

PRESS RELEASES:

Activist Cindy Sheehan, Arrested at March 20 Iraq War Protest, Expands Peace Activism to Israel/Palestine in Groundbreaking Book

BELLEVIEW, WA—Cindy Sheehan is no stranger to loss—or controversy. The mother of a fallen Iraq soldier, Ms. Sheehan first gained notoriety for camping out in front of former President George W. Bush's Texas ranch in opposition to the war. Most recently, she was arrested Saturday (March 20) at a large anti-war march through the Capital commemorating the seventh anniversary of the Iraq War and demanding an immediate withdrawal of troops. Over the past few years, Ms. Sheehan has become a leader and symbol of strength in the peace movement, venturing into other U.S.-supported conflicts such as Afghanistan and Israel/Palestine. Toward that end, Ms. Sheehan recently contributed her words to a groundbreaking new anthology titled *Shifting Sands: Jewish Women Confront the Israeli Occupation*.

"For speaking out, I was (and am) called 'anti-American and 'anti-Semitic,'" she writes in the book's introduction. "I am neither...I am 'anti-immoral-occupations' and opposed to the governments that perpetrate and perpetuate them. Or more to the point, I am pro-peace, pro-justice, pro-human rights."

Ms. Sheehan describes *Shifting Sands* as "a collection of essays and poetry by 14 brilliant Jewish women." She explains that "through these histories and testimonials, we are taken to a human world, where transformation comes early or late but it always comes." The collection of very personal stories includes essays by Starhawk, Anna Baltzer, Jen Marlowe, Hedy Epstein and other Jewish women relating their personal stories of Judaism, the Palestinian struggle for freedom, and hopes for peace. The book, published by Whole World Press, is available for preordering through Amazon.com and will be published in paperback and on Kindle May 4.

Baker's Statement on Real Costs of Aid to Israel Shown in Human Terms via Groundbreaking Collection of Jewish Women's Personal Stories

BELLEVIEW, WA— In an interview published in the National Journal, Secretary of State James Baker advised the Obama administration that the \$3 billion the U.S. gives Israel in aid this year should be tied to the Israeli government's compliance with the ban on new Jewish Settlements in occupied Palestinian lands.

Currently, despite statements by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Israel's settlement building continues—and is accelerating as living conditions in Gaza under siege are called inhumane by the United Nations. Despite all this, stories about the effects of the Israeli occupation rarely receive this sort of spotlight in the media because of the U.S.'s close relationship with Israel. Many Americans also consider this topic "too complex" to fully comprehend. It is with informing Americans in mind that editor Osie Gabriel Adelfang began compiling the upcoming anthology, *Shifting Sands: Jewish Women Confront the Israeli Occupation*. Adelfang says many Israelis and Americans alike are so used to hearing huge numbers (billions of dollars, thousands dead, millions of refugees) as well as seeing Palestinians stereotyped as rabid terrorists that most don't question Israel's actions or American aid.

"I believe that the first step toward any peace is in seeing the "other" as human again," Adelfang says. "You can't see people on the other side of a 24-foot wall. But my contributors have been on both sides. I believe that by telling their own personal stories, the women who contributed to the book accomplish two goals. First, they show the world that there are Jews out there (including in Israel itself) that strongly oppose the Israeli government's policies. Second, they show the world individual, human stories of life under occupation as seen through individual women's eyes—an easier avenue toward understanding than the overwhelming amount of history, information and disinformation to sort through in understanding how the current situation came into being.

The book contains 12 essays and two poems as well as an introduction by American peace activist Cindy Sheehan and a preface by award-winning Israeli journalist Amira Hass. It is currently available for preorder through [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and will be published in print and via Kindle on May 4.

"This is information Americans need to be thinking about," Adelfang explains, "not just for the sake of peace over there but because their tax money—a lot of it—is going toward an occupation the U.S. claims to oppose. I agree with Mr. Baker, we have to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak, and stop supporting this ongoing tragedy."

In Mr. Baker's interview, he made this point directly:

"I would also stress that United States taxpayers are giving Israel roughly \$3 billion each year, which amounts to something like \$1,000 for every Israeli citizen, at a time when our own economy is in bad shape and a lot of Americans would appreciate that kind of helping hand from their own government. Given that fact, it is not unreasonable to ask the Israeli leadership to respect U.S. policy on settlements."

Mere words are not doing the job: In an article published today (March 22, 2010) in the UK Telegraph, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "boasted that he had faced down American demands to halt Jewish construction in East Jerusalem." The story quotes Netanyahu as saying:

"As far as we are concerned, building in Jerusalem is the same as building in Tel Aviv," he said. "I wrote a letter, at my own initiative, to the [S]ecretary of [S]tate so that things would be crystal clear."

Under current policy, Israel's government is not only receiving aid, but also openly admitting to calling the shots in the U.S./Israeli relationship. Palestinians suffer, U.S. aid contributes to illegal settlement expansion, and President Obama, according to Mr. Baker, will soon appear weak and ineffective on foreign policy. Adelfang recommends Americans research the facts for themselves and let their representatives in government know how they feel about their money being spent in this way. For her personally, she says, "it's not the money. Read these women's stories. They make me cry again each time. Real human beings, hardworking, honest people, young children—they are suffering and the world is telling them that no one cares." She hopes the book will not only show that some do care, but will help others educate themselves and take action toward justice and peace.