



BREXIT Would Assist Designation of Israel Lobbyists as 'Foreign Agents'

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Only then would the British electorate be able to control, by law, the often covert activities of lobbyists, both inside and outside the House of Commons, acting not in the interests of the United Kingdom but in the interests of an undeclared nuclear state in the Middle East, the hard-Right government of which has had undue influence over the EU Commission in Brussels for decades.

There is now a renewed effort in the United States to have the Israel lobby in America designated as a 'Foreign Agent' under existing legislation, and Britain should follow suit.

The Pro-Israel Lobby, headed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has been called the NRA of foreign policy lobbies, "a hard edged, pugnacious bunch that took names and kept score". The almost unilateral popular support of Israel in America, not to mention the nearly \$3 billion in aid the country receives every year, did not come about by accident.

It's the result of over 50 years of hard lobbying. Politicians and pundits alike are quick to support the Israeli state, and reluctant to criticize it. Pro-Israel groups such as AIPAC spent close \$4 million last year, ensuring that US-Israel ties will remain strong. The Pro-Israel lobby remains one of the strongest and most influential foreignpolicy lobbies in the US.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is a lobbying group that advocates pro-Israel policies to the Congress and Executive Branch of the United States. It was founded in 1951 by Isaiah Kenen who originally ran the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs as a lobbying division of the American Zionist Council.

One of several pro-Israel lobbying organizations in the U.S., AIPAC has more than 100,000 members, seventeen regional offices, and « a vast pool of donors. « It has been called « the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel, » and one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the United States. The group does not raise funds for political candidates itself, but helps organize to channel money to candidates. Its critics have stated it acts as an agent of the Israeli government with a « stranglehold » on the United States Congress with its power and influence. The group has been accused of being strongly allied with the Likud party of Israel, and the Republican Party in the US.

Among the best-known critical works about AIPAC is *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, by University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard University Kennedy School of Government professor Stephen Walt. In the working paper and resulting book they accuse AIPAC of being « the most powerful and best known » component of a larger pro-Israel lobby that distorts American foreign policy. They write:

AIPAC's success is due to its ability to reward legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda, and to punish those who challenge it. ... AIPAC makes sure that its friends get strong financial support from the myriad pro-Israel PACs. Those seen as hostile to Israel, on the other hand, can be sure that AIPAC will direct campaign contributions to their political opponents. ... The bottom line is that AIPAC, which is a de facto agent for a foreign government, has a stranglehold on the U.S. Congress. Open debate about U.S. policy towards Israel does not occur there, even though that policy has important consequences for the entire world.

Note

1. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Israel_Public_Affairs_Committee

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