

Transcript of Hustings

(TC: 00:00:00)

HW: JSAF is made up of about 20 different organisations in the community. We are a mixture of social justice organisations, synagogue movements, youth organisations and communal institutions. We collectively work on different issues related to social justice. What we try to do is bring a Jewish voice into the field of social justice in this country and to raise awareness, educate and campaign on a wide range of issues. Anything from human rights, refugees and asylum seekers, climate change, global poverty and we work collectively raising awareness in the Jewish community and collaborating in joint initiatives. We have nice working relationships with each other and what we are able to do very well is work together to really raise to the forefront of the community what things we think are important for the Jewish community to be caring about and increasingly more and more the Jewish people really see their Jewish identity-, social justice being the core expression of their Jewish identity, is the best way of putting it. That is one of the tenets on which we work together, is to raise that issue in the community.

You'll see on your chairs, we have produced an election manifesto. In this manifesto you'll find different issues relating to issues that we work on. In case anyone is very worried about charity commission regulation, I promised that I would say that not every organisation round the table has contributed to this (laughter). So, a few organisations that particularly have these as their core objectives have put these issues in and I hope that there will be a few questions from the floor that get raised to our candidates tonight, amongst other issues, which I'm sure people will want to talk about. So please feel free to take this away and have a read and I hope you use this to inform your vote in the upcoming election. More importantly, because you haven't come here to hear me, I'm really delighted that we've got our three candidates here. We've got Glenda from the Labour Party, Ed from the Lib Dems and Chris from the Conservative Party. I do have an apology from Beatrix Campbell, who is the Green party, who was not able to join us. You may have also heard that a new candidate appeared on the scene in Hampstead and Kilburn last week, who is an independent and she also sends her apologies. We did Tweet at her and try and get her here but she was busy.

So, a couple of ground rules; the way this will work is that I'm going to hand over to the three candidates, and we decided the fairest way to do this was in alphabetical order. They're going to give their pitch to you, and then we're going to open it up to questions from the floor. Please, questions only, no speeches, and I will chop you off if you make a speech. So we'll take questions one at a time and each candidate will have an opportunity to answer that question. I'll chop you off if you speak for too long. The bulk of this is for you to participate and you to ask questions to the candidates. I hope that we'll get to as many of you as possible. I apologise if we don't. If we're running out of time I might take two or three at a time so we can get a few more questions in. I will stop talking and handover to Ed. He'll be going first.

Ed: Okay, shall I stand up? Does that work? (Audio skips 03.04 – 03.07) hearing rather than agreeing. As you know, my name is Ed Fordham and I'm the Liberal Democrat candidate here in Hampstead and Kilburn. It's a new constituency that's coming together for the first time. It's two thirds of Hampstead and Highgate and a third of the current Brent East seat. It's probably one of the most interesting seats in London and arguably in Britain. I would say that, wouldn't I? I'm sure all of us would agree, but I joke and I think relatively accurately, you can virtually pick any country in the world, and there are 250 – 500 people from that country living here. It's one of those seats where it is multicultural in the extreme. There are more Jews and Muslims in this seat than any other seat in Britain. 10,000 broadly of each on the 2001 census and so in that sense the opportunity for, shall we say, intense debate and questioning, is pretty live.

My picture is relatively simple. I live in the constituency and I know the area incredibly well. Also my own politics is rooted in what I call community politics. Lots of people come from party tradition and that's to be respected, but my own background, my parents somewhat puzzled at my joining a political party. They say, 'We don't know how you got into it.' I say, 'Well actually, if you think about it Mother, you were a school governor,' my dad was chair of the village committee, that whole sense of volunteering and inclusion and activism is something that mattered to my family and my upbringing. Voting for them was a responsibility not a chore and so in that sense a consistency like this, I think, is an amazing chance.

The last thing I'll say really, is in terms of that diversity here, many of the issues touched on in the manifesto are incredibly live, We have a constant stream of people for whom asylum and immigration is a real issue day to day. We have a constant stream of people for whom housing and security is a real issue. On top of that you have a social conscience, which is perhaps typified by the Jewish tradition that's percolated through and out of Hampstead but that brings with it a social awareness and responsibility that's really incredibly exciting. I think it's become a welcoming atmosphere. I love the diversity here in the patch and I think that matches with my own approach to life and with my own party, so I ask the opportunity for your support in the election when that comes. I don't think any of us know for sure, but I'm pretty sure we all know it is May 6th (laughter). I don't think there's any great secret there. It certainly will be local election day in London, so I hope if nothing else you take the obligation of pursuing other people who might not vote and get them to the polling stations. Thank you (applause).

HW: Glenda.

Glenda: Good evening and I'd like to thank Hannah and JSAF for organising this hustings and for all of you turning up. I have to say this is one of the more luxurious hustings sites. They're not usually like this, I do assure you. For me, it's been an enormous privilege to represent Hampstead and Highgate since 1992 and along with Ed, I found the boundary changes that turn Hampstead and Highgate into Hampstead and Kilburn fascinating. I must lay my cards on the table, I'm very John Dunnish. I do not believe any constituency is in an island entire unto itself. We are all mutually interdependent. What is amazing about this constituency and has consistently amazed me,

is it's remarkable lack of parochiality, if that's a proper word. People are very concerned about their local community, but they're equally concerned about what's happening in Burma, in Tibet, in Darfur, in Somalia, in Israel, in Gaza. So what Ed is saying about this multiracial, multicultural energy of this constituency is remarkable and fascinating.

I think this is probably the most important election that we've had since, really, 1992. In 1997 there was no question that the Labour Party was going to win. I'm speaking entirely on my experience of this constituency. In 2001 the majority of people didn't know there was an election going on, and didn't seem to care either way. In 2005, it was all the Iraq war. That was the only issue on the doorsteps. This time, I think we-, and it may have taken a long time, and perhaps it's not the best way for politics to develop, we seem to have come to the point where we now are seeing that the country is going to have to make a real and serious choice. Because what is facing us as a country and we're not alone in this, it is something that the world is experiencing, is 'How do we come through this particular bumpy patch, to ensure that not only our country has a future, but our people have a future?' Because the greatest national resource is our people. It's their energy, it's their creativity, it's their capacity for hard work. That is what's going to see us through, but that has to be supported. So obviously I hope you'll vote for me, but again, thank you very much for coming along this evening (applause).

Chris: Hannah, thank you very much indeed. I'd like to start by agreeing firstly with Glenda (laughter). We'll get that out of the way now. I'd like to start by agreeing with Glenda that this is indeed one of the more sumptuous venues we've had to speak in and I would like to add my thanks to JHUB for hosting us this evening. I'd also like to thank Ed, just to avoid him feeling left out, in tipping me off about May 6th. I was thinking about taking a day's holiday that day, but now you've let me in on the secret, perhaps I'll roll my sleeves up and do some work on May 6th instead.

Well, let me start by giving you just a brief word of personal background and then talk about the election we have coming up in a few weeks time, which really is, as Glenda said, an extremely important and potentially an epoch changing event. Speaking personally I've lived in this neighborhood for the last ten years. I got married just up the road in Christ Church last June. I'm not sure my wife is very impressed by the election, we're not seeing each other as much as she would like, having got married. I've been extremely active these last ten years, on various local campaigns. You've probably been harassed by leaflets through your door, talking about our campaign to keep Hampstead police station open, and a 999 police based here in West Hampstead, the campaign to keep London's transport moving, protecting the views from parliament hill. A whole host of other local (TC: 00:10:00) issues that I've been active on. So it really would be a privilege to represent this area, an area which I love passionately, if elected as our local MP.

I'm also, just to let you know, a very enthusiastic member of Conservative Friends of Israel. I spent a very happy summer living and studying at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot in 1994 and I've always been happy to help the community in any way. I remember just a few months ago, helping in Nick Viner there from the JCC paint some

railings as part of Mitzvah Day, which I discovered is based here. Isn't that fantastic? One of the best initiatives I've come across is based in this building. That's tremendous. Anyway, enough about me.

Let's turn to the election we have coming up. The final point of agreement with Glenda is that this is indeed a vitally important election. We have a real choice. Here in Hampstead and Kilburn, we're going to play an important part in making that choice. People are important. Our country's future is important. I think the approach Gordon Brown has taken over the last 13 years has taken us in the wrong direction. I think a lot of the money he's spent, hasn't been spent wisely, which I think is a tragedy. We've heard about the creativity and inventiveness of voluntary organisations like the one here. Well, I think Gordon Brown has relied too much on state monopolies run from Whitehall and hasn't given enough power to smaller, local organisations who understand their communities, like the ones who are based here. I think that's been a systemic failing over the last few years. I think it's why, for example, the gap between state schools and private schools has widened, which is a tragedy, in my view. It's why the gap between rich and poor, under a Labour government, has widened. I think that's a tragedy and the Conservatives have ideas to fix that.

I think their stewardship of the economy, which I noticed hasn't been mentioned so far, despite the fact that it's probably the biggest issue we face, I think has been extremely irresponsible. Running a huge deficit since the year 2002, long before the credit crunch ever came along, spending our children's money and our grandchildren's money without being responsible, year in, year out. We all know you can't run a charity or a business or a household that way. It's no way to run national economy either. That's why, when the recession hit, here in the UK we were not as well prepared as some other countries and that's why the recession here lasted longer and was deeper than in some other European countries, France and Germany, to give just two examples.

Now, just to finish, here in Hampstead and Kilburn we have a particularly pointed choice. This is one of those key marginal seats which will determine the outcome of the election. In my view-, and the recent voting numbers and opinion polls bear this out, it's going to be a very close run thing between Glenda and I (laughter). Whichever of us-, I know there are some dissenting opinions here, fundamentally the choice the country faces is; who runs the nation? Is it Gordon Brown or David Cameron? How we vote here, in a few weeks time, because we're a marginal seat, will directly determine that outcome. So I'm asking for your support, not just because I've lived here for ten years and because I've got a great track record in the local community, good though those reasons are. I'm asking for your support because it's time to change our country's direction, to introduce some financial responsibility, to re-empower individuals and voluntary groups. That's why I'm asking for your support and when election day comes here on May 6th, I very much hope to have a tick or a cross next to my name. Thank you very much (applause).

HW: Thank you very much, we're going to open straight up to questions. So would anyone like to be our first asker? Adam?

Adam: I'd like to hear from each of you. What are you going to do, if you get elected, specifically to make life better for the Jews in your constituency? (Laughter).

HW: Okay, Ed, why don't you go first?

Ed: I should say I'm not Jewish, but I think the only answer is one, who are the Jews? Two, What does better mean? I think there is something quite important about this issue, which I hadn't fully appreciated until earlier this year. I was getting-, I walk up West End Lane every day to get the Jubilee line, weekdays, I should add, not really at the weekend (laughter). I bought the Jewish Chronicle at the shop on the corner, got on the tube, it must have been a Friday, and I got on the fourth carriage. I always get on the fourth carriage, and I just stood there, ready for work, reading the Jewish Chronicle. This chap on the tube, suited, on the Jubilee line, said, 'Are you Jewish?' I said, 'Sorry?' He said, 'Are you Jewish?' I said, 'What sort of question is that?' He said, 'I hate Jews'. Happily we pulled into Finchley Road station and he got off, before there would have been quite a considerable altercation. It shook me up for the day, to put it mildly. I haven't really-, it's the first time, really, I've articulated it in public. Anyone who doesn't understand what happens everyday in the street for Jewish residents here, I think is missing the reality of the life here.

I have some friends, their name is Anderson. Their Grandfather changed their name from Abrahams because they didn't want to be known to be Jewish. Being Jewish in Britain today is still an issue and it shouldn't be. I think anti-Semitism is a scourge and we need to do everything to jump on it. As a Liberal Democrat, this is a pretty live conversation, I can say with some confidence. I know some of you know the details of that debate very well. I think that it's not a question anymore for Jews. I think it's a question for the community we live in. As someone who isn't Jewish, I'm very, very clear that I have a responsibility that will stand up and will fight on those issues. I don't think, I should add, that this is simply a conversation about anti-Semitism. I think there is something about Jewish values, Jewish culture, Jewish religion, which is far more interesting, far richer than any of the prejudices accept. I think there is something that we can roll out, that we can express and that we can share, that actually says, 'This is something really quite special,' and the opportunity to represent that is phenomenal.

The Jewish museum is reopening soon. I know that there are two groups locally that I have some contact with. One is Hafla, which is a Jewish Muslim orchestra, and the other is MUJU, which work out of The Tricycle. Both of those, I know, are having conversations with the Jewish museum about the work they can do. I think there is something incredibly powerful and disproportionately simple, about getting other faiths, other communities, other groups to see and understand and accept. I think we all have a responsibility for that and I suppose, the fundamental point is I don't think that's something for Jewish citizens alone, I think it's for all of us. I'm prepared to play my part in that.

HW: Chris?

Chris: Thank you. Well that's a very good and very direct question. I can't fault you for beating about the bush. I think there are real issues along the lines that we heard about a few moments ago. I think everybody who is in public life in any way, has a responsibility to stand up and roundly condemn anyone who discriminates, whether it's anti-Semitism or anything else, and make sure that if they see it in public, they stand up to it. If they encounter it in the wider community, they make sure the police are onto it. This needs to be stopped straight away. There has been a rise in anti-Semitic incidents in the last three or four of five years. It must be absolutely opposed at very level, publicly, privately, behind closed doors, in the streets, in the council chambers, in the House of Commons as well, if necessary.

I think where there are specifically Jewish concerns, I think (phone rings). Is that Gordon Brown calling to call an election? It looks like Nick has the inside track here (laughter). I think where there are particular issues the Jewish community needs help with, you know, representing an area with a very big Jewish population, we have a responsibility to step up to the plate and do that. So, for example, one of the local synagogues in this constituency is interested in opening up a specifically Jewish primary school. I've been working quite closely with them and with the committee on the planning application process, on the process to get the school approved, firstly, by the council and subsequently, by the secretary of state. It's going to be a fairly drawn out process but I've been doing everything I can to assist with that, organising meetings, attending meetings with the Rabbi and everything else. So, that's a specific example of something that we can do.

I think more generally, making sure there is an atmosphere of safety and of security and of peace and of tolerance is vital. Also, one other thing, when Israel takes steps to defend itself domestically, it often gets a pretty rough time. I think those of us who have lived and studied there, as I have, understand the pressures the Israeli state is under from all sides, should stand up and defend it when that happens. I mean some political parties attacked Israel very violently, at the time of the Gaza incidents, Operation Cast Lead, a year ago. One party went as far-, it wasn't mine, to say that Israel should be disarmed. I disagree with that, and I'm happy that I have stood up and said so, and will continue to do so.

Glenda: On the basis of your religion (TC: 00:20:00) nothing. I mean, I wouldn't prioritise your religion over anybody else's religion. We've just passed an equality bill in the House of Commons, and we all took a great deal of flack on. Some of the clauses in that bill, which dealt particularly with equality for single sex couples for example, to adopt. That caused a huge furor within other religions. We stood firm, and we said, 'No. On the basis of your religion, you may not have that kind of special treatment.' I say that to you and to everybody in this room, on that basis, no. Equally, I will do, as we all would-, I mean, let's face it, all three of us who are sitting up here do all we can to ensure that anti-Semitism is stamped out, in exactly the same way we will work to stamp out anti-Islamic violence, in the same that we will attempt to eradicate the basic, what's the word I'm looking for? It really is early Alzheimer's but don't hold that against me,

(laughter) the prejudice. I'm talking about prejudice. It is our duty, not just ours as politicians, but as everybody sitting in this room, to do all that we can that is humanly possible to attempt to eradicate prejudice, however it expresses itself, be it on the basis of religion, on the basis of color, on the basis of race, on the basis of gender.

I have got another point to make here, and I'm just grabbling around in my mind to try and come up with it. I've got it. The other thing that I would certainly work hard for, and I know the other two will work equally hard, is to encourage people in this next election to turn up to vote. Because if people don't turn out to vote, what could happen, has indeed already happened, as we've seen, is a fascist, anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic party has sent two of its representative, claiming to represent this country, to the European Parliament. They are there because people didn't turn out to vote. It was a classic example of the British people cutting off their noses to spite their faces. It was a plague on all your houses. Nothing that they did affected any member of parliament. The punishment was felt by local authority councilors, and we, as a country now, have members of the BNP sitting in that parliament. So that, I'd work very well. I think that about sums up what I have to say (applause).

Sarah: Hi, I'm Sarah from Rene Cassin. You might have read in the election manifesto section about the Human Rights Act, which my organisation has a particularly vested interest in. So, I wonder if each of you could potentially set out what you think is the future of human rights legislation. There has been a lot of talk about bills of rights, responsibility. If you could particularly address two points, one of which, is whether you would keep all the protections and mechanisms of the human rights act, perhaps in some other form. And two, that you could guarantee that your party wouldn't try and make rights contingent upon responsibilities or good behavior in any way, even for criminals or terrorists or asylum seekers.

HW: Chris, why don't you go first?

Chris: Yes, I'd be happy to. To take the second part first. Human rights are fundamental and they're not contingent on any sort of other behavior, so things like the right to life, and the right to trial. All of those sort of rights are inherent and cannot be removed by legislation or by any element of someone's behavior. That is absolutely fundamental. I think in some areas, we've recently seen those rights getting potentially eroded. So, I was very concerned, and my party-, I voted against 42 day detention without trial. I thought that went too far. I think the idea of compulsory ID cards goes too far and we shouldn't have that. So, I think there are those rights that need to be protected. You asked a question about the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act, enacted subsequently in 1988. I think the principles that underlie it, are generally accepted and supported.

Now, the way it's been implemented in legislation, sometimes gives judges a huge amount of latitude. So, for example, it simply says something like, 'Everyone has a right to a family life.' Now I think we understand what that means and we all basically agree with it and sign up to it, but it's cast so widely that judges have enormous discretion in

how they interpret that. I'm someone who believes principally in parliamentary sovereignty. That is, parliament should decide what our rules are and judges apply them. With clauses that are that widely cast, effectively judges end up making the law. So, I think there may be a case to effectively, sharpen it up a bit and make it a bit more specific. So parliament decides exactly what a right to the family life means, rather than having judges decide it, on the fly. The key points are, rights are fundamental, they're not conditional and we need parliament making sure that these things are clearly defined.

Just one last point, while I'd say rights are absolute, entitlement-, because many people say you don't get rights without responsibilities, or something like that. I don't think they are referring to human rights, I think they are referring to various forms of entitlement which is probably an overlapping but not completely overlapping sort of area. So if your question is basically, 'Will I, as your MP, stand up for these rights that are talked about in the human rights convention and the act?' I mean, the short answer is, 'Yes'.

HW: Glenda, why don't you go next?

Glenda: Well I don't see any need whatever to change the existing Human Rights Act. I strongly disagree with Chris, that judges, on the fly-, that's an extraordinary expression, overturn the will of parliament. Laws are indeed passed by parliament, but then they are tested in the courts. On some of the issues that you raised, which have to do with 42 days and certain acts with regards to preventing or punishing a terrorist, thank God the judges do act on the fly, because they do overturn things which in my view, do impinge upon the basic human rights. To go back to a point that I was making earlier, I think sometimes the issue of human rights can within a parliamentary context become almost exclusively about human rights in this country. Of course, the issue is human rights across the world. I think that is one of the values of maintaining the Human Rights Act.

Whether we ever do get a bill of rights, your guess is as good as mine, when I think of the tiny changes that we made in parliamentary procedures today. When I tell you that in the members cloakroom at the House of Commons, we all have our plastic, immovable coat hangers with our names above it, and at one end of this plastic immovable coat hanger there is a loop of faded pink tape. When I was first elected, I said, 'What's that for?' I was told in all seriousness, it was where I was expected to hang my sword, it gives you some idea of how long it takes to move the mother of parliaments along. It is this issue of this acceptance, I think in a way, which is inherent in what is in the human rights act and of course it's much more precisely framed and drafted, that I am going to say now, is that despite our exterior envelopes, however different they may be, we are all human beings. We are all part of this great, extraordinary thing, which is called the human race, on this little planet. If we begin to allow other people's human rights to be eroded, don't be surprised if ours go to.

Ed: Well I completely agree with what Glenda said. I think there are two specific things. One is I think, a written constitution will get us some way to actually protecting many of the elements of a bill of rights. I think actually, that would help in all seriousness. The second is, I think this issue around entitlement is actually quite fundamental. Chris said

he gave the short answer, I'd be intrigued to hear the long answer because I have a suspicion that this issue of entitlement actually unlocks a whole raft of issues. It's all very well having-, and I spent some time, not enough, but in the Moishe House, with an evening of Darfuri refugees, you know protected by human rights. Actually the entitlement to work, the entitlement to homes, the entitlement to civil protection, is virtually nil. It applies to a number of countries around the world, Darfur, Somalia, Zimbabwe, many of which we have our hideous and sticky little colonial fingers in, in history. So we then have to pick up the pieces and responsibilities of that, not all that many years on. I think there is something quite significant around the issues of entitlement. I think the bill of rights-, it has been questioned by a number of parliamentarians and I think that should be rejected. I absolutely trust the judiciary, I don't trust parliament. I absolutely would put my faith in the judges on their interpretation of that, as opposed to MPs. I think there are a number of issues, and if I give one example, I don't trust that it should be the Home Secretary or the Foreign Secretary making their judgment. (TC: 00:30:00) I think on virtually all of these cases, I'd put it, for example, in the direction of public prosecutions, get it out of the political sphere and get the decisions and the judgment made by them, not by politicians, subject to the whims of the electorate.

HW: Ben, the Ben sitting down, and I'll come to the next point afterwards.

Ben: I wasn't going to ask an overtly political question, but Chris-, sorry, I'm Ben and I work for various organisations here (laughter). Chris has provoked me by his attempt to dismiss the Liberal Democrat's candidate in this seat. So I want to ask the question, but give it to all of the candidates to give them an opportunity to justify the claim that it's just a two way battle between yourself and Labour, in a seat where it's made up two thirds of a Labour constituency and one third of a Liberal Democrat constituency and none of a Conservative constituency. I also wanted to ask a second part of that question, because if the Conservatives are part of this election now, it may well be because they've spent a huge amount of money doing so. I've never seen an election where a local candidate has billboards of themselves.

HW: Ben, have you got a question?

Chris: That's a speech.

Ben: I want to know if you are embarrassed by where that money has come from, given the revelations over the last week (laughter and applause).

HW: Ben, can you just clarify, is that a question for all three candidates? (Laughter).

Ben: I think there are questions there that all three candidates might want to (talking over each other 31.36).

HW: Okay, so do you want to just run through your two part question?

(All talking 31.40).

Glenda: No, we know what he's saying.

HW: Which candidates actually are in this race, and whether they think it's appropriate for somebody who doesn't want to live in this country to be backing one of the candidates.

Glenda: Yes, we can answer that one.

HW: Glenda would you like to go first on that basis?

Glenda: Well, okay. I mean, that's the joy of democracy, isn't it? I mean, the more the merrier. There are three candidates here but if you tot up how many there will be contesting this seat, I think there are six or seven, aren't there?

Yes.

Probably.

Glenda: I can remember in, I think it was 97, we had almost fourteen candidates. The issue is based on demographics and the idea that a vote-, I never really understand this, but a vote for one of the not-named central parties is essentially a wasted vote. My concern is not that. My concern is people not getting out there to vote in the first place when I think that people died, and are still dieing, and fought to give us the right to vote. When you think of the millions of people in the world who would be desperate to have a democratic election and when you think of what we-, you know, we go up to the polling station, there are three people out there with their different colored rosettes. You're lucky if you see a policeman. You go in, there is that beaten up black Japan box tied together with lawyer's tape. Look at how elections are conducted in other countries, where there are police everywhere. There is army everywhere. We're hearing the most terrible reports of what is happening in Iraq at the moment because they're going to have an election, the terrible things that happened in Afghanistan because of the election, the terrible things that are happening in Pakistan because of the political turmoil in these places. I mean that there are millions of people who have the temerity to say, 'Oh I'm not going to be bother, it's-, no, I can't be bothered, you're all the same. It never affects me, you never do what I say.' So I think it is very, very important to go out there and vote.

On the issue of Lord Ashcroft's money, I have to be entirely honest with you, I think the British people are extremely canny when it comes to general elections. I don't believe our votes can be bought. If there are questions to be asked about that money, it's not so much of how much it is, or how it's being spent, it's-, I really can't believe that the hierarchy of the Conservative Party didn't know that he was in fact, a non-dom for tax purposes, that he had in fact misled them on his supposed commitments to take the peerage. I simply cannot reconcile what we've been hearing today, that William Hague and apparently

David Cameron knew last month the real situation. They have been asked questions on this issue and they've avoided and evaded straight answers. Now, it may well be that the philosophy in the upper echelons of the Conservative Party is, 'Don't ask, don't tell.' But it does seem to me, as somewhat of a paradox, of a party that is claiming to wish to govern with transparency, frankness, and giving a straight answer to a straight question. Those things don't quite gel as far as I'm concerned.

HW: Chris?

Chris: Where do I start? Let's start with the funding question. I mean, I come to politics as a comparative outsider. I've been an entrepreneur for the last ten years. Frankly, what I've seen in terms of the expenses and indeed the party funding questions, with all three parties, is not something that I personally am very impressed by. We've heard Lord Ashcroft's non-dom status referred to. All three parties have said that they would change this after the election, so non-doms can't donate, but at the moment all three parties, including mine, have taken donations from non-doms. In Labour's case, a total of ten million, including from Lord Paul and the Chaucey brothers with the Lib Dems. In fact the Lib Dems, biggest ever donor, has subsequently been convicted of fraud and it was discovered that the money he gave them had been stolen and they haven't given it back. So I think this is a repugnant tar brush which touches, unfortunately, on all of three of our parties. I think it's important that we get some fresh faces, who are not career politicians into parliament to try and clean up this mess (applause).

Chris: Now the question was raised about my local campaign and it's true, I've been an extremely active local campaigner on a number of different levels. I would say, something like-, I mean, over 95% of my campaign is funded by local donations, rather than anything from the party centrally. Well over 95%, it's more like 95% or 98%. I certainly haven't received any money from Lord Ashcroft or any of his associated entities. It's all been donated by enthusiastic local people. I certainly make no apology for having-, for wanting to communicate with the electorate what we've been doing, what we stand for, what we believe in, the future we'd like to build for our country, and indeed to get turnouts up. Because I realise when I put a letter through your door, judging by the sound of it, I may equally be provoking you to vote for someone other than me. If the net effect of all this activity is to increase turnout, which last time was only 55%, as Glenda said, in this constituency, shockingly low, given the sacrifices people have made, then I will be pleased to contribute to raising turnout, irrespective of the result.

The result brings me onto the other part of the question. You asked me, 'What is it that gives me confidence to say that it's going to be a close thing between Glenda and I?' Now you'll hear some figures in a few minutes, I'm sure based on projections done about five years ago. I'm going to go psephological on you here. There are three bits of recent data. The first is the London assembly elections, 40,000 real votes cast in this seat, on the 1st May 2008. We got about 12,500 or 12,100, Labour got about 10,500, the Lib Dems got 6,500, and they almost got beaten into fourth place by the Greens. A similar thing happened in the European elections, both in Barnet and in-, sorry in Brent and in Camden, because it's a cross borough seat, Labour and the Conservatives, first and

second, Lib Dems third. Finally, before I bore you with figures, there was the biggest ever opinion poll of marginal seats done by PoliticsHome in September 08 and again in September 09. They surveyed 35,000 people, including here and the result here was a Conservative gain. The figures they released, I was on 36%, Glenda was just a nose behind on 34. That's within the margin of error. So, frankly, anyone's guess. Again, the Lib Dems back on 23. So when we say that it's a close run thing between us and Glenda, we're not making it up, there are some extremely solid figures and don't forget, when you cast that ballot paper, you're choosing who runs the country. Is it going to be Gordon Brown or David Cameron? You know, just be careful because you may wake up on May 7th with Gordon Brown still in number 10, so be careful.

Ed: (Audio skips 38.58). The Belsize Ward by-election when you lost, whether you take the Fortune Green by-election when you lost, whether you take the Queen's Park by-election where you lost, all in the last four years. That set of figures from five years ago that don't quite count, it's called the general election result.

Chris: The seat didn't exist! The seat didn't exist.

Ed: You can block Sarah Tether out all you like, but your 10.8% of the vote in Brent wasn't very impressive at that general election. So, the bottom line is, you get as an MP who you vote for. David Cameron and Gordon Brown are not on the ballot paper, you will go to the polling stations, you can search for their names, they will not be there. You get the MP you want and the reason why this is such a live issue, is because, as I say, there is a very real risk the Liberal Democrats might win. It's not a wasted vote. It is in lots of parts of the country. Don't doubt that for a minute! There are seats up and down the country where all of the parties don't exist. You can go and vote Conservative as much as you like in Liverpool, there is not a prayer of a Conservative being elected in Liverpool. In fact, for that matter, nor in Manchester nor in Newcastle nor in Bristol, (TC: 00:40:00) nor in Glasgow. There are major cities across England, swathes of it, where the Conservative Party no longer exists as a force in any form. To be fair there is one Conservative Councilor in Manchester, he's a Liberal Democrat defector, so I should confess that.

In terms of the question of the funding, every single penny my campaign is spending in this election has come from residents who live in this constituency. Not one penny from anywhere else. We raise it through local events. Many of you see the cake stall up at the Jester Festival, where we're raising money as I desperately welcome Elaine, buying the Flicks (40.34) cakes, in order to raise money for our cause. So the reality is we literally do it through street and through community politics. There is no special funding. The issue with Lord Ashcroft, and I accept that all the parties have problems with funding and I think I'm in the only party that actually says we should have some state funding in return for votes. The issue with Lord Ashcroft isn't just that he's a non-dom, it's that he has a seat in the House of Lords. It's that he gave a private undertaking that William Hague now seems to think he might have broken. It's the fact that he's deputy chair of the Conservative Party. It's the fact that the chairman Eric Pickles didn't know the undertaking. It's the fact that there are a whole series of murky elements here. He

confessed he was a non-dom on Monday in order to get it out before the papers came out the following Monday. It has a whiff about it, that no one likes. If it's so straightforward and so simple, put it out in the public domain, let us make our own mind up. The reason is they won't and they're scared, because actually funding an election campaign from Belize is wrong. Not just from Belize, but where does that money come from? When you look at the hotspots of the world, Belize is not the happiest place in the world, and when the Tory party is funded to the tune of ten, twelve million pounds, by someone making profits from one of the poorest countries of the world, to my mind, it stinks! (Applause)

Glenda: Also, I mean, the real currency of election is not money, it's policies.

Ed: Yes.

Glenda: That's the real currency.

HW: Ben?

Chris: Which is why the Lib Dems will lose!

Ben: Thank you. My name's Ben, I work for the Jewish community and I'm also a (inaudible 42.08) constituency. One general question and one specific question (inaudible 42.13). The general question to all candidates is-, you've probably seen one of the live issues in the Jewish community is arrest warrants that are being brought against Israelis who are coming, who want to come to the UK. The government has said today that they want to legislate to change the rules relating to universal jurisdictions to allow Israelis and anyone to come to the UK without being frustrated by these arrest warrants. I just wanted to know what you thought about that issue and whether you would support it if it were brought to a vote. A specific question to Glenda, and I don't mean to pick on you but you are the incumbent. I understand there are different levels of parliamentary activity but I wonder, I struggle to understand how you as my MP can be acting on my behalf when you've only taken part in two debates in parliament in the last year and voted in less than half the votes which is well below the average amongst your peers. So, my question to you is; what are you doing with your time that you're not doing that, to represent me in government.

Glenda: Shall I answer first? Is that specific to me?

HW: Yes. Although, I have to say that the questions should be directed at all three candidates.

Glenda: Well you can't direct it at them if they're not the incumbents!

HW: Okay.

Glenda: On the issue of-, I'll be entirely honest with you, I find the participation in debates which in the main are conducted to a virtually empty chamber, where nobody listens, the results of the debates in the main have absolutely no effect on you or anyone else in the country. On the issue of the voting, I've never avoided an important vote. I'm categorical. I mean, there are many more important things that I can do as your MP than sit in the chamber listening to opposition day debates, which again clarify nothing, obfuscate everything and are really only there to try to make party political points. I can do much more by being up in the constituency, by writing letters to Ministers, by doing all that kind of thing, and that is my central interest. The idea that the work of parliament is exclusively within the chamber or asking ministers questions from the floor of the chamber, is simply not the case. I mean, nine times out of ten, a great proportion of the questions from both sides of the house are planted. I find it much more effective to actually ask a minister face to face, to write a letter, to ask for a meeting. So that's my view of parliament. I've forgotten the first part of the question.

HW: Universal jurisdiction.

Glenda: Oh yes, universal jurisdiction. Well, I will listen to the arguments if the government is seriously looking at this. I will listen to the debate, but at the moment I would not vote for the change. I mean, if there was a change, we wouldn't see that a man was arrested at Heathrow airport in police custody at the moment, will have to stand in court because-, I'll stick with Serbia because I can't manage Republika at the moment, has wanted him to be extradited on the grounds of war crimes. I've had this argument with people before, and there are other people who have been guilty of war crimes who have come into this country. So, I would not be happy to see that law necessarily changed, but I will give you my fair assurance on listening to the debate.

Ed: I was in Isarel when the Tzipi Livni case was live, to put it mildly. My view is the attempted arrest warrant was a stunt. It was organised by a campaign group designed to pull a publicity stunt. One of the reasons why the government has hesitated, as I understand it, is that actually this will be a fundamental issue in the House of Lords. The Commons will vote through the resolution proposed by the government. That's the mathematics of the chamber. The issue is what happens in the Lords. There are two elements to the Lords. One is no one party has control, which on this occasion is probably a useful thing. Second is that the legal experience in the lords is far more significant and far more informed than the legal experience in the Commons. The Liberal Democrats, I think largely along with Labour, have actually said, universal jurisdiction came out of the second world war, and it's a principle we want to defend.

One of the things I've done and this is very much a personal issue motivated by some Jewish constituents who approached me about it, is I made contact with three residents all coincidentally in Hampstead. Professor Jeffrey Jowell who's a professor of jurisprudence at UCL, Professor Phillip Sands who is a well-known international barrister and Law Lord Lenny Hoffman. I had a conversation with the three of them, and David Howarth, who is our spokesman on legal matters in the Commons. We are pretty confident that we will put forward a proposal that I think in the Lords will have credence, that the principle

of universal jurisdiction is preserved, but the granting of an arrest warrant for parliamentarians of other international countries that are defined as allies would be put over to the director of public prosecutions. It would get it out of the party sphere and into the legal mechanism. So, it would protect, entirely jurisdiction, but would nonetheless enable us to get war criminals from around the world. The other point, I think, about the stunt is, you know more about Israeli politics I'm sure than us, but if you are picking a politician, Tzipi Livni is not the one. In Israeli terms, I use those words advisedly, she is a moderate, she is articulate, she is different in Israeli terms and if you want any illustration as to why it was wrong, I think the fact it was her is the proof, and I utterly condemn it for that.

On the point of Glenda's voting record I actually think politics can be murky and muddy and we can throw things around. I actually think this is one of the issues on which it's a legitimate debate. Glenda's stance is entirely fair and right. She regards the House of Commons as a waste of time, in terms of many of the debates. I don't want to stereotype you are unfairly.

Glenda: I do, absolutely.

Ed: I understand that, but I think for us as residents and us as voters, it's hard to understand. I think I could, and there were seventeen votes the other night, on the amendments in relation to a legal bill. I think anyone who claims to understand all seventeen who isn't a lawyer would be unusual. I don't claim that I would understand those. The risk that actually if I were the MP I could vote on all seventeen of those, get my average up, and therefore you wouldn't be saying, 'It's less than 50%'. I think the problem arises, and Glenda and I have spoken about this before, when actually some of the key votes are missed. So there have been three votes in this parliament on MPs expenses, one of which was passed with a majority of five and Glenda didn't take part in the vote. I think that's a basis for my legitimate criticism of that. I am saying, I would have participated in some of the votes. I don't think all the votes that haven't been (TC: 00:50:00) participated in were just minor legal amendments. Some of them, I regard as fundamental and I'd like to think I'd have a more visible and active role in that discussion and I'd have a higher voting record, on that basis.

HW: Chris?

Chris: I think the comments on Glenda's voting record have probably been extensive enough so I will refrain from adding my boot to the imprints which have-,

Glenda: Go on! I'm a big girl!

Chris: Already been left on Glenda's-, no, no, I think enough has been said and I'm not going to add to the barrage of assault. I would observe that in my four years as a Camden Councilor I never missed a council meeting and I think I've spoken and voted in every debate and every motion. Now on the question of universal jurisdiction which was raised by the gentleman at the back. This has been used by what are, euphemistically termed,

'campaign groups' and others, as a cudgel with which to bash, essentially bash Israel. They seem to be the targets of this and we've heard about the most recent case, the Livni case. I think almost, something like three quarters of the Lib Dem parliamentary party lined up behind the early day motion, effectively pushing this whole thing. I think only one Conservative out of 200 signed up to it. I think we didn't want to put our name to what was apparently an anti-Israel vehicle that was being punted around the Commons. I think if there are genuine war criminals, and there was this Pinochet case, wasn't there? About five or six years ago. Then we do want to see genuine war criminals brought to justice. I do agree with the idea of putting it in the hands of a responsible non-politicised person like the director of public prosecutions.

Ed: That's not your party policy Chris.

Chris: Well I'm telling you what I think. Look, your party leader called for Israel to be disarmed, okay?

Ed: No, no, we're talking about jurisdiction.

Chris: I'm giving you my personal opinion. I cut you some slack when you were expressing support for Israel without pointing out your party has called for Israel to be disarmed, so let me express my personal view as well. My personal view is putting in the hands of an independent person (applause).

HW: Can we let the candidate speak? You can clap at the end.

Chris: **I'm happy to be interrupted by clapping, it's okay.**

HW: No, we'll save the clapping till the end.

Chris: Let them have two goes! I think putting them into the hands of an independent responsible third party like the director of public prosecutions is a good idea. Attacking mainstream responsible politicians from a democracy like Israel is an absolute outrage. I think incarcerating people like Pinochet or people who are genuinely war criminals is fine. Frankly I think putting it in legal hands is the best way to do it and if I'm elected, frankly, irrespective of what my party policy may be, that's how you can expect me to vote (applause).

HW: I'm conscious of time, so I think we will take two questions at a time. So this gentleman at the front's been waiting and Poppy at the back. So do you want to go, and we'll answer in succession.

Sure. My Question has actually just been referenced there, and it's about what's been coming out in the press recently, in the Jewish Chronicle, the Ham & High, online and various different places, about the different party's positions regarding Israel. Ed was quoted in this week's Ham and High as saying that his party supported peace and was against military action on Israel's part. Glenda, I believe

was quoted in the same article as saying that opinion hasn't changed as far as she's concerned for years and that it was all anti-the separation fence which has seen a 90% reduction on terrorist attacks on Israelis. Chris has just spoken at the beginning of all this to say that he believes that Israel has an absolute right to self defense. I'd like to ask all three candidates what their own particular definite opinions on these issues are and how they feel those opinions gel with those of their party, which often, especially in the case of the Lib Dems, seem to be completely at odds with the party's opinion. It would be nice to know how they feel that their opinion would work in the framework of their party and in the framework of the government.

HW: Okay and Poppy?

Poppy: Hi, I'm Poppy Berelowitz, I work on the Big Green Jewish website. It recently came to light that the majority of the UK's pledge at Copenhagen for climate adaptation between 2010 and 2012 is being recycled from the overseas development aid. I'm wondering what your government will do to ensure that the UK is paying its fair share towards the amount necessary from 2010 onwards to ensure that developing countries can adapt to climate change.

HW: Ed?

Ed: I'll deal with Poppy's question first (laughter) because it will give me breathing space to catch up with Jonathan's. I'm probably in the fortunate position of saying actually my government won't worry about it too much in the next four years because we'll probably be propping up one of the other failed governments, but-

Chris: Which one are you going to prop up?

Ed: Well, we'll see what people decide.

Chris: What do you think?

Ed: I don't know.

HW: No, no. Answer the question.

Ed: I think we're back to the interrupting game, but the serious answer around responsibilities for climate change and meeting the treaties, is that actually I just think that there is something disproportionately timid about the way we have tackled these issues. Actually, the only treaty that there's been that I feel that we've met was Montreal, where we've hit the targets and it was largely around CFCs. Actually, virtually all of the treaties are dictated by the rich countries and the ability to backslide out of them and find ways out of them, I find distressing. I find it bizarre. I mean, it's interesting, isn't it? That it takes so long in this election debate to get to the environment and global responsibility. I think one of the issues with this constituency and I just think it informs the candidates

you get, is actually there just needs to be a global responsibility that Britain leads. We just don't go along with it, we don't just attend, but actually we just have to lead it. We should be at the front and I just don't understand the hesitation. I find myself getting genuinely agitated and upset that we're so pedestrian, in the worst sense of that. Perhaps ironically we're much more calm minded in that actually we sign up to it but then drive around polluting.

Actually climate change is the issue. Glenda said this is one of those elections where you decide and I actually think that climate change is one of the decisions in this election. I mean climate change in every sense; third world development, international responsibility. I don't want us to have a world whereby we say, 'Actually,' somewhat condescendingly, 'Africa needs our help and we will therefore Westernise it.' I remember with some agitation when the Albanian dictatorship fell there was a photograph of an Albanian farmer on a horse and cart and it was in the British media as though this was the worst possible thing and it showed how backwards they are. I just think that there is something mad about our desire to industrialise the globe, a very simple approach of mine, and I just don't get it and we caricature it as though it's something regressive, as though actually we should just ship cars and tractors over there and all will be fine.

I'm a big fan and interested in Herbert Samuel who was the first Jewish ruler of Israel since Herodian times. His son was Governor of Jerusalem and he talks with some passion, spoke rather, with some passion, his grandson still repeats the story, of how when Jews started going back to Israel before the state was created and they tried farming the lands under the British mandate, the British were clearing the stones away in order to make the land better for tractors and ploughs. They were misunderstanding the climate, where actually, the stones in the soil are crucial to holding in the moisture in that environment. There is something completely bonkers about the way in which we are saying 'Westernisation is the answer and horse and cart and hoe and soil is backwards.' I think it's complete madness and I just think we have to get a grip and it's fundamental to this issue around the treaties around the adherence, around the targets. You can backslide around them but it dodges the reality of the issue which is that if we don't act now, we won't have another chance.

On Jonathan's slightly fundamental issue, two things came out of the Holocaust which I think this dates to, this issue of Israel and its right to self defense. Two things came out the Holocaust, one was Israel and the second was the UN. There is a strong liberal tradition around the creation of the state of Israel and it's one that I am interested in as a historian, I'm interested in as the prospective MP here, and it's one that I am taking significant steps to remind the Liberal Democrats of. The effect of the 1967 conflict was that actually at some point and I think it's 1967, Israel, the UN, and a lot of liberal opinion, separated. When I went to Gaza and then the following day to the Knesset, I was intrigued to find how few Knesset members, by example, had been to Gaza. Actually, there are two Knesset members who I met who had been to Gaza but that was on military service, twenty years ago. So, there is a misunderstanding about the issues. However, I'm very clear, Israel is a sovereign state, it has the right to exist. Israel has the right to defend itself, as any country does. There is a massive misunderstanding about the nature of

rocket attacks, (audio skips 01.00.21) a misunderstanding of what is going on day by day. I have a Liberal Democrat Party member in West Hampstead and she rang and she said, 'Ed, you just have to understand, my sister lives in Israel, a rocket landed last week and it killed the goat.' She said, 'It's completely trivial, it will never make the headlines, but my sister has to tell her six year old daughter why the goat is splattered across the back of the yard.' Britain's approach to the Israel conversation has become blinkered. The Liberal Democrats have been so seized by the conversation around Palestine and the Palestinian peoples that there has become a noise that I think has removed the real conversation. I am absolutely-

HW: Ed, speed it up.

Ed: Speed up, okay. I am absolutely signed up to the fact that there is a long way to go, and as the MP to this seat I think I have a contribution to make and I think I can make added value based on experience not just theory.

Glenda: Well, I'll start where Ed left off and answer the question about Israel. I have always been and I always will be an absolute supporter of the state of Israel. I am not, nor will I ever be an absolute supporter of Israeli governments, particularly if I don't agree with them. It's pretty much the situation towards my own country (laughter). Ed mentioned the issue of the rockets and the goat being killed. I would simply point out that we had categorical assurances from the Israeli government spokesman that white phosphorus had not been used in Gaza. Was it last week or was it the week before, we discover that the Israeli Defense Forces have carried out an enquiry and white phosphorus had been used. I am opposed to the war that goes through villages. I'll be perfectly honest here, I don't know what's happened as far as the peace process which supposedly was being driven by Tony Blair, has got. Why anyone would choose Tony Blair as a peacemaker (laughter) in that particular part of the world is a mystery to me, but there we go. I think the British government certainly is committed to a peace process. Well, in a way I think the whole world, apart from a couple of Middle Eastern countries, is committed to that peace process but we all delude ourselves if we think it's going to be achieved over night. The real tragedy of this, the real tragedy is at some point it will end. Those who are left and we won't be, will ask, 'Why? Why did this happen?' When you have two nation states sitting side by side, living in peace and it will happen but it's just the terrible, terrible length of time, it's getting to that point.

On the issue of climate change and the third world, well I'm sure you're aware the government has given a clear commitment that overseas aid is a guarantee as far as money is concerned. I can't give you a guarantee beyond 11-12 on that, I can't give you a guarantee beyond 11-12 over a whole range of what are deemed national expenditure. But there is no slackening at all of the commitment to the third world and to climate change. I hope Ed is right when he says that climate change is a major issue in this country, because I have been somewhat disturbed to read that I think it's only 40% of people in this country now believe that climate change is manmade. This may simply be a follow from the outcry over the emails from the East Anglia University, but my colleagues will confirm what I'm going to say to you now. We had a hustings a few

weeks ago in a church up in Hampstead. There was not one single question about the environment from that audience, not one. In part as I say, I think it has to do with the economic situation we're in. In part it has to do with the rows about the East Anglia University.

For me the bottom line is that everything this government has done and everything that other nations have done, has always been decried, discounted, dismissed, by some of the environmental campaigning organisations. They're always telling us it's too little, it's too late, it's not effective, it won't do enough, which fills me, and I know, maybe it isn't true, but it fills me sometimes with the sense, 'Well if it's really so impossible why don't we just enjoy what we've got while here and forget about the future!' I think we have to, as well as doing what we're doing via the law, via money, via trying to negotiate with other countries, give the British people a sense of confidence, that we can do something, that it isn't limited only to government, that individuals can make a change. Ed was talking I thought somewhat-, well I know some people who would say that it was the old colonialism coming out again, in saying that the developing worlds, 'They can't have what we've had. They're not allowed to know what we've known. We've learned the mistakes and they're going to have to carry the burden.'

Well it's a nice idea but it won't play very well in China and it certainly won't play very well in India. I mean, on the broader issue of how we can link the making poverty history for the rest of the world with tackling and really defeating climate change, I have no argument with that, but we can't sit on some high pinnacle and say, 'No, no, you've got to learn from our mistakes.' I was in Ethiopia, admittedly it was a long time ago. The worst of that famine, it was in 85, had passed. I was there with Oxfam and we'd gone as far North as it was possible to go because of the civil war that was going on. I stood at the side of this completely dry river. It was probably as wide as this room and it was about-, I'm not very good at distance but it was about 20, 25 feet deep. There was a tiny trickle of water, way way down at the bottom with two little boys with no shoes on splashing about in. That night, the rains came. They came in the mountains and when we got up the next morning that river was like milkless cocoa, and it was splashing over the retaining walls at the top. Why was it looking like cocoa? Because it had washed the surface soil from the mountains. I was talking to the Oxfam people, and they said, 'Because the only fuel the people have, is the wood and the brush.' I'm sorry, if you say to a woman who the only way she's got to cook a meal for her child, 'No, no you can't cut down that tree because the top soil is going to be swept away when you get rain', you will get a very short answer. So we have to stop pretending that this is simple, that we can say to other countries, 'You have to do what we say. We have technology, we have experience, we are certainly infinitely richer than many of them and we can help them.' We have to get off this idea that we can tell them what their futures will be.

HW: Chris.

Chris: Okay, thank you very much. Let me start with the Israel question. I spent, as I said at the beginning a very happy summer living and studying at the Weizmann Institute. I traveled around Isarel, Jerusalem, Gaza, and so on and so forth. I'm clear about a few

things. I'm clear that Israel is a friendly democracy, which is our ally. I'm clear that it is surrounded by threats and I'm clear that Hamas are essentially a terrorist organisation who are hell bent on destroying the state of Isarel. Israel have an absolute right to defend themselves, which they exercised this time last year during operation Cast Lead, as they were entitled to do. Ed made some comments earlier, I mean the Lib Dem position at this time about a year ago-, Nick Clegg, the leader of the Lib Dems came out and said, 'Israel should be disarmed'. He wrote a big article in The Guardian which you can look up online. 'Israel should be disarmed.' The Liberal Democrat MP for Rochdale whose name eludes me, I'm not sure he's going to trouble the historians, went to a rally in Trafalgar square, and said, 'I'm here on behalf of Nick Clegg to condemn this massacre.'

So their position was clear and what really worries me, is that the Lib Dems then used that in the months succeeding to target Muslim communities with that message. So right here in our borough, in King's Cross, not two miles from here there is a big Bangladeshi community. They put out leaflets, Ed's opposite number whose name is Jo Shaw, put out leaflets to the Bangladeshi community, with a picture of a dead child, saying, 'Nick Clegg calls for Israel's disarmament.' Then she put out a blog post saying how she'd used this issue to recruit new members. Now, you know, (TC: 01:10:00) you might be willing to say, 'Look, the Lib Dems were entitled to their views, fair enough, we disagree with them but they're entitled to it.' To then go and use those views to specifically target Muslim communities to whip up votes I think is really rather reprehensible and I whole heartedly condemn it. So, I hope that makes my position on this question completely and transparently clear.

I'm going to talk about the environment question and then just touch on the hung parliament point. You raised a question about the environment. We have these grand conferences every couple of years and everyone flies in and they set these targets, don't they? They say, 'We're going to reduce CO2 by X percent.' Gordon Brown loves this because he loves setting targets that he then ignores. He does it the whole time. They set these targets, I think in 97 there was a target to reduce our CO2 by X percent. I can't remember what X was, and if you look (audio skips 01.10.49) previously. So it's been frankly, totally ineffective. I think what we as a country have to do is take a few of the hard choices needed to make a difference. So I'll give you just a few examples. We and I think probably the Lib Dems, I'm not sure, have said we shouldn't have a third runway at Heathrow because it will encourage the growth of air travel. We've said that we should develop a high speed rail network and we should develop cross rail to encourage more use of rail travel. We've said that we should increase tax a little bit on pollutants and at the same correspondingly reduce tax on income, just to tilt the incentives a little bit. We need to invest more in renewable energies.

The final thing we need to do, which you may, I suspect, find a bit less congenial, is we do frankly need to invest in the next generation of nuclear power stations because while we need to push renewables, the truth is, the reality is, just to be completely honest, they're unlikely to plug the gap Nuclear power-, I speak as a former, as a physicist, I'm a physicist by academic background, it is non-polluting and it's the best way of plugging this carbon gap that's opening up. It's not just an environmental point, it's an energy

security point, because if you look at where we get our oil and gas from, I can someone shaking their head, I'm obviously not carrying the audience at least in that particular quarter. If you look at where we get our oil and gas from, you know, it's from countries that are somewhere between unstable and unfriendly, places like Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Columbia, Nigeria. To be reliant on those countries is a slightly dicey prospect in any case. So I think those are some of the things that we can do that are tangible, that are concrete, that will deliver results, rather than setting these grand targets which then get completely missed and everyone just carries on as before.

I'm shaking my head because across the country it's the Conservative councils which have been opposing wind farms and renewable energy.

Chris: Well, I think some local people in some areas don't like a wind farm on their doorstep and frankly if somebody said, 'Let's put one in West Hampstead', we'd probably get the same. There are places you can put them in. Remote areas you can put them in, not a problem. I think it's a question of where they go.

The Labour and Lib Dem councils (inaudible 01.12.58)

Chris: Well it tends to be local people who drive these things.

HW: Can I just encourage you to-, the specific question was about overseas development assistance, so maybe to finish on that.

Chris: Okay, well I had one other brief point as well. I think as far as trade is concerned, I think if there are countries, and China is the biggest example-, they're opening up coal fired power stations at the rate of one a week. I wonder if an idea would be to introduce some measure of pollutants into the whole tariff system. So, if you're going to be part of the GAT system, you recognize-, if someone is using energy sources that are cheap but polluting, you somehow recognize that in the tariff network. It's just a blue sky idea but it might be something that helps the point the question was raising.

Now, one very brief final point. Somebody asked the question earlier, in fact, Ed just spontaneously mentioned a point about hung parliaments and he said, 'Well we'll end up propping up one party or another.' Now I asked him a straight question which was, 'Which party would that be?' Let me finish.

HW: You have to answer the questions that are being asked.

Chris: **It's a point that came up.**

Ed: It's (talking over each other 01.13.59).

Chris: He wouldn't give us a straight answer, so my point is, make the choice yourself, don't leave it to the Lib Dems to flip a coin to after the election.

HW: I'm going to really encourage all the candidates to speed up their answers and for us to speed up our question asking. I'm going to take three, Edie, Julia and then Leanna and then I'll come to the next two.

Edie: My name is Edie Freedman from the Jewish Council for Racial Equality. I'd like to ask all three of you what you're going to do to end the detention of children for asylum purposes and I'm also going to ask you, in order to safeguard the future of sanctity in this country, will you sign the sanctity pledge this evening?

Glenda: Well tell us what sanctity is.

Sanctuary, sorry.

Glenda: Oh I beg your pardon, I thought you said sanctity.

Sanctuary.

HW: Okay, so a question about detention of children and sanctuary. Julia?

Julia: You all mentioned to different extents your allegiance wholly or not wholly to your party. I'd be interested to hear your views and your activity in relation-, of your party in relation to European parties. This is particularly loaded towards the Conservatives. I don't know how many of us are Jewish here, but the idea of voting for a party which is aligned in a European perspective with right wing parties in Austria, France, Italy, Spain, etc etc is quite uncomfortable. Similarly people have some similar views about socialism and (talking over each other 01.15.31) so I'd like to hear how active you are and what you would do for and against (talking over each other 01.15.37).

HW: Leanna?

Leanna: I'd like to ask whether your parties or you will support the Robin Hood Tax which is a 0.05% tiny tax on banker's financial transactions (audio written over by music 01.15.52 - 01.16.33).

HW: As brief as possible.

Chris: Yes, I'll be really quick, the sanctuary pledge I'll read it afterwards and make a decision once I've read it, but it sounds like a good principle. Do I support the detention of children? I don't think I do support the detention of children unless they've committed an extremely serious criminal offence. The next question was on the European-,

Edie: But what will you do to end it? What will you do to end the detention of children? I'm not asking you whether you support it. I'm asking you what you're going to do to end it.

Glenda: You're talking about the detention of asylum children, aren't you?

Eddie: Asylum seeking children, yes.

Chris: Yes. I mean don't generally-, I don't support the detention of children as I've just said, and if an opportunity arises in the House of Commons to vote against it then I'll take that opportunity. Who knows, if I draw the lottery and get a private member's bill maybe that's one of the things that are on the table. Somebody raised the European Union parties. Now, I actually do have a list of all of our sometimes uncomfortable cohabitants which I unfortunately left at home but I'll make sure I bring it next time. All the European groupings, the liberal one, the socialist one and our one, have some slightly dubious people in them, frankly, as I guess do some domestic parties as well. Specifically on the question, there is this guy Michael Kaminski in Poland. I've got a quote here from the chief Rabbi of Poland. The Chief Rabbi of Poland has spoken up on behalf of Michael Kaminski and made it clear that far from being an anti-Semite, Mr Kaminski is an outspoken opponent of anti-Semitism and friend of Israel. That's signed by the chairman of the European Jewish Congress and indeed the chairman of the Westminster synagogue, closer to home.

Julia Can I just say? That's had a lot of publicity in this country, people are much less aware of Spain and Italy and France and Austria.

Chris: That includes me, so I'll have to look into that. I wasn't aware of a problem in those countries. In fact, Stephen Pollard, the editor of the Jewish Chronicle, who you will know wrote last year, 'There are few things more despicable than anti-Semitism but here's one of them, using a false charge of anti-Semitism.' Which I'm not suggesting you're using, but politicians like David Miliband did, 'Using a false charge of anti-Semitism for political gain.' He concludes his article by saying, 'Far from being an anti-Semite Mr Kaminski is about as pro-Israeli an MP as exists'. So I thought people might appreciate hearing that. There was a final question, which was, remind me?

HW: Robin Hood tax, 0.03% (talking over each other 01.18.49).

Chris: That's right, to close the gap between rich and poor. Okay, the City of London, last year generated 27% of UK government taxation. So it's an easy hit, it's an easy hit to say, 'Let's tax the bankers, let's soak the rich. It's an easy hit.' I understand that. Actually, what it will do, is drive away the people who generated 27% of our tax base. So I just say, 'tread carefully.' Now you asked about closing the gap between rich and poor, which is something-, my family originally come from Peckham, so you know, I do understand what you're saying. The gap between rich and poor has opened up under Labour, which is quite extraordinary. I think the way you address these things, I mean, I could talk for hours about this, but in brief: You fix the education system for a start so children in more deprived areas get a decent education which doesn't always happen at the moment. You make sure the benefit system encourages rather disincentives work, a whole range of things like that. Of course, yes, you put money into it as well but I think driving away the one part of the economy that has kicked out some money in the last ten

years, 27% of the UK government's revenue. I think it's an easy hit, you get a round of applause, but I'm just saying 'Tread carefully'. (TC: 01:20:00)

Ed: In reverse order, I think the Robin Hood tax does work. Not my humble opinion but Vince Cable's and I'll go with that. It's a risk I'll take. More seriously, on the charge that if we tax the banks then thousands of them will flee to Zurich and other places, one of the very problems we have is that the banking industry is so large here. It's such a dominant element of the city. I think actually, if some of them go, they go, and it is not financially irresponsible at all. Absolutely, all of the other countries that have weathered the storm have a balanced economy. The whole problem we have is the banking industry is just so, so vast here. 37% of the GDP and that's actually not the international average at all. All the Western economies are working at about 20, 24% and we're on 37. It's preposterous, not even Ireland which has a huge banking industry, is so dominated as we are. So the Robin Hood tax does work, it is a simple gesture.

Chris: Yes, it's a gesture, all right.

Ed: It's a simple gesture in terms of the percentage levied on them, but I don't think it's a simple gesture in terms of the money generated in order to make the-, I think post Thatcherite legacy a little less awful. In terms of European parties, I'm not aware of having dodgy bedfellows in the European parliament for the liberal grouping but I think the issue around the Polish alliance. Two elements worry me about that. One is the stereotyping of Poland that occurred as a result of the debate, because actually all that was engendered was this sense that actually, 'All the Polish politicians are nasty right-wingers.' So that actually genuinely worried me. A country that struggles with its post-Holocaust history, but actually we did it no favors by stereotyping Kaminski in that way. Actually there was a very real charge, not from the nasty British media, but from Edward McMillan-Scott, who is one of the more informed individuals in the European parliament. He's sat in it, I think for sixteen years. I sense that actually much more of it is around the power play of the European People's Party, but the bottom line I think for it, is actually Cameron was fulfilling a leadership election pledge to get right-wing support in order to win the party leadership. I don't think he needed to make that pledge at the time, I thought it was odd. I thought he went too far but one of the effects, entirely unintended, was to stereotype the nature of Polish politics. I think in terms of a post-Holocaust age in a Jewish conversation, I think it's unhelpful.

In terms of child detention, one of the things I've learned and understood is that actually one of the things you can do as an MP is use the office of MP to achieve change. I read a report that said that actually, I think there are only, something like 47 MPs who had ever visited a child detention sanctuary where migrant children are held. I think there is something about this seat, I referred to it earlier whereby the MP has a responsibility on human rights, on international affairs, like very few other seats. Actually visiting these places, giving them exposure, giving them coverage, seeing for yourself. I think that's a pretty positive and proactive way. I don't for a minute think I'm going to get a private member's bill, I don't for a minute think it's going to go through the House of Commons and I don't for a minute think that would change the children's lives. If it took a year,

actually those six year old kids are seven years old by the time it goes through and that's too late. I think proactive is the way. The sanctuary pledge, as I understand it, a number of Liberal Democrat MPs and candidates have signed it, I'm pretty confident I can sign it tonight, bar any small print, but I'm pretty confident I can do that.

Edie: I have one for each of you.

Glenda: Well, on the issue, you say, 'What can one do?' One will continue doing what one always does in the House of Commons. You sign the EDMs, you write to the minister. There is a new campaign that just started which all of us, who are interested in these-, and it's pretty much I would say, the whole of the House of Commons, sign up. I'm not going to stand here and pretend to you that that is going to work over night. I think there have been improvements because of the introduction of the examination of detention centers by her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons. Unfortunately Anne Owers is stepping down but she set a very good record here and hopefully that will continue. The real crunch point here is speeding up deportations. In some instances it's not-, I mean, I don't have any time with the way children have been collected in the past, or families that have to be deported have been treated, woken up in the middle of the night, all that kind of thing. Not infrequently, the whole processes gone through to return people and it tends to be in the main to safe third countries that they're going to where you have to have the agreement of the third country. If that falls down that lengthens the process but there are ways, I believe, I'm not the only one in the House of Commons who believes this, where that problem with families who are going to be deported, could be made much, much easier, much more humane than it is at the moment.

On the issue, who asked the question about Europe? Oh yes. Well, I mean one of the things is-, why a supposedly centre-right British party would wish to align itself to what seemed to be extreme right wing European parties, why it left that kind of centrist grouping in the European Union, is, was and will remain a mystery to me. I mean I think the real damage here is that it reduces yet again the kind of influence of Britain within the parliament of the European Union. It's just another half-hearted example, well it's not half-hearted. It's just another example that the Conservative Party simply cannot come to terms with our membership within the European Union. They don't have the courage to say, 'We're all going to come out.' They don't have the courage to actually entirely engage.

On the Robin Hood tax, yes! But it's not going to happen unless we get the whole world agreeing to it. I mean, I presume your concern over tackling poverty was third world poverty. If you're talking about poverty in this country, well I can't see that it would happen, but as an idea it certainly is worth something pursuing. I mean, it's got another name actually, it's the Tobin tax. That is something, as we know, that Gordon Brown thinks is a very good idea, but we would have in that instance, have to get international agreement on that. But if you don't try, you don't get anything.

HW: Okay, we are out of time, but I did promise two more questions. So Phil and Dan and then we're going to close.

Phil: I wanted to ask a question about nuclear power in three different contexts. First of all, in this country, is it a good way to go in terms of improving our environment? Second of all in Iran, if Iran gets nuclear weapons, what would you be advising our country and our army and our government and all the methods we have, to do? The third question is on Israel. If, as most people suspect, they have nuclear weapons, what do you think about that?

HW: And Dan.

Dan: My name is Dan Berelowitz from Tzedek who are the Jewish Community's response to extreme poverty. We believe that nobody regardless of race or religion should be forced to live in extreme poverty. The government is signed up to the Millennium Development Goals along with the majority of other countries in the world, aiming to give 0.7% of the GDP to developing world countries within five years, 2015.

Glenda: 2012 actually.

Dan: What will you do to make that those goals are met?

HW: Okay, so questions about nuclear power in relation to this country.

Glenda: Do you want me to go first because they've been going first?

HW: Fine. Iran and Isarel, and MDGs 0.6%. Glenda?

Glenda: Yes, I do. I have come round to thinking that nuclear power is the way that we can guarantee energy in the future. It is the cleanest. On the issue of Iran getting a nuclear weapon, well it's on the table for them. I mean, they know precisely how the rest of the world views it. I personally believe that we should be pursuing the non-proliferation treaty. Obviously that's a country that is unprepared to listen to that at the moment but if you're saying, 'Do I think that they should be threatened with war if they get a nuclear weapon?' I don't think, I'm not a physicist but it doesn't seem to me from what I've read and what I've heard from people who are, that they're within a speedy time of developing a nuclear weapon. You're shaking your head, perhaps you are a physicist, give us the facts. Give us the facts, if you know they are in the position of developing a nuclear weapon in two year's time!

Phil: My question was, 'What if they got one?'

Glenda: If they get one, well the 'if' is the big issue, isn't it? As I say, it doesn't seem to me that they are in the position of developing one in the near future. If they do get one, well you see, I'm an optimist. I think, by the time they're in the position of possibly being able to develop a nuclear weapon there may be a radical change in the government of Iran.

Chris: What are you basing your timeline on?

Glenda: I didn't interrupt you, please don't interrupt me. I mean, it would seem that the opposition (TC: 01:30:00) in many instances is going down, but I think it will be possible, it would be possible for there to be a change. I do think that the pressure that is being exerted on Iran in this issue is the way to go. I don't think at this stage we can stand up and say, 'Well if you do, the world is going to go into a nuclear war.' On the issue of Israel, I didn't know there was anybody in the world who didn't know Israel had an atomic weapon. I'm not quite sure, I mean Israel has said, has she not, that if Iran does develop a nuclear weapon, she will be duty bound to take it out. I presume that she wouldn't take it out with a nuclear weapon. I presume it would be an attack and then we're in a situation of a war with mutually assured destruction on both sides. I thought we might have managed to move beyond that point, but the whole world would be in a situation where they would not be prepared for that eventuality. It's not just the Western World, I mean, the whole of the Middle East is concerned about this, isn't it? Was there another question?

HW: No, you covered them all.

Glenda: Have I covered it?

Ed: Poverty.

Glenda: Thank you.

HW: No, she did it first.

Ed: Okay.

HW: Why don't we continue?

Glenda: Did I do poverty?

HW: You did.

Glenda: Did I?

Audience: No.

Glenda: No, I didn't.

HW: Oh, sorry!

Glenda: You asked what I would continue to do. I'd continue to do what I've always done, I mean, which is argue for, campaign for, march for, our reaching the UN

percentage, which I believe we will do by 2012. I mean, when I was first elected, we, as a nation, were second from the bottom in that particular pecking order. So, certainly that we've done since we've been in government has certainly managed to reach those goals.

HW: Sorry, Ed?

Ed: I mean, just on the extreme poverty, yes, I agree with Glenda. I think we're on course to hit that by 2012 by the statistical analysis. I think there is something more fundamental. I mean I've spent a year working with Martin Dent who is an academic at Keele and established Jubilee 2000. I think there is something about poverty, whereby, people and voices can make a difference on this conversation. It doesn't have to be politicians acting. Clearly, harnessing politicians is a key part of that conversation. Actually, Jubilee 2000 and the canceling of third world debt and the raising of child poverty standards and lifting children out of poverty is something that can happen, where we have a social conscience. I think that's the issue. We just need to generate that and it's not just a futile hope. We need to generate that culture and that approach. I don't think it's that impossible. Jubilee 2000 was described as a pipedream when Martin first spoke of it. I think in 1991, but actually from being one academic at Keele university, it became a global movement and a successful one. In terms of nuclear power, I don't think another generation of nuclear power is the answer. An interesting set of tutting behind me, I think.

Glenda: I think it came from the audience actually.

Ed: It may have done as well (laughing).

HW: Continue!

Ed: I don't think another generation of nuclear power, I mean, I am genuinely angry we've left it so late. Actually nuclear power has been known as a problem. Nuclear power has been known as a problem for many many years. If we'd invested in renewable sources, we'd be there in the way that Scandinavia is. However, we're now at a tipping point. I know the scientists are going to argue over that, but about energy sources. There aren't many models whereby you actually wipeout nuclear power support and the economy survives. I think the only example cited is Cuba which is perhaps the least helpful example in the conversation, where they actually by nature of the American blockade, their power source is removed and they've gone into a post-nuclear power age. I don't propose reenacting Cuba here.

So I sense that we're on track for a set of nuclear power stations. There is a very real conversation about whether that's a renewal of the current set, whether it's expansion of the set. This is a pretty live issue on the North Somerset coast, whether you're rebuilding the power stations there or whether you're actually picking other sites. Certainly if you go to Hartlepoole and say you're against nuclear power, you won't win the election. If you go to Somerset and say you're in favor of nuclear power, you'll probably lose the Bridgewater constituency. So there are all sorts of pressure groups at play in that

conversation. I sense we're at the point whereby renewables are probably too late for the level of power we're now demanding. The issue with nuclear power of course, is the carbon output is low but the construction cost is high. Not just construction cost in financial terms but in environmental terms.

In terms of Iran and Israel, if the world just lets Iran chug along with its disguised experiment to obtain nuclear weapons, then it would be odd for Israel to not react. It would be almost bizarre. I happen to think that the East-West debate is now sterile and actually there is a different axis conversation around the Middle East, around nuclear weaponry. I think we have a choice. We either let Israel have that conversation on its own and just watch the consequences which will not be pleasant, or the world acts. I think America's concentration on that issue has moved away and I think if we just let it chug along as it currently is, then actually Iran will have nuclear weapons, Israel will react, and none of us will be the winners. Actually the world has a choice. You either act, and I don't think it's about protecting Israel, it's actually about being responsible towards Iran and the people of Iran.

HW: Chris:

Chris: Okay. I will endeavor to be concise. Let's start with the question of development. The Conservative Party have said, 'If we get elected, there are two parts of the national budget which we're going to protect, because clearly savings are going to have to be made to fix our bankrupt balance sheet. The two areas we're going to protect are the NHS and international development.' I think that should signal the importance we attach to helping our neighbors, our friends, cousins, brothers, around the world. As I hinted earlier, I think it's not just about, a. about giving out money, important though that is and much though we must do it. It's about how we give that aid out. I must prefer to see it delivered by charities and local groups who have an understanding of the local area, rather than giving it to governments who have I think historically, let's say, a somewhat checkered track record. I suspect there are charities who are based in this building, who have links to other charities or maybe themselves do work overseas in continents like Africa. Charities can be a very effective way of getting practical aid to the people who really need it.

I think trade is very important as well, because what really builds prosperity in the long-term isn't just giving out, handing out money, although it needs to be done to avoid catastrophes and to help people develop, what really creates sustainable, ongoing development is economic prosperity and development. I think opening up our trade channels a little bit more to some of these countries, will ultimately help them develop and help us as well. There is a potential win-win in there somewhere and I think that's the really sustainable, viable way to go about the whole thing.

Now, there was a series of questions about nuclear power and so on. The first part of it related to the UK. As I said a few minutes ago, I do think the reality is we have to invest in the next generation of nuclear power stations because if we don't, we're going to start getting blackouts and we're simply not going to be able to meet our needs. Our carbon

footprint will expand to yeti-like proportions and we will be dependent on countries like Russia, who have already started using fuel supply to their neighbors as a geopolitical cudgel with which to beat people. Frankly, I don't fancy being on the receiving end of Vladimir Putin whacking us over the head with gas supplies in ten years time. The second part of the question related to Israel's nuclear weapons programme. I think it's a pretty open secret. Frankly, of all the countries that are developing nuclear weapons outside the NPT, to be honest, Israel is a democracy, I frankly trust them, to put it bluntly. I trust them to use it responsibly which is not the case with a number of other countries that are developing nuclear weapons. If I were advising the foreign secretary and talking about who we need to denuclearise, Israel would not be, frankly, on the list. There are other countries that are far more, potentially dangerous that we should focus on.

Which brings me onto Iran which was the third and final part of the question. I think if Iran got hold of nuclear weapons it would be extremely dangerous. I mean, Iran have been sponsoring Hezbollah for some time. They've made all kinds of statements about both Israel and America. I think there is no guarantee they would use that nuclear weaponry with any restraint. They might do, maybe it will all be okay, but there is no guarantee. Nor is there any guarantee they wouldn't give any of that technology to terrorist organisations. So, you know, this may not happen but there is the material risk it would. So I think a nuclear armed Iran would be extremely, extremely worrying indeed. So what do we do about it? I think we need to start with a pretty muscular (TC: 01:40:00) set of diplomatic initiatives which currently are kind of stuck because China and Russia for whatever reason don't really want to play ball. Since his election Barack Obama has not really engaged with the issue as much as we thought that he might. So I think that we do need to contemplate a more front-foot set of, for example, economic sanctions to try and encourage-, stick and carrot to stop Iran developing these weapons. I don't think we've been active enough.

I mean, there is an argument you could make and I don't think I'm quite persuaded. You might say, 'Just leave them to it and the opposition movement, the green movement will eventually topple the regime and that will sort it out.' That's a dangerous assumption to make and I think right now, based on the facts available today, I don't think that's a gamble I would be prepared to take. Therefore I would be urging the world's leading nations, including this one, to put together, a much more front foot set of economic sanctions and incentives to try and push the Iranian government into the right direction to avoid this happening. Because if it does happen, there is a chance, maybe it's only 25%, but a material chance that we're going to end up with extremely serious problems in that region. It serves everyone's interests. The Iranian people's interest, certainly the Israeli people's interests.

HW: Chris you have to end.

Chris: To avoid that situation occurring (applause).

HW: We're really out of time, so can I just cut the applause and just ask you very quickly in one minute each to give your final end speech.

Glenda: No! What's the time? We're talked out!

HW: You're talked out! (Applause).

Glenda: Some of us want a cigarette!

HW: Okay, so no end speech, so on that basis, thank you all very much for coming, thank you audience for participating. We will have a transcript of this and I'm sure there will be people in this audience that will use it and hold you to account in the coming weeks and months and into the next post-election. Please do take the manifestos and read them, we'll be distributing them for our organisations and we will be sending them to your central parties. So have a look at what's in them in more detail. Lastly, I'm sure there will be people here that will want to continue this conversation with you.

Glenda: Well shut up and let them do it!

HW: So I'll send them your way.

Glenda: Could I just say? Thank you to Hannah for chairing so well (applause) and thank you for some really interesting questions! Thank you very much.