

Hillary Clinton: “Make Countering BDS a Priority, Fighting for Israel is a Personal commitment”

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On the eve of her religious denomination’s quadrennial meeting, Hillary Clinton wrote a letter to Jewish agency heads saying she opposes the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel that the meeting will consider.

“I believe that BDS seeks to punish Israel and dictate how the Israelis and Palestinians should resolve the core issues of their conflict. This is not the path to peace,” Clinton wrote in a letter Monday (May 9) to David Sherman, chair of the Israel Action Network, and Susan K. Stern, vice chair of the Jewish Federations of North America.

The Democratic presidential candidate is [a lifelong Methodist](#) and may be watching the workings of the General Conference, the denomination’s top policy-making body, from afar. The conference begins Tuesday (May 10) in Portland, Ore.

Clinton has spoken against the BDS movement before, calling it “alarming” [in her speech](#) earlier this year to American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Divestment is one of the top [issues](#) to be considered at the conference. [Four resolutions](#) would require the denomination to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett-Packard — companies that profit from Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands — and other investments that relate to illegal settlements. The church [already opposes](#) the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Friends Fiduciary Corporation [already have divested](#) from companies supporting Israeli occupation.

“Your voice is very much needed this week,” wrote Stern and Sherman to Clinton in a joint letter. “We hope you will again speak out forcefully against the divisive and destructive BDS movement.”

Here is the full text of Clinton’s response:

Dear David and Susie:

Thank you for your letter, and for your organizations’ continued leadership in confronting so many of the important issues and challenges our world faces.

More than three decades ago, my husband, Bill, and I took our first trip to Israel, walked the ancient streets of Jerusalem’s Old City, and fell in love with the country and its people. Israel became a special place for us, and I am lucky

to have had many opportunities to return and to make many dear friends there over the years.

As Senator and Secretary of State, I saw how crucial it is for America to defend Israel at every turn. I have opposed dozens of anti-Israel resolutions at the UN, the Human Rights Council, and other international organizations. I condemned the biased Goldstone Report, making it clear that Israel must be allowed to defend itself like any other country. And I made sure the United States blocked Palestinian attempts at the UN to unilaterally declare statehood. Time after time, no matter the venue, I have made it clear that America will always stand up for Israel. If I am fortunate enough to be elected president, the United States will reaffirm we have a strong and enduring national interest in Israel's security.

It is because of my longstanding commitment to the Israeli people and to the security of Israel that I am writing to express my opposition to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction movement, or "BDS," the global effort to isolate the State of Israel by ending commercial and academic exchanges. I know you agree that we need to make countering BDS a priority, and that we need to work together—across party lines and with a diverse array of voices—to reverse this trend with information and advocacy, and fight back against further attempts to isolate and delegitimize Israel. It would be a serious mistake for the United States to abandon our responsibilities, or cede the mantle of leadership for global peace and security to anyone else. The Jewish state is a modern day miracle—a vibrant bloom in the middle of a desert—and we must nurture and protect it.

I believe that BDS seeks to punish Israel and dictate how the Israelis and Palestinians should resolve the core issues of their conflict. This is not the path to peace. I remain convinced that Israel's long-term security and future as a Jewish state depends on having two states for two peoples. But that can only be achieved through direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians; it cannot be imposed from the outside or by unilateral actions. As Secretary of State, I convened the last round of direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders; I know how hard this will be, but it is an effort to which I would be committed as president.

Israel is a vibrant democracy in a region dominated by autocracy, and it faces existential threats to its survival. Fighting for Israel isn't just about policy; it is a personal commitment to the friendship between our peoples and our vision for peace and security. Particularly at a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise across the world, we need to repudiate forceful efforts to malign and undermine Israel and the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism has no place in any civilized society—not in America, not in Europe, not anywhere. We must never tire in defending Israel's legitimacy, expanding security and economic ties, and taking our alliance to the next level.

Please know that I am grateful for your work, and that I stand ready to be your partner as we engage all people of good faith—regardless of their political persuasion or their views on policy specifics—in explaining why the BDS campaign is counterproductive to the pursuit of peace and harmful to Israelis and Palestinians alike.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

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