

# Karen Telleen-Lawton: Sustainable Global Policy

World peace begins with a U.S. policy based on support for justice everywhere.



Palestinian girls head to school in the old city of Jerusalem. (Karen Telleen-Lawton / Noozhawk photo)

By Karen Telleen-Lawton, Noozhawk Columnist | Published on 03.22.2010

Strolling through any store is convincing evidence of the ubiquity of global products, but most of us are understandably confused about U.S. global policy and its effects on our lives.

One who is trying to expand awareness is [Dr. Jeff Halper](#), an anthropologist, American-born Israeli Jew and [Nobel Peace Prize](#) nominee. In several venues across town on March 2, he delivered a bleak assessment of U.S. foreign policy in Israel and Palestine.

Sponsored by the local group [Americans for a Just Peace in the Middle East](#), Harper addressed a luncheon at the [UCSB Faculty Club](#), gave a lecture to about 40 [UCSB](#) students, and spoke to about 50 students at [Westmont College](#). He wrapped up his day at the downtown library for an audience of 90.

Harper is an author, lecturer and co-founder of the [Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions](#). He told of his own journey as a Jew who moved to Israel years ago “make a difference.” He urged Americans, including American Jews, to allow Israel to mature into a nation that extends justice to all of its residents, regardless of race or religion. Emphasizing the asymmetrical nature of the conflict, he placed responsibility on the side with power: the Israeli government.



Since 1976, Israel has been “the largest annual recipient of direct economic and military assistance” and “largest gross recipient of such assistance since [World War II](#),” according to [Wikipedia](#). That is about one-fifth of the U.S. foreign aid budget,” about \$500 annually for each Israeli. Currently, Iraq money temporarily eclipses money to Israel.

Why do Americans know so little about this? [Research by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt](#) shows that support for Israel is compatible with traditional Republican and Democratic agendas, and “being distinctively unsupportive of Israel can significantly hurt a candidate’s chances.” Money is the key. Harper believes his country’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is unjust and unsustainable, and calls on [Congress](#) to cease unrestricted funding and support of Israel.

On my three trips to Palestine and Israel during the past five years, I have witnessed the successive strangling of the Palestinian economy, with walls built well within Palestinian territory. The walls, fences and guard towers separate men, women and children from their families, schools and jobs. Well-kept Israeli-only highways and checkpoint-riddled, dilapidated West Bank ones reinforce a society where the government allocates freedom of movement, education, speech and more based on Jewishness.

The majority of Palestinians and Israelis desire peaceful resolution to the conflict. Nevertheless, they mean different things by “peace.” Palestinians insist that peace means “just peace”: simply upholding international law. [United Nations Security Resolution 242](#), approved unanimously by the [U.N. Security Council](#) in 1967, calls for “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the [1967 \(‘Six-day’\) War](#)” and “termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries from threats or acts of force.”

For Israelis, peace means territorial and human security, but there is little agreement on how this could be achieved. The Israeli government continues to build cities euphemistically called “settlements” on Palestinian land using water confiscated from Palestinians.

The situation deteriorates daily. Pressure from settlement expansion, encroachment on [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#), and Israeli crackdowns on nonviolent protests are bringing Jerusalem close to a breaking point, according to [Sabeel](#), an organization of Palestinian Christians. The tension in the city is higher than it has been in many years, they say.

Sustainable world peace begins with a U.S. policy based on support for justice wherever it resides, which supports long-run U.S. strategic interests. The elected Democrat and Republican leadership can't seem to see beyond the money, so American individuals need to become better educated on this issue. These links can help.

— *Karen Telleen-Lawton's column is a mélange of observations supporting sustainability. Graze her writing and excerpts from Canyon Voices: The Nature of Rattlesnake Canyon at [www.CanyonVoices.com](http://www.CanyonVoices.com).*