

## Audio

### Speaker Key:

DG	Dean Godson
BN	Benjamin Netanyahu
WS	William Shawcross
MH	Michael Howard
JP	Jonathan Paris
JH	Jonathan Hoffman
JC	Jason Cowley

DG Thank you all for coming. Thank you for your patience. Prime Minister, we first met when you were fairly newly minted leader.

BN When I was young.

DG A quarter of a century ago, we're delighted to be able to welcome you here today. In fact it was as part of a delegation of journalists that was particularly adversarial on that occasion and what struck me was your willingness to head for the sound of gunfire and to engage as it were in hard talk on the really difficult questions of the day. And that's what our audience will certainly provide today. Some difficult bowling. We've got every shade of opinion represented here today and our usual house rule, no question too outrageous you just have to state your name and organisation before doing so.

It's a particular pleasure to welcome you here at this historic juncture in the international scene. It's a particular pleasure also because as I'm sure many of you know, you have now you've already passed the moment where you are now the longest serving Israeli Prime Minister in a single consecutive term of office and next year you will surpass David Ben-Gurion's record of the longest serving Israeli Prime Minister of all time.

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As I'm sure everyone here knows Israeli politics is a contact sport and so if I may mix the sporting metaphors to stay on the surfboards for decades plus in the face of the international scene, in the face of differing US administrations, I'm being very diplomatic on that. And also in the domestic context of Israel. I think when we first met we talked about Charles De-Gaulle's famous line, how can anyone govern a nation with 264 different kinds of cheeses? We haven't yet come up with the Israeli equivalent thereof but managing an Israeli coalition is a difficult matter indeed.

The second dimension of particular interest to us here, of Policy Exchange of course, is the domestic agenda and of course your period as Finance Minister

handed to you as a poison chalice in a different era. But the boom since then in the Israeli economy through the reforms that you initiated have attracted enormous attention globally and perhaps you might care to reflect on them a little today here in the light of our work on domestic policy as well.

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We're delighted that you're here. We're delighted that William Shawcross, a distinguished author, biographer, will conduct the interview and then throw it open as I say for question and answer. It's a great week for us. You're the culmination of that and we look forward to hearing what you have to say. Thank you.

WS Welcome Prime Minister. It's a great pleasure to be here with you to talk with you today, particularly because your visit to the EU three who are most involved in the Iran nuclear agreement created by President Obama. It's been said that the EU three, that's Britain, Germany and France, and probably other European countries went into a state of shock and mourning when President Trump unilaterally decided to withdraw the United States participation from the deal. Do you think they're now moving out from mourning through grief into acceptance? Is that the impression you have from your visit this week?

BN Well I'll tell you what I told them. First I'll tell you what I didn't tell them. I didn't tell them pull out of the Iran agreement because I think it's a flawed agreement. The United States decided to pull out of this [inaudible] in a minute. The weight of the American economy forces the issue. I mean if you were a European company or an Asian company or any company and you have to choose whether to do business with Iran or forgo doing business with the United States, you have to choose an economy that is about three percent of the size of the American company or forgo an economy of \$21 trillion GDP.

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Now that's a no-brainer and everybody's choosing it effectively as we speak. Companies are pulling out of Iran and it's a good thing that they're pulling out of Iran because if we know anything it's to stop aggressive tyrannical regimes early on. Don't accommodate them, for Gods sake don't feed them with cash, stop them and that's what I think is happening now. So I didn't spend much time on that because I think it's a done deal in the utter meaning of the word.

WS With a great respect you must have spent quite a lot of time on it.

BN I have a request. I'm sorry, this is my late father, it's the greatest story, would go into a restaurant and he'd be given a table and he'd said after two minutes he'd say do you have another table? That's...

WS [Overtalking].

BN No, can you turn off the lights a bit? It's awfully warm here, is it possible?

WS I don't think that's possible because you've got the BBC, CNN, goodness knows who else.

BN Same table, fine.

WS Okay good, we've got very good water here too so that's all right.

BN Thank you.

00:05:33

WS But you must have spent quite a lot of time talking about Iran with the three leaders at least it's been billed as that was your primary purpose to tell them exactly what you've told us. Are any of them still resisting the logic that you have just outlined? And publicly they say they're still trying to take the deal forward without America?

BN I don't want to put words in their mouth but my impression is that everybody understands the economic realities that I just said and there is a common goal that we share, and the common goal is to make sure Iran doesn't get nuclear weapons. I think the deal was flawed because basically what the deal said was don't enrich Uranium for one bomb and then exchange for that Iran within a few years you can enrich Uranium in an unlimited amount; for 100 bombs, 200 bombs, which I thought was a terrible deal.

And in addition to that they were given a lot of money and a lot of credit. Billions and billions of dollars which they promptly spent not to moderate Iran but in fact to fuel their dreams of empire and conquest throughout the Middle East and Yemen and Syria and elsewhere.

So the deal was bad any way you looked at it and the fact now that people are... Well the American administration is saying enough of that, this aggressive regime is not going to have a cash machine. We smashed it. In fact smashed this machine, cash machine for conquest has been stopped dead in its tracks and I think people recognise that and I think the test now is to make sure Iran does not pursue either a weapons program, which we uncovered, or its campaign of conquest.

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WS Can you tell us a bit about your...?

BN And so my real focus in this visit was not about the deal. My real focus was about reversing Iran's aggression in the region, mainly getting them out of Syria, all of Syria. That's what I spoke about and I have to say that I found considerable agreement on that.

WS In all three countries?

BN Yes.

WS And how are they to be got out of Syria?

BN First of all ask them, demand it. Also we have to recognise that we are not going to let Iran entrench themselves in Syria in order to achieve their declared goal. When I say declared, Iran declared it and again three days ago to destroy Israel. So they want to stockpile weapons, lethal weapons, in Syria to be able to fire

rockets in all of Israel. And we're not going to sit there and wait for it to happen so we're taking action against that.

WS So the world can expect a continuous military action by Israel against Iranian positions throughout Syria?

00:08:26

BN If they continue to entrench themselves militarily and they're doing it not to fight Daesh, ISIS; Daesh has gone, it's finished. They're doing it as they openly say they are doing it, in order to attack Israel with a view of destroying it. If we've learned anything from history, including British history, is you don't accommodate an aggressive regime that is taking territory, is building up armaments with a view of conquering you. You take action against them early on. Bad things should be opposed at their beginnings, not after they become horrendously dangerous.

WS And do you think that the three countries with which you've been talking this week will accept such a level of Israeli engagement?

BN Well they've backed us up actually against Iranian aggression I have to say and I'm very glad to have heard when Iran fired missiles at us from Syria and we took action against Iran, the European position actually was very supportive and I appreciate that. And I think it makes sense, it's also something that is shared, this opposition to Iran's aggression throughout the Middle East.

It's shared by us and just about all the Arab states. So you know when Arabs and Israelis agree on something, it's worth paying attention because we must know something and we do know that Iran has to be opposed for the future of peace and stability and security in our region.

I didn't find opposition to that proposition and I think if we all agree on the goal of getting Iran out of Syria, then I think there's a chance of achieving it. My experience is you get some place if you know where you're going and I think just plotting that goal is the first step of achieving it.

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WS And what about the Russian attitude? You went to Russia quite recently and then it was notable that after your return to Israel there was another attack launched by Israel against Iranian positions and the Russians were the dog that did not bark. They were very silent on that. Do you think you have at least tacit Russian support despite their alliance with Syria and Iran?

BN Is there a Baker Street here?

WS Is there a Baker street here? There is up the road.

BN Well that's the dog that didn't bark.

WS Your knowledge of English literature is very good.

BN Well I can't possibly refer to our international colleagues on those terms but I will say that I spoke to Mr Putin many times, actually in the last three years several

times, because his forces are very close to ours. And I said look we have a legitimate right to defend ourselves against the Iranian regime that seeks to obliterate us and therefore if they move their weapons close to our border with a view of attacking us we'll take preventative action. And we don't want to clash with you. So let's... It's a horrible word, let's deconflict, I hate jargon.

00:11:32

WS We'll figure another word for it.

BN Let's make sure we don't bump into each other or shoot each other's planes from the skies which is really what this means and we agreed and I'm glad to say that we've succeeded in maintaining this line of communication. So we've not had any clashes. I think and I think Mr Putin understands that Israel is doing what any country would do faced with a foe that is out to destroy it. And so far it's been holding, I hope it will continue to hold.

WS So the Russians are turning a blind eye to your actions? In Syria.

BN I'm not sure they're blind.

WS You're not sure of that?

BN Well I think they can see very well what we're doing.

WS Fine. I think I'm sure there would be questions on Iran later but I think we should move to Gaza because it's on everybody's mind. After the horrific events in early May, I think it was May 14<sup>th</sup>, when 40,000 protestors were encouraged if not ordered by Hamas to congregate on the Gaza side of the fence that is the border between Israel and Gaza. Some 62 Palestinians were killed by the IDF.

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Now, the world was outraged and Hamas has discovered a brilliant way of damaging Israel in the eyes of the world. And I'm puzzled because Israel is one of the most sophisticated countries in the world technologically, the IDF is an extremely well-disciplined army, and I don't understand why you haven't yet managed to devise a non-lethal method of crowd control which does not bring Israel into such public disrepute throughout the world.

BN Well you raise two points here. One is what actually happened and second how it's perceived and the question, it's very hard to avoid the perception of the easy falsehood that this is a peaceful protest. This is just Martin Luther King or Mother Theresa, they're on their side of the fence protesting. And by the way, what are they protesting?

WS I don't understand why you bring in Martin Luther King or Mother Theresa.

BN Because the idea of non-violent protests is something that we all agree with. Who could oppose it? I don't oppose it. They could protest as much as they want and demonstrate as much as they want but that's not Hamas is organising. They're organising a violent assault into Israel with the view of destroying us which they openly proclaim in order to break the fence, the border fence, and

kidnap and murder Israelis that are 100 metres away and communities that align the fence and so on.

So this is not a peaceful protest. They come in with pipe bombs. They come in with weapons. They come in with explosives and they pretend that it's a peaceful protest. They pay, the organisers Hamas, they pay civilians to come but mostly it's their own families. So first let's show what they say happened on the day that you talk about, and these 62 people died.

00:14:52

Who were these 62? This is Hamas own spokesman, it's not me. The Hamas official Salah Bardawil confirms the majority of the casualties during the Gaza fence riot were Hamas members. 50 of the martyrs were from Hamas.

WS Why did they confirm that so quickly?

BN I don't know. That's a very good question...

WS [Overtalking].

BN Yes, because we have their names and we have their pictures and their photos, which by the way I'd like you to bring next time to show who they are and the records of these so called peaceful protestors, they're not peaceful protestors, they're Hamas vicious terrorists.

WS It's astonishing to me that Hamas admitted very, very quickly that the vast majority were Hamas members but some were innocent civilians and I return to the question, can't you devise a better way of dealing with unpeaceful protestors?

BN Okay so I ask the same question, Shawcross I said to our technological people, you have performed wonders. You've developed a bullet in a bullet, that's our anti-missile technology. You've developed for the first time in history an ability to discover tunnels underground. You know, people have been working on that one since the time of the Babylonians. Can you not find a way to stop this kind of tactic with non-lethal needs? Because we tried water guns, we tried the tear gas, we tried all sorts of other devices and none of those worked against this kind of tactic.

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So they're working on it and you know given our record we probably will figure out something but we haven't gotten it yet. And by the way when I talked to the European leaders I will say okay, what would you do? Can you deal us some technology? I'd like to know if you have the ability to do this because we'd gladly use this.

The last thing we want is any violence, the last thing we want is casualties, and the last thing we want is confrontation but as I said in France just imagine that you had the equivalent of 20 million people on the borders of France commandeered by a terrorist organisation dedicated to the destruction of France. And the burning of Paris and they're about to cross the border into France and

they're going to murder and kidnap any French citizen they can see and you try to stop them. And water cannon doesn't work, and tear gas doesn't work, what would you do? I don't think you need an answer for that one.

WS And so no-one, no other states, not even in the United States is more advanced than Israel on these matters. A preventive non-lethal...?

00:17:38

BN Well that was the case a few years ago on tunnel technology. They worked on it and worked on it and worked on it and devised a solution and I hope that will happen now. No country in the world... I talked to NASA about tunnels. I talked to every country that you can imagine. Look at that, terror tunnels, rockets and mortars, we've solved that one. Arson kites, they're now burning our fields and we're figuring out technology to prevent that. These are the fields of the country that they say they love and they're burning it up.

So I mean this is a violent, vile terrorist organisation that masquerades as a peaceful protest and what they're actually opposed to is the very existence of the state of Israel. And if they weren't, if Hamas wasn't this tyrannical theological horrible gang that has hijacked two million people in Gaza we'd have had peace years ago. And that's true of the Palestinians on the other side, in the West Bank, in Judea and Samaria.

The reason we don't have peace is a very simple reason; they don't want to recognise a Jewish state in any boundary and because they continue to seek our destruction through various means we don't have peace. Otherwise there would have been peace long ago. The issue between us and the Palestinians has never been a Palestinian state. It's always been a Jewish state.

00:19:05

The Palestinians have offered a Palestinian state time and time again, effectively in the Peel commission in the 1930s and the Partition resolution in 1947 and the success of the Israeli government since then and they've always said no. It's not a Palestinian state they want, it's the destruction of the Jewish state. They don't want a state next to Israel, they want a state instead of Israel.

And it's kind of hard making peace with someone who wants to seek your destruction. How can you make peace with Al-Qaeda or with Daesh? It's a non-negotiable idea that Britain would be destroyed or Israel would be destroyed. But when you have a leader like Anwar Sadat, the great President of Egypt, who said okay that issue is off the table, we recognise Israel's right to exist, we have peace.

The same happened with King Hussein of Jordan, recognise Israel's right to exist, we have peace. And the same will happen when the Palestinians produce a Sadat or a King Hussein or any leader that recognises Israel's right to exist, we'll have peace.

WS Well I don't think anybody in this room would disagree with your definition or description of Hamas. It is a vile terrorist dictatorship, there's no question about

that, that wishes to destroy Israel. But you're bringing up Anwar Sadat and King Hussein, which prompts me to ask you how do you think the possibilities of a settlement of the Palestinian issue, which must be something you worry about all the time, and I think every Israeli that I know does. How are prospects improved by the rapprochement between you and the Sunni states, which is quite extraordinary in the last couple of years? Do you think that from that you may develop an Anwar Sadat type initiative?

00:21:00

BN The Palestinians are 1% of the Arab world. 99% are not Palestinians and they live in 20-odd countries that have been two of which have made peace with us. Jordan and Egypt. And I think the possibility of expanding if not a formal peace but an actual peace, not merely non-belligerence, but gradually normalising relations is before us. Why is that happening? The first reason is Iran. The second reason is Iran. The third reason is Iran.

WS Just can you expand on that? Can you put out a map here?

BN Here's what Iran's been doing, since the nuclear deal by the way, Iran has moved to try to colonise Iraq. Does this work? Amazing. Israeli technology at its best. Iran was here and Iran was in Lebanon, now it's trying to outright take over Iraq and certainly in Syria they want to bring their army 1000 miles from Iran to Syria in order to destroy Israel from Syria.

They also established a similar arrangement in Yemen, similar to Lebanon, and they're flying rockets in Riyadh, which is here, 700 kilometres away. So Iran is on a campaign of conquest following the nuclear deal, which was supposed to bring them into the community of nations, and as I said they're destroying one nation after another, with the money given to them by the nuclear deal so this was really a bad deal anyway constructed. So he agrees with me on that, okay.

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You have the countries of the East, the Arab countries, just about everyone of them agrees with me on that and I agree with them. That has created a new found friendship because they understand that Iran ultimately wants to conquer all of them. It actually wants to go beyond that. Can you show...? Here's the commander of Iran's revolutionary guards. Here's what he says. No, not that. He says Ali Ja'fari the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran we're on the path and links to the rule of Islam worldwide. What?

This is not a clerk. This is a general. And he's basically saying we're in this theological militarism that is made to obviously convert all these Muslim countries to Iran's Shi'ism and subordinate them.

WS That's impossible.

BN It's not.

WS That alone is impossible.



BN It's a mad idea but mad ideas before they've failed have claimed the lives of millions. We know that and so Iran doesn't believe in a master race, Iran believes in a master faith. This is what all the militant Islamists believe. They believe that they're insubordinate. First the Muslims and all the infidels through their mad designs.

And they wouldn't believe it, he's their commander. This is not some Ayatollah, this is a general and there are others who have proclaimed the same goal. So the Arabs understand this and they understand that they're in great peril and they look around and they said well who is our partner against this madness? And they say Israel.

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And they now see others. I think they now see the United States and that's a very important change so that's bringing them together to us in the first instance. There is a second reason why our relations are normalising with the Arabs today, with the Arab world, with the other 99% in stages, the reason that it's changing is because they also want civilian technology.

You know they all have to have water and clean air and health and IT and so on and Israel as you know is a global technological powerhouse and so they can envision and some of them talk about envisioning this Israeli cooperation. Not only in security but also on technology and I think that they're right. So I'm very hopeful in that respect that we can normalise gradually relations with the Arab world and that will effect the 1%, but let me also say that it's a battle for the public opinion.

There's an interesting thing that's happening. That's beginning to change. I don't want to overstress it but we're measured you know you could just go on the internet and spend \$1000 and you can check what is happening and it's kind of interesting, here's what we see. I'm more interested in relations with Israel and a few years ago there would be zero but you can see across quite a few of the Arab countries that there is a substantial minority that is beginning to say, that's not a bad idea. You know we might benefit from this.

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So these are positive signs. Again I don't want to overstate them but I think that there's a degree of interest right now both in security and Israeli development that I think is creating the possibility of changing the equation. People used to say if we have peace with the Palestinians we will have peace with the rest of the Arab world. It might be that if it's the other way round it could be more precise.

If we gradually normalise relations with the Arab countries, it could advance the peace with the Palestinians and we should do both. We're waiting for a Palestinian partner but we're continuing to do both.

WS Well let's concentrate on that for a moment on peace with the Palestinians. I mean I totally understand and believe that the Palestinians are very badly served by their leaders from Arafat onwards. Arafat actually going back to what you said ten minutes ago, Arafat did originally agree at Camp David to a two-state

solution and then reneged on it. The two-state solution was always held out and it was held out by the Obama administration and secretary Kerry and so on as the ultimate goal. You supported it in your Bar-Ilan speech but that was in 2009. Do you still support the goal of reaching a two-state solution?

BN I haven't changed my view and it can be summed up in a very simple way, the Palestinians should have all the powers to govern themselves and none of the powers to threaten us. So from day one they wanted the powers to threaten us, yes? That means that in the tiny area from the Jordan river to the sea, can you show it?

00:27:35

Here's the tiny area from the Jordan river to the sea, okay? This is mighty Israel, Greater London as you know, that's it. Okay this is the West Bank, Judea and Samaria and there's Gaza. So Israel's here and from the edge of the West Bank to the sea as I explained to President Trump when his visit to Israel is that this is from the George Washington Bridge to Trump Tower.

You know so you sort of think that you know under any circumstance, here's our expanse. We got out of Gaza, which is right here, okay? And in about five seconds Hamas and Iran overtook it. Hamas and Islamic Jihad which is beholden to Iran they overtook it, now they're firing rockets into Tel Aviv, Beersheba, any part of Israel. We got out of Lebanon and within five minutes, Hezbollah, which means Iran, took southern Lebanon and fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

So we can't do the same thing here in the West Bank, which is 20 times the size of Gaza, we'd simply not survive and therefore the Palestinians should be able to have their independence, their governance, I don't care about that, but in the area, this tiny area from the Jordan river to the sea the overriding security power must remain with Israel.

Now people say, oh but that's not fair independence, well in the third mistake mosaic of the Middle East it's just a mosaic of failed states, there is no other way to keep security and to keep the peace and some people say that's state minus or its autonomy plus and I say look I don't want to brand it, I want to tell you not the branding but the actual proposition that I'm putting forward is that they have all the powers to govern but not the powers to threaten us, which means security remains with Israel.

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And if that brings me a bad editorial in an unnamed British newspaper or many of you, I don't care. I take care of the survival of the state of Israel and I maintain that the survival of the state of Israel is also necessary for the survival or the possibility of peace in the Middle East.

WS I think pretty much of the room agrees with you on that.

BN Oh good.

WS I'm running out of time because there's a lot of people who want to ask questions but just what do you want to be your legacy? You've been Prime Minister for a very long time as Dean said, for your legacy you don't presumably want to leave the Palestinian situation as it is now.

BN I think it's possible to advance a solution and the American administration is working on such a solution. I have said that I would entertain, I would listen to it and I would consider it just as when Secretary Kerry under Obama proposed a plan. I said there's some parts I don't like but I'm willing to sit down and talk about it, which by the way he refused. Now he refuses on a different pretext to consider an American plan and he says that this administration is pro-Israeli. Well I didn't say to President Obama and Secretary Kerry I will not consider your proposal because you're pro-Palestinian. For God's sake if you want peace there are two things that you need to do.

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The first thing is sit down and broker the peace and the second is recognise the Jewish state. For God's sake, do it already because that's the underlying problem.

WS One last question from me for now at least.

BN How would I like to be remembered? I don't want to be remembered, not just yet but...

WS How would you like to be judged then now, if not remembered?

BN As the defender of Israel and as the liberator of its economy. That's it.

WS Okay, that's pretty precise. One last question for now, how does dealing with President Trump differ from dealing with President Obama?

BN Your Father was a prosecutor, wasn't he?

WS He was the chief British prosecutor at Nuremberg.

BN Looks like you could have been too. I've done very well with American presidents, those I agreed with, those I disagreed with. I want to remind you that with President Obama I'd signed a ten-year agreement for American security assistance to Israel to the tune of \$38 billion. That's something I'll always be appreciative of and grateful for. And so we had our agreements and we had our disagreements.

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The main disagreement that we had was on the question of Iran and I was quite forthright about it. I thought the deal as it turned out I think correctly jeopardises our security and will allow Iran to enrich Uranium and will allow Iran at the same time to enrich its coffers for its dreams of empire. So obviously I opposed it because I thought it puts the very survival of my country in peril. But there were areas that we agreed on and worked on and I appreciate that.

WS Well you haven't really answered my question.

BN There's no disagreement between President Trump and me on Iran. I appreciate that very much, as I appreciate his decision, which I think is historic, to recognise Israel, Jerusalem as Israel's capital. I think this is very important historically. I think you look at the milestones of the 21<sup>st</sup> century today, you've got the signing of the Balfour Declaration 101 years ago, here, in this city. I was at Boris's office yesterday and Boris Johnson is the foreign secretary and that declaration was signed there on that desk, it's quite amazing.

And it was followed by President Truman's recognition of the Jewish state minutes after the partition resolution was approved in the UN and I think this will stand the time also really in time among these historic decisions. Why? Because Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people for 3000 years since the time of King David. It's been Israel's capital for 70 years. All the offices of state are there; the Prime Minister's office, the Knesset, the Supreme Court, and they're all going to be there.

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They're not going to move away. Any conception of peace would have Jerusalem as Israel's capital so why not recognise facts? Just like recognising the fact that there has to be a Jewish state in order for there to be peace. There has to be this state as its capital. Every country chooses its capital. The British people have chosen London as their capital, we don't contest that. The French people have chosen Paris.

WS But the Palestinians have also chosen Jerusalem.

BN Yes but the argument is, is it part of Jerusalem? Nobody contests, I hope, the part of Jerusalem that is where these institutions sit and will continue to sit. There is disagreement, yes. We claim all of Jerusalem but the fact is they shouldn't reject part of Jerusalem. Why should European governments say that the capital of Israel will not be, you know, will not be in Jerusalem when they know very well that this is a fact that will continue?

It was the partition resolution. I have to check this so I'm going out on a limb here, as far as I know the partition resolution they decided to internationalise Jerusalem, something like that is not going to happen and nobody actually claims that today. But under that same resolution, Bethlehem I think was supposed to be part of an international regime. So those people who say they wouldn't recognise Jerusalem today now saying we should keep Bethlehem away from the Palestinians? That should be internationalised too? Of course they don't say it.

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These are fact. Jerusalem is Israel's capital and I'm very glad that President Trump finally said something that everybody knows is true.

WS Good well I think there may be people on the floor who want to ask you further on that issue. I have many questions. The gentleman there in the blue tie, would you state your name and organisation please?

MH Michael Howard, House of Lords. Prime Minister, many people who will sympathise with and understand the need to stop the people scaling the fence at Gaza and of course you're absolutely right that the protests were not peaceful. But fewer people, despite your answers to William, sympathise with and understand proposition that the only way to stop them scaling the face was to kill them. Why couldn't you use rubber bullets? Why couldn't you, if in extremist you have to use live ammunition, why couldn't you shoot them in the legs? Why did you have to kill them to stop them scaling the fence?

BN Everything you said Mr Howard has been tried and other things and it didn't work and in fact nobody intentionally went out to kill anyone. People die accidentally. And I can tell you that Hamas at a certain point said, not enough people have been killed, push more, let the Jews kill more. Their goal was to have as many casualties. Our goal was to minimise casualties and avoid fatalities but there's only one thing that I would do, you know, there's only one way that you can actually put this to the test. If you had a similar situation here and you tried it, and I'll tell you what if you're successful in finding non-lethal means to stop this, I would be the first one to use it as I asked our technological people to try to develop this.

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This is a new tactic. It's a new form of warfare. It's trying to attack civilians while hiding behind civilians, which is essentially what the Hamas is doing anyway. It's when they put their rockets inside schools and homes and they fire on our homes. This is a clear war crime. So they continue and it just photographs better but the fact is that they're doing something unconscionable. They're actually throwing their fighters, 50 out of 62 Hamas terrorists, and they put civilians in front of them as a human shield, try to cross the fence and kill Israelis and kidnap them.

If you find a way, you know, I cannot tell you that we've exhausted the future possibilities because we're investing in this very heavily now but we did not find a means yet to stop them and any country would stop direct assault on the lives of its citizens if they were in our place.

WS The gentleman with the elegant beard.

BN Another couple of rows, yes.

WS With glasses. Actually I meant the man next to you, sorry. Do you have a beard? Oh I apologise, it's the shadows of the lighting.

JP My question is about Iran in Syria. Really quickly about a week ago a Syrian air force commander said from now on we will not allow Iranian and Hezbollah armaments be stored in our hangars following a series of attacks by an unnamed country. Do you think the Syrian government will eventually get the picture and start to find a way to minimise Iranian influence in Syria and ultimately to get rid of the Iranians?

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BN Let me show you what Iran's trying to do in Syria. It's trying as I said to move its army 1000 kilometres, no 1000 miles from Iran which is here to Syria which is here and Israel is right here. That's Israel. So they want to bring in aircraft, they've already brought in anti-aircraft batteries that reach deep into Israel, 150 kilometres. So they can actually bring down our civilian aircraft and most important they want to bring in a ground surface-to-surface rockets that are precision guided and have half a tonne of warheads.

So this could land anywhere in Israel. It could land in Tel Aviv or in Jerusalem and so on and it's a devastating thing. They also want to bring submarines to the Mediterranean. Can you imagine? So this is a real imperial aggressive implantation of the military. The military with the view of destroying Israel. When we attack these positions, when Iran fired at us and we attacked their positions, 30 positions here, a Syrian army fired at us. Fired at our ammunitions and as a result we destroyed six Syrian anti-aircraft batteries. I think Mr Assad has to consider this. As long as they wage this horrific civil war, internal war inside Syria, Israel do not intervene.

00:41:17

The only thing that I did was to establish a hospital on our side of the fence here in the Golan Heights and we took care of thousands of civilians, Syrian civilians, a humanitarian intervention. But we didn't intervene. Now that the war is over, Daesh is finished, it's nearly over and he invites or allows Iran to come in to entrench itself with a view of attacking Israel, potentially destroying Israel from Syrian territory, he is no longer immune.

His regime is no longer immune and if he fires at us, as we've just demonstrated, we'll destroy his forces. So I think there's a new calculus that has to take place and Syria has to understand that Israel will not tolerate the Iranian military entrenchment in Syria against Israel. And the consequences are not merely to the Iranian forces there, but to the Assad regime as well. I think it's something that he should consider very seriously.

WS Okay, I think the gentleman next to him has a question who does have a beard I think. The lights are very bright. Could you state your name and organisation?

JH Hi, I'm Jonathan Hoffman, former Zionist Federation vice-president and blogger. Prime Minister, in 12 days time if you were to stay in London we would be able to see a march with the Hezbollah flags and a march where Israel is vilified. Where they say that Zionism is racism. Do you have any comment on the fact that our government in the United Kingdom believes that there are two wings of Hezbollah: the political wing and the military wing, and the flags in the streets of London if they designate the political wing of Hezbollah are okay? Do you have any comment on that?

00:43:09

BN I think this is wrong. They're both seeking the destruction of not only of Israel but of Jews and it's like saying well the SS is bad but the Nazi political wing is okay. No, they want our destruction, what else can you say? I think this is wrong. It's

just wrong. The support of Hezbollah and Hamas by people who claim that they have progressive values, I mean these are horrible people. It's the worst theocratic gangsters in the world. They believe in nothing that we believe.

They don't believe in pluralism, they don't believe in the rights of women, they don't believe in... I mean they hang gays. I mean horrible things. Why are progressive forces going behind the most anti-progressive forces in the world? There's something wrong and you know what they're doing it because they're against Israel, you know. I don't hear them protesting elsewhere. Why are they protesting only against us? The one democracy in the world. The one country that recognises human rights, the protects human rights and an independent judiciary that has Arabs and women and gays and everyone represented in the political system, this is the country the choose to attack and affiliate with the most regressive forces in the world, you know there's a name for this. It begins with A: Anti-Semitism.

WS That's a huge new issue.

BN Oh it's a wonderful issue.

00:44:40

WS And I'd love to talk to you about that but I don't think I should steer us. Dean, you were pointing to somebody. This gentleman here who's got the... Which one?

BN I don't mean that Anti-Semitism is a wonderful thing. I mean that it's important to call things as they are and I call them as they are. This is pure and simple Anti-Semitism that they are aligning with these horrible forces. That may be the wrong people, that execute people, their own people at gunpoint. That espouse this medieval barbarism against the forces of modernity and pluralism, I think there's something deeply wrong with this. And who's at fault here? It's not Israel.

WS Just don't answer me but...

BN I'm trying to be diplomatic.

WS Very good. One reason as we've discussed already for the hostility, the growing hostility perhaps in Western Europe, especially amongst the progressives from the Labour Party, Labour leadership here is because of Gaza and the West Bank and the failure to find the solution.

BN I must review that completely. Mr Shawcross I want to ask you something, if that's the case why are they protesting with the same vehemence against millions who are butchered and made homeless everywhere in the world? They don't do that. Why are they not protesting countries that are occupying other countries, moving their populations? I hear nothing of that. Nothing of that. This is not the cause of any wrongdoing that Israel is making, it's because Israel exists. This is what is the thing that they're really protesting against.

00:46:16

If they want to, if they adopted a uniform standard, I'd give you an argument but they're not so they're leaving aside all the wrongs in the world and concentrating

on the world all-Jewish state that is surrounded by people who openly declare their willing and desire to obliterate us and they side with the obliterators. I can't buy this as a moral position.

WS I'll just say I accept that Anti-Semitism is growing and it is a vicious evil force that we all in this country have to combat. There's a gentleman there that's been waiting very patiently.

JC I've been waiting very patiently William thank you very much. Actually...

BN Your name and organisation.

JC Jason Cowley, the editor of the New Statesman magazine. Prime Minister very good to have you here in London. Actually further to your remarks on Anti-Semitism, The Israeli Labour party has severed its historic ties to the British Labour party, long-standing relationship between Israeli Labour party.

BN I don't think that's true.

JC Oh, I thought it was and the question I want to ask is, are you disturbed by the reports of Anti-Semitism within the Labour Party? This great institution that Clement Attlee, Harold Wilson, Tony Benn, now led by Jeremy Corbyn and many would suggest the Labour Party has been infected by Anti-Semitism. Are you aware of this and what do you think about it?

00:47:44

BN I'm concerned with the growth of Anti-Semitism anywhere and in any quarter. There's Anti-Semitism on the left and there's Anti-Semitism on the right and wherever I see it, I oppose it. I think that the Labour Party has been historically a bastion of support for Zionism and I value its contributions over the years. Yesterday I met with Parliamentarians from both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party who support Israel. I recognise there's a strain. I recognise that. But I hope that people in Britain honestly and fairly look at the picture in the Middle East.

The picture in the world and I hope that they recognise something that they evidently do not understand yet, that there is a whole realignment taking place in the Middle East. They're sort of stuck in the past. The relationship between Israel and the Arabs is changing very dramatically. Very dramatically and I think that if they see with us the future then we can resolve a lot of these problems. I think that's important.

The other thing and I hope... I wouldn't tolerate Anti-Semitism anywhere and I hope that it is attacked and rolled back in the Labour Party. I hope by its own leaders. Let me show you one thing that is happening in the world which will astonish you because people think oh my God Israel you know we have the occasional statements of BDS and the occasional... Here's Israel's relations in 2017, a real agreement that we signed, that's the blue, okay?

00:49:33



I was in Africa three times in 18 months. I was in South America and Latin America. I am the first Israeli Prime Minister that had gone there. Can you imagine nobody went there south of Texas for 70 years? But we were greeted with enormous friendship and a desire to meet with us. We signed new agreements with India, China, Japan, Japanese investment in Israel has grown in the last three years 20-fold. New agreements with Australia. First visit to Singapore ever. Agreements with Russia, with Muslim countries, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, whom I visited again for the first time.

What does that tell you? It means and of course in Europe. I mean central Europe, eastern Europe. I think there's a west European problem with recognising that the world has changed. The most dramatic changes of all of these six continents I was in if you divide north and south American, two continents. Six continents in one year, unbelievable flourishing that this was diplomatic relations and economic relations with these countries.

Their relationship to Israel, their view of Israel was radically changed but the greatest and the most radical shift is in the Arab world itself. What do we recognise? That Israel has great benefits for them. First Israel has prevented with our superb intelligence terrorist attacks in dozens of countries across the globe, including our fantastic cooperation with British intelligence and we've helped save many British and European lives.

00:51:15

You just hold about an airliner that we prevented from being downed, exploded in mid-air from Australia to the Gulf, there are many, many other terror incidents, gigantic terror incidents that have been prevented by Israeli intelligence and all countries today are affected by the fear of radical Islamic terrorists so Israel is supporting them and they're interested in having relations for that.

But the other reason is they want the benefits of Israeli innovation. Israeli is the innovation nation and the future belongs with those who innovate and the remarkable ingenuity of young Israeli entrepreneurs who have been liberated by the liberation of the economy which I have some role in undertaking.

And its created an interest worldwide in making alliances with Israel. So our intelligence and security prowess on the one side and our technological and economic powers on the other side has given us diplomatic prowess. All the world is recognising that. It's not that we don't have problems, we surely do, but I hope that the governments of western Europe will recognise what governments in Asia, Africa, America, Asia, Australia have recognised.

That Israel is a great partner for seizing the future and we're a natural in great partner for Britain and the European democracies because of all our partnerships, we cherish the ones with democracies. And I'll tell you why, because freedom is precious and it must be nurtured. We defend freedom in the heart of the Middle East and we are the partners of all those who want to see a fair, secure and more prosperous world. Thank you.

00:53:39

WS You can see Dean is taking over so this means no more question I'm afraid. Sorry for anyone who's disappointed.

DG Prime Minister, thank you. This is your third visit to the UK on the President premiership, we're delighted you've extended your stay in the UK to do this. The only public appearance of your trip here to the UK. You may be a little disappointed but the noise of the demonstration that some of you may have heard was actually not directed against yourself but was against the Supreme Court. So perhaps against the odds and perhaps surprisingly but thanks for you time. We really are grateful to you for giving up your time this morning. I just want you to join me in thanking William for an outstanding presentation. Thank you.

BN Thank you all, appreciate it.

00:54:20