

Remembering those who do not have freedom . . .

Tibetans, North Koreans, sex slaves, Palestinians . . . among these, only the Palestinians' lack of freedom is enabled by the U.S. government, with our tax dollars. The U.S. supplies over \$8 million dollars a day in military aid to Israel, whose population is about the size of the Bay Area's. Most of this military aid is used against Palestinian civilians who are struggling to free themselves from Israeli occupation, domination, and expansion onto Palestinian land.

Unarmed Palestinians at demonstrations have been killed by live ammunition and also U.S.-supplied teargas canisters fired at close range, in violation of rules about how they should be used. In Operation Cast Lead, Israel's 22 day-assault against Gaza in 2008-9, Israel dropped U.S.-supplied phosphorus bombs on civilian areas, causing slow burns deep into people's bodies. Phosphorus bombs are not supposed to be used in densely populated areas. The ratio of Palestinians to Israelis killed in that war was more than 100 to 1.

In October 2012, 15 leaders of Christian churches wrote to Congress asking it to investigate whether Israel uses our military aid in compliance with U.S. laws. The U.S. Arms Export Control Act limits the use of U.S. weapons to "Internal security" or "legitimate self-defense." The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act prohibits assistance to "any country which engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations." The U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and Israel's leading human rights organization, B'Tselem, have provided abundant evidence of Israel's violation of human rights. Yet Congress won't investigate. Why?

Israel conquered the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza during the 1967 War, land the U.N. intended for a Palestinian state, and has occupied it militarily ever since. Under international law a conquering power may not move its civilians into occupied territory. We have enabled Israel's settlements by providing such things as Caterpillar bulldozers and HP surveillance equipment. Yet, when we asked Israel to stop the settlement-building, Israel thumbed its nose at us. It continued illegal settlement-building, bulldozing thousands of Palestinian homes and orchards to this day. When the Security Council wanted to pass a resolution against settlement-building, using President Obama's very

words against settlements, Obama, on Israel's behalf, said he would veto the resolution. Why?

Before Israel became a state, many people had serious misgivings about Zionism—the movement to create a Jewish state. Jews in the United States had come to enjoy the separation of church and state. Some feared that establishing a Jewish state in Palestine against the will of the majority of the population would lead to more anti-Semitism. The State Department strongly opposed the idea, predicting that it would generate ongoing violence, diminish our moral standing, and be against U.S. interests. Zionist paramilitary were already forcing Palestinian Arabs into exile. President Truman was conflicted but finally supported the idea, persuaded that Jewish votes and money were needed to win a close race.

Thus our special relationship with Israel was established, a relationship that makes it difficult to even discuss whether we want it. We don't have the information we need to discuss it. We hear little about Palestinians' daily lives under occupation or about their mass displacement in 1948, known as the *Nakba*, or Catastrophe. Are we really free when another country has so much influence over our media and politicians?

To learn more about how this special relationship began, read Alison Weir's *Against Our Better Judgment: The hidden history of how the U.S. was used to create Israel*. Weir will talk about her book on May 31, at 7:30 pm, at the First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo, 72 Kensington Road, San Anselmo 94960.

For more information about the program and for links to facts mentioned in this handout, go to www.14fp.org. There you can also learn what you can do.