



AJC's Transatlantic Institute: An EU Pro-Israel Lobby AKA an 'International Advocacy Group'

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The Transatlantic Institute is an office of the AJC, based within the EU. A global advocacy organization founded in February 2004 that claims to strengthen ties between Europe and the United States. It is affiliated to AIPAC the American Zionist lobby in Washington.

According to its mission statement, the Institute works to promote « *transatlantic cooperation for global security, Middle East Peace and human rights.* » It is part of the AJC's network of 20 regional offices throughout the US, including NY, LA, SF and Chicago, plus 9 overseas offices including those in Brussels, Berlin and Paris that operate to influence EU foreign policy.

Transatlantic's International Advisory Council is chaired by former Spanish foreign minister Ana Palacio and includes former Democratic US Congressman Robert Wexler, former US Deputy Secretary of State, British-born, John Negroponte and German-Jewish journalist Josef Joffe.

It is assumed that the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which gives Israel free access to the European single market, was implemented as a result of the efforts of the AJC. It also assumed that the billions of Euros recently granted to Israel by the EU, for research, was extensively supported by the AJC advocacy group.

The problem is that this US-headquartered, Israel lobby is backed by a powerful pressure group in Washington that has close ties to Congress and consequently able to influence US foreign policy as well as American arms shipments to the Israeli state. The entire setup, from a democratic point of view, is less than satisfactory because the decisions of the EU Parliament are susceptible to being skewed by lobbyists in favour of a non-member state that is over 3000 km distant from Brussels, in the eastern Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, both Tel Aviv and Washington are worried that BREXIT (a British exit from the EU) would mean a breakup of the existing established lobbying networks that currently influence so many aspects of EU foreign policy. The *status quo* may be advantageous to the Israeli state but is, arguably, dangerously detrimental to both regional and global peace.

A political separation of the United Kingdom from the European Union would be estimated to be of political and economic advantage to Britain. However, as for the military balance of power: this would be difficult to quantify in view of the second strike capability of the German-built and recently supplied, submarine fleet of the Israeli navy now reported to have been modified to be nuclear-armed with cruise missiles and patrolling the

Mediterranean.

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