

Remarks at the Balfour Project event, House of Commons, 19 May 2016

I am a retired diplomat. I was British Consul-General in Jerusalem until 2014. I am speaking now solely for myself.

The best outcome for both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, remains the two state solution. It is best both for the equal rights and for the long term security of both peoples. But that outcome is disappearing before our eyes. It urgently needs saving.

It is not only consistent with our values, it is also in the British national interest to uphold that solution and to uphold International Humanitarian Law.

I see three ways to help to do that, and they are the best way to mark this centenary:

- support strongly the current French initiative for an international conference; there is urgency, so we cannot afford to hang around waiting to see whom America elects in November
- advocate British Government recognition of the state of Palestine alongside Israel, on the basis of the 1967 lines, as Sweden and over 130 other UN member states have done
- uphold International Humanitarian Law in deed as well as in word, for we wrote it.

Explaining to British people, especially the young, why the UK is directly engaged in the past, present and future of the Holy Land is worth doing. Thank you to the Balfour Project for helping us to do that.

Sir Vincent Fean,

Consul-General, Jerusalem 2010-14 (retired)