**Tom Tugendhat MP, Chair of Foreign Affairs Select Committee**

*(Address as: ‘Mr. Tugendhat’)*

* + - * Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling on behalf of the Conservative Party (2015 – present).
* Born in 1973, he was born into a political family: His father is a Supreme Court Judge and he is the nephew of Baron Tugendhat, also a Conservative politician. He was educated in elite schools and studied for his MA in Islamic Studies in the University of Cambridge; he also spent time studying Arabic in Yemen.
* After completing his studies, he moved to Beirut, where he initially pursued a career as a journalist before starting his own public relations firm, which had a diverse and international cliental.
* In 2003 he joined the Educational and Training Services Branch in the UK army. In 2005 he transferred to the Intelligence Corps, and in a decade of service took part in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, served as the military assistant to the Chief of the Defence Staff and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

**Parliament**

* Upon his release from the military Tugendhat began pursuing a political career, and in 2015 was nominated by the Conservative Party to run for the safe seat of Tonbridge and Malling in 2015. He carried the vote in the 2015 general elections, and was elected again in 2017.
* Despite his relatively short time in politics, Tugendhat is considered a rising star and potential future leader in the Conservative Party. He sits on a number of prominent committees: The Liaison Committee and the National Security Strategy Committee.
* In 2017 he was elected with a significant majority to chair the prestigious Foreign Affairs Select Committee, prevailing over a veteran politician and the former chair, Crispin Blunt, who was known for his critical views towards Israel.

**Noteworthy positions**

* Tugendhat was in favour of the UK remaining in the EU, yet since the 2016 referendum has come to show reserved support for PM May’s proposed Brexit deal.
* Hawkish on defence matters, Tugendhat voted for increased intervention against IS in Syria and an updating of the UK’s nuclear weapons system.
* Conservative on socioeconomic matters, Tugendhat consistently votes for lower taxation and cuts to social benefits.

**On Israel**

* Tugendhat is a member of Conservative Friends of Israel.
* Tugendhat has on numerous occasions expressed his view of Israel as an important ally to the UK on economic and security matters, as well as a likeminded country. According to him, strengthening relations with Israel should be part of the UK’s “Global Britain” agenda post-Brexit.
* Tugendhat fully backed the decision to fully proscribe Hezbollah as a terrorist organization (which will come into force on Friday 1st March). He views Iran, Syria and extremist groups as critical in the Middle East, and does not view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the root of conflict in the region.
* Combined with these statements, Tugendhat has also spoken out against Britain’s support for UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemned settlement expansion, saying that the Israeli-Palestinian issue is being used as a distraction by the brutal dictatorships in the Middle East to keep attention away from bloodshed and oppression. He wrote an op0ed to the Spectator on the issue, titled “Britain was wrong to back anti-Israel UN resolution” (4/1/17).
* That being said, he does follow the government line on some Israeli policies, like opposition to settlement expansion, doubting Israel’s commitment to the peace process and more.