



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

18 January 2016

Dear Philip,

Supporting Groups Bringing Israelis and Palestinians Together

I recently visited Israel and the Palestinian Territories as part a UK-Australian delegation, and met a number of groups working to bring Israelis and Palestinians together.

I was particularly impressed by the work of a group called Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET).

MEET works to bring together promising Palestinian and Israeli youngsters to develop their leadership, technology and entrepreneurship skills. The programme was established by two graduates of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2004 and continues to be run in partnership with the university.

High school students are chosen to take part in the scheme and take part in a three year technology and entrepreneurship program followed by an alumni program so that graduates can keep in touch and continue to work together. They select equal numbers of Israelis and Palestinians and males and females.

The program is a real success, with three-quarters of alumni continuing to work together, a 60 per cent increase in students who recognise value in working with someone from the other side of the conflict, more than fifty projects launched and fifteen businesses established.

I have enclosed a pamphlet so you can read about MEET's work and its impact in more detail.

Could I ask if the Government has made an assessment of the effectiveness of groups like MEET in resolving the conflict, and what support we currently offering them?

It seems clear that they are having a significant, positive impact in the region, so can I ask if the Government has considered how funding we provide to the region could be used to support this group and its valuable work?

I would be very grateful if you would consider the work that MEET is doing and look at what further support that your department may be able to offer them.

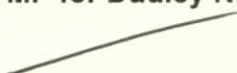
I am also writing to Tobias Elwood and Justine Greening on the same terms.

Many thanks,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. Austin', written in a cursive style.

Ian Austin
MP for Dudley North

A long, thin, slightly curved horizontal line drawn in black ink, extending from the left margin towards the center of the page.