

AIPAC'S APPROACH TO

BDS

THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS MOVEMENT



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Since its founding in 1948, Israel's enemies have repeatedly attempted to undermine and ultimately destroy the Jewish state through military assaults, terrorist attacks, and actions at international organizations. More recently, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign has emerged in an effort to stigmatize, delegitimize and isolate the State of Israel.

BDS proponents seek to drive a wedge between Israel and the rest of the world—separating Israel's government, businesses, universities and people from their partners abroad.

AIPAC's work to oppose BDS is two-fold:



Counter threats to Israel posed by foreign governments and international organizations



Equip pro-Israel students to proactively address the challenges presented on U.S. college campuses

At its heart, BDS does not aim to affect positive political change or improve the situation for Palestinians. BDS' objective is to delegitimize Israel and undermine its right to exist.

BDS dishonestly equates former apartheid South Africa with present-day Israel in order to enlist people of conscience in a global campaign of economic and social pressure.

BDS does not seek Israeli-Palestinian peace. Instead, many of its proponents seek to destroy Israel.



Waged in European capitals and in institutions like the United Nations, state-led BDS seeks to isolate Israel politically and economically by punishing those who work with the Jewish state. Disguised as a righteous movement, it blames Israel—and only Israel—for the absence of peace. And it attacks the Jewish state with a moral code applied exclusively to Israel.

In seeking to impose one-sided “solutions” on Israel outside the bounds of a negotiated framework, BDS efforts undermine the prospects for peace by relieving Palestinians of the need to negotiate with Israel, and by promoting demands that forgo any expectation of compromise.

By eroding confidence in Israel’s legitimacy, BDS attempts to weaken and ultimately destroy Israel.

AIPAC’s Approach:

AIPAC has lobbied Congress for decades to counter diplomatic attacks and economic warfare against Israel.

- In the 1970s, AIPAC encouraged Congress to combat the Arab League Boycott. Congress passed key legislation to prevent American companies from complying with Arab boycott requests.
- In the 2000s, we urged Congress to make ending boycotts against Israel a condition of free trade with the United States. That message was carried to the Arab states of Oman and Bahrain, which acceded to that demand, and America now monitors their compliance.
- Today, as trade talks take place between the United States and the European Union, strong bipartisan majorities in Congress have set a clear standard through legislation: EU activity to boycott Israel risks forfeiting the benefits of free trade with America.

AIPAC has encouraged Congress to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship, countering divestment with investment.

- The 1985 U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement serves as the foundation for expanding trade and investment between the two countries—from \$8 billion a year when the agreement was signed to more than \$45 billion today.
- In 2014, the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act (SPA) formally designated Israel as a “strategic partner” of the United States and established a legislative foundation upon which to grow the bilateral relationship in the areas of energy, water, homeland security and food security.
- Moreover, in state capitals across America, representatives are passing laws formally condemning BDS, requiring state pension funds to divest from companies that promote BDS, and preventing state governments from buying goods or services from them.



On U.S. college campuses, BDS efforts are most evident when student governments consider resolutions to single-out and punish the state of Israel. To date, only a handful of student governments have passed BDS resolutions, and in each case, the college or university has swiftly issued a repudiation.

In fact, despite the efforts of Israel's detractors, no U.S. college or university has divested from Israel or companies doing business with Israel—and none is likely to do so.

Rather, the real focus of BDS on campus is to create skepticism in the minds of students about Israel's legitimacy. Seeds of doubt are intended to bloom decades later when graduates hold positions of power and authority—and can withhold tangible support or even contest Israel's right to exist.

AIPAC's Approach:

For more than 35 years, AIPAC has worked to help students find their pro-Israel voices and strengthen Israel's position on America's college campuses and beyond.

- Thousands of college and high school student activists participate in AIPAC political leadership training each year to learn the value of the U.S.-Israel alliance, the importance of pro-Israel political activism and how to engage campus political leaders to defeat BDS.
- From intensive seminars in Washington, D.C. where students meet with members of Congress, to rigorous trips to Israel to learn about the issues first-hand, AIPAC empowers rising activists to help build the pro-Israel community on and beyond campus. AIPAC also welcomes thousands of students to Policy Conference each year, the nation's most widely-attended pro-Israel event.
- AIPAC-trained student activists learn that the best way to counter animosity towards Israel and anti-Semitism is not by shouting louder, but rather through the diligent work of building relationships with diverse political, racial, religious and cultural communities on campus who recognize the destructive and malicious nature of the BDS movement—and the many benefits of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.
- AIPAC instills confidence in students to successfully make the case for Israel in hostile environments. Student activists are prepared with salient facts to counter damaging falsehoods perpetuated by those who seek to divide and separate students on campus. In addition, they encourage America's future policymakers to celebrate and strengthen the countless academic and other partnerships between the two countries that benefit the entire world.
- On campuses nationwide, AIPAC-trained students are leading efforts to make the case for the U.S.-Israel alliance, to push back against Israel's detractors, and to defeat anti-Israel resolutions brought before student governments.

The mission of AIPAC is to strengthen, protect and promote the U.S.-Israel relationship in ways that enhance the security of the United States and Israel.



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