

Foreign-State Influence and the UK Disclosure Gap

What the public record shows about state-directed political influence — and where Britain’s new registration regime falls short of its US counterpart.

Prepared by Brandon Myers, independent researcher · brandonmyers.net · July 2026 · Built entirely from public records

1. THE DOCUMENTED CASE CONFIRMED

In January 2017, Al Jazeera’s undercover investigation “*The Lobby*” (later cleared by Ofcom) filmed **Shai Masot**, a senior political officer at the Israeli Embassy in London, discussing plans to “**take down**” UK MPs opposed to Israeli policy — naming Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan — alongside a “hit list” (incl. Foreign Affairs Committee chair Crispin Blunt), the covert building of pro-Israel youth/front groups inside both main parties, and embassy money (“more than one million pounds”) for party delegations. The Foreign Office, under Boris Johnson, declined a formal inquiry and treated the matter as “**closed**” after an ambassadorial apology, over cross-party objections (Thornberry, Salmond, Blunt).

2. THE TRANSATLANTIC ASYMMETRY CONFIRMED

The *same state’s* influence operation in the United States is, by contrast, a matter of exhaustive public record — **because US law compels disclosure**. Under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), **Clock Tower X LLC** (registration #7649), run by former Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale, had to register as a foreign agent for the State of Israel (via Havas Media Germany), and to file with the US Department of Justice its funding and its “informational materials” — which named and criticised US commentators. Britain’s parallel episode surfaced only through undercover journalism, and left no comparable public record.

3. THE REGULATORY GAP CONFIRMED

The UK’s **Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS)** came into force only on **1 July 2025** (Part 4, National Security Act 2023). Its stronger **Enhanced Tier is reserved for Iran and Russia only**. All other state-directed political influence — whatever its origin — falls at most under the lighter **Political Influence Tier** (register an arrangement within 28 days), with none of FARA’s granular financial and materials disclosure. The activity the United States forces onto a public register, Britain largely lets pass unseen; the 2017 episode predated even this, and no scheme was available to invoke.

SUGGESTED WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

1. To ask the **Home Secretary** what criteria govern designation to the FIRS enhanced tier, and whether the Government will review whether the political influence tier’s disclosure requirements match the depth required under the US FARA regime.
2. To ask the **Home Secretary** how many arrangements have been registered under FIRS since 1 July 2025, and whether the register will be published in full and made searchable.
3. To ask the **Foreign Secretary** whether the Government will revisit the 2017 decision not to hold an inquiry into the conduct exposed in “*The Lobby*.”

What this briefing does not claim: it does not allege any current operation — the 2017 episode is historical and documented. There is **no evidence** that the US operation (Clock Tower X / Parscale) has any UK footprint; the point is a shared pattern of state conduct and a disclosure *asymmetry*, not a single funding line. The issue is transparency and applies equally to any foreign state.

Sources: Al Jazeera, *The Lobby* (Jan 2017; Ofcom-cleared Oct 2017); Times of Israel, Haaretz, Middle East Eye (all quoting the primary footage). US DOJ FARA registration #7649, efile.fara.gov. GOV.UK, Foreign Influence Registration Scheme guidance (in force 1 July 2025; Enhanced Tier: Iran, Russia). Full evidence and citations: brandonmyers.net/writing/the-other-theatre.

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