Response to Common Inaccuracy: Divestment and Boycott are Effective Methods to Protest Israel

Inaccuracy: Divestment and other initiatives aimed at sanctioning Israel are appropriate and effective methods by Palestinians and their supporters to protest objectionable Israeli policies.

Response
Divestment and other BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) initiatives are fundamentally biased in their demonization of Israel and fail to do anything constructive to improve the situation on the ground for Palestinians or promote Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.

Divestment campaigns ignore the complex nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the competing national and territorial claims, and simplistically and unfairly place the onus of the conflict on Israel alone.

They also disregard the long record of Arab and Palestinian refusal to recognize of Jewish statehood, along with Israel's peace proposals at Camp David, Taba and elsewhere, which were rejected by the Palestinian leadership.

A true solution to the conflict will require the good faith and determination of both parties to work together for a secure, independent and prosperous future for Palestinians and Israelis. Such a solution will only emerge from intense negotiations, with both sides making difficult concessions regarding borders, refugees, settlements and additional contentious matters.
BDS does nothing to promote such Israeli-Palestinian negotiations or reconciliation, and does not even support this as a goal of the movement. Indeed, leading BDS advocates and organizations do not support a two-state solution or the continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state and deny the Jewish right to self-determination and statehood. The global BDS movement’s demand for the return of all Palestinian refugees to their former home in Israel effectively calls for the end of the Jewish State of Israel.

To be sure, criticism of Israel and Israeli policies can be reasonable and legitimate. But divestment, which singles out Israel for pariah status, is biased and disproportionate.

BDS is also not effective. Despite the best efforts of these activists, and some minor gains among church groups and British trade unions, the divestment and boycott campaign has largely failed to have more than a public relations impact, particularly in the U.S. To date, despite some symbolic wins, campaigns have failed to convince targeted institutions to divest from Israel, universities to boycott Israeli scholars and academic institutions, or lobby U.S. companies to stop doing business with Israel.