the relations back on track
- We have always respected Turkish diplomacy
- There are different opinions in Israel about Turkey's mediation role
- Iran's nuclear program is not only Israel's but the world's problem, everybody has to take responsibility

**Shadow Foreign Minister Keith Simpson MP:**

- Turkey and Israel are two secular, democratic states in the region, it is important for the UK that they solve the problems in their relations
- It is worrying that the Iran crisis is escalating, we expect Turkey to tell Iran the international consequences of its policies
- Conservative Party is a strong supporter of Turkey's EU accession, a Conservative government will try to convince the countries obstructing the process