



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Office of the President

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**STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT JOHN GARVEY
ON THE AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI UNIVERSITIES**

The American Studies Association's recent call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions is lamentable. The Association has appointed itself as a kind of inept volunteer fire department, aiming to put out the Israeli-Palestinian conflagration by throwing gasoline on the fire. That's not exactly right. It has decided to pour gas not on the source of the fire but on bystanders, some of whom are trying to extinguish the flames. No good can come of punishing academic institutions for the shortcomings, real and perceived, of their nations' leaders and policies.

Rather than restricting academic freedom to advance political causes, academic organizations like the ASA should be working to foster dialogue with their foreign interlocutors, perhaps especially those they disagree with. The academy – universities, faculties, and satellite institutions – is a place where research, open discussion, and creative thought can lead to reforms and new approaches to longstanding problems. I hope the ASA's call for a boycott produces just the opposite of its intended result – a proliferation of U.S. linkages with Israeli universities and other universities in the Middle East.