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Divestment would punish wrong side

As a UCLA alumnus, I read with great concern the July 8 Daily Bruin editorial "UC must respect human rights, divest" and the "Special Letter from the Editor" that followed on July 15.

As a congressman, I supported sanctions against South Africa, which helped bring down apartheid, and the law which pressured the Soviet Union to allow freedom of emigration. But the idea, supported by The Bruin, to sanction Israel for the failure to achieve peace in the Middle East would punish the only democratic country in the region which respects human rights and has been willing to do everything it can for peace (except commit suicide). The sad fact is the Palestinian and Arab leaders have rejected peace, resorted to terrorism and the murder of innocent civilians because they are unwilling to live alongside a Jewish state of Israel. The United States should not punish Israel but continue to pressure the Arab world toward democracy and to accept a secure Israel living alongside a peaceful Palestine.

Henry Waxman United States congressman

Ignore critics, divestment justified

Your July 8 editorial "UC must respect human rights, divest," is a brave and progressive step toward peace and justice in the battered Middle East. This is just a reminder that if you take into account the per capita population of pro-Israel Jews versus Palestinians and progressives, you have an overwhelming majority in favor of divestment. As in all areas of public debate when it comes to the Middle East, a vociferous few scuttle debate and free expression. It would be comforting to know you can withstand intimidation. Should you choose to do so, be prepared to contend with the label of anti-Semites.

Hani Bawardi Ann Arbor, MI

Hold true to beliefs through opposition

I found the necessity for your Special Letter to be a very depressing reflection on the pressures placed on you if you fail to conform to many