

Islamist ideology rife within Civil Service, says ex-ambassador

A former UK ambassador has said it is undeniable that “Islamist entryism” is creating anti-Israel sentiment within the Civil Service.

Edmund Fitton-Brown, who was a British diplomat for more than 30 years, claimed that rising hostility towards the Jewish state in wider society was being mirrored across Whitehall.

Muslims have been over influential in the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Prosecution service for a good 15 years.

His comments came after The Telegraph revealed [Foreign Office staff attended an event at the Iranian embassy](#) in London to celebrate the Islamic revolution, just weeks after the regime massacred thousands of its own people.

. . . Mr Fitton-Brown, who worked for the Foreign Office from 1984-2017, said it exposed how “Islamist entryism” in Whitehall had skewed the debate on the Middle East in favour of the UK’s “enemies”.

In an article for The Telegraph, he said: “It is hard to avoid the conclusion that another factor has grown in importance, Islamist entryism not just in the Foreign Office but also throughout the Civil Service and a range of other professions.

Mr Fitton-Brown, who was the UK’s ambassador to Yemen from 2014-2017, said the decision to attend the Iranian party showed the Foreign Office was increasingly confusing Britain’s friends with its enemies.

He contrasted the Iranian celebrations with the Government’s

approach to Israel, which has been [heavily criticised by Sir Keir Starmer](#) over the prosecution of war in Gaza.

“The Americans have certainly noticed our lack of resolve. Our Gulf allies have looked elsewhere for assistance.”

He added: “This vacillation is not without cost. We fought for the Falklands but what happens when a predator next casts envious eyes on our overseas possessions? How do we justify our permanent seat on the UN Security Council if it is ever called seriously into question? The Prime Minister needs to understand the potential cost of inaction, and act accordingly.”

Civil Service bias against Israel is now undeniable

By Edmund Fitton-Brown

As Britain’s former ambassador to Yemen, it saddens me to see my former place of work get to this point. But it is now undeniable that parts of the Civil Service have developed a systematic bias when it comes to the Middle East.

This next bit accords with what I said to Gerald Honigman last week.

There is some context to the Foreign Office bias against Israel. When you have a couple of dozen posts where Arabic is spoken and only one Jewish state, you train large numbers of Arabic speakers. I was one of them myself. What I didn’t do was confuse transacting business in the region with relaxing into its prejudices and failings.



Mr Fitton-Brown has suggested that anti-Semitism is common within a number of government departments Credit: Chris Ratcliffe/Bloomberg

But the coffee and dates are seductive. Many British ambassadors end up sounding like their hosts. Successive prime ministers have been badly advised, for example when many of my colleagues cried wolf about how the “Arab street” would react badly to any Western attempt to liberate Kuwait from the 1991 Iraqi invasion.

Two decades on from Blair/Bush, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that another factor has grown in importance: Islamist entryism not just in the Foreign Office but also throughout the Civil Service and a range of other professions. We have seen a steady reframing of debates, including in the sphere of national security. Allies portrayed as the problem, adversaries become misunderstood actors with legitimate grievances. Hate marches for Hamas and the Houthis show that inversion in society and the Civil Service reflects society. Over time, that inversion produces exactly the kind of misjudgment we saw this week.

Iran still refuses to withdraw the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 and reaffirmed repeatedly since. That decree called for the murder of a British citizen for the crime of writing a novel – and very nearly killed him in 2022. Until it is formally rescinded, the idea that relations with Tehran can ever be described as friendly is fanciful. A government that still sanctions the killing of writers should not expect to party with British officials....

...Iranian intelligence activity should face zero tolerance.

It is mystifying that Sir Keir Starmer, having promised in opposition to [proscribe the IRGC](#), still hasn't done it, even after the EU has. We have had many recent terror plots in the UK, often against Jewish targets, and often sponsored by Iran. Who exactly needs to get killed before we take decisive action?

Foreign policy begins with moral clarity.