

During the last 8 years as Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury my number one priority after representing the interests of my constituency and constituents has been the relationship that our country has with the Arab world. Putting aside Europe these are our immediate neighbours and countries of the most important strategic importance imaginable.

I have formed the British (MENA) Middle East and North Africa council in Parliament, which has attracted the support of over 200 other parliamentarians who like me have a keen interest in our relationship with this region. On a cross party basis this Council is playing its part in building links between representatives and seeking to forge greater ties from an economic, security and educational perspective.

Some of these countries are well known to British citizens, such as the UAE where an increasing amount of bilateral tourism and trade is taking place. In other cases much less is known about other countries such as Mauritania. When I visited Nouakchott I was the first British MP to visit since its independence in 1960. Yet what links all these Arab countries together apart from their common language and culture is their interest and respect for the UK and a willingness to engage and increase trade. Such an opportunity is one which UK plc cannot pass up; but like with every foray into a new commercial frontier, companies must do their homework and ensure they are prepared for whatever crises and setbacks might come their way.

With this in mind, I am delighted to send my support for the work of The Centre For Issue and Crisis Management. The work that John Dalton and his colleagues are doing at the Centre gives British companies the tools they need to ensure they understand the risks and how to deal with emergencies before they become too big to handle. Having spent the last twelve months studying the workings of UKTI and British exports to this region, it has become apparent to me that as a nation we need to pool information and share knowledge and expertise in a much better and more constructive way so that we provide a more coherent approach and solutions to the Arab world across a whole spectrum of engagement. For reputation and crisis management, I fully endorse the work of The Centre for Issue and Crisis Management as a "one-stop shop" for British companies seeking to traverse sometimes difficult paths towards commercial success.

Daniel Kawczynski MP