

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

July 5, 2017

The Honorable Mr. Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to request the reappointment of two positions critical to the global and domestic fight against anti-Semitism - the White House liaison to the Jewish community and the State Department Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS).

With the recent increase in incidents of anti-Semitism in the United States and in some other countries, as well as a rise in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, I am concerned that the Administration has failed to designate points of contact for Jewish international and domestic communities. For over forty years, previous Presidents have appointed a White House liaison to the Jewish community. In 2004 Congress required the State Department to create the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, headed by a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, through the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act (Public Law 108-332). The Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Omnibus Appropriations Act also included an explanatory statement: "The Secretary of State is directed to fill the position of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism authorized by Public Law 108-332 in a timely manner."

Beyond being a liaison to American and global Jewish communities on issues ranging from the BDS movement and addressing anti-Semitic hate crimes, these positions have been critical for working with officials at all levels of government, including multilateral organizations, to facilitate the protection of, address stereotypes and prejudice towards, and provide educational and community and coalition building tools for the wider public on and with Jewish communities, including celebrating Jewish-American heritage.

I am therefore troubled by remarks by Secretary Tillerson on June 15 before the House Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee, in which the Secretary appeared to challenge the statutory mandate of the SEAS position. Secretary Tillerson said, "I have not made a decision as to whether that special envoy office should be left as it is or if there is a better way to deliver on the intent." These comments directly contradict State Department spokesperson Mark Toner's April 14 statement that the Administration will appoint a Special Envoy.

Given continuing incidents of anti-Semitism, including over a hundred threats to Jewish institutions in this country since the beginning of the year, and significant incidents abroad, I urge you to comply with the FY17 Omnibus and Public Law 108-332 and select a qualified individual to serve as the SEAS, and also appoint a qualified White House Liaison. Should it prove helpful, I am happy to assist you in identifying qualified persons. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Cardin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Benjamin L. Cardin  
Ranking Member

CC:  
The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State