For those who do not forget those points, the pain is real. It is not at all difficult to understand why a people as oppressed as the Palestinians have been, with the apparently unthinking complicitity of the United States, see our country as hypocritical and uncaring.

Now, finally, there is movement on the political front. But that is not our concern. Our concern is the people of Palestine - the ordinary women, men, and children who simply want to live decent lives on the lands which have been theirs for centuries. People who have been killed, beaten, humiliated. People who have been evicted so their homes could be demolished, who have had their wells closed, their orchards destroyed, their land confiscated. People who have experienced tear gas lobbed into maternity wards, arrest without charge, torture until they sign confessions written in a language they can't read, trials without adequate defense, and imprisonment in inhumane conditions. People for whom medical care has been obstructed, education has been stopped, and who have been arbitrarily taxed (by soldiers!). People who have been illegally deported, whose families have been separated, whose children have been shot, and whose bones were deliberately broken.

Who did those horrible things? The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) did.

Can you imagine Gulf War coalition troops acting in the fashion of the IDF? Of course not. Such reprehensible conduct is completely foreign to the moral standards of most civilized countries. Our sense of outrage was triggered by the senseless beatings by the Los Angeles Police Department, and calls for accountability and change were immediate. But we ignore (if we are aware, because the media frequently ignore them) the facts regarding the much greater brutality of the IDF. It is a brutality well documented by dozens of reputable organizations including Amnesty International, the Red Cross, Physicians for Human Rights, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and of course the US State Department and the United Nations.

Granted, similar human rights abuses occur, as the State Department reports, in many parts of the world. Only in Israel, however, is it so systematic, so deliberate, and so well funded with dollars from US taxpayers. Interestingly, we now use economic power by telling others in the Gulf War coalition we won't sell them more arms until they make good on their pledges regarding funds for the war. Why don't we tell Israel, who gets the lion's share of our foreign aid funds (and who wants more) to first meet their commitments under the Fourth Geneva Convention?

Given that background, it is not difficult for non-political, non-Arab persons to understand the dismay, anger, and mistrust so many Palestinians feel about the US. If we of AAPHR are among those persons, what do we want? We want the IDF to stop its oppression of the Palestinians. That can be achieved two ways. One way is compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. What the IDF is being made to do is not only shocking, illegal, and immoral, but dumb as well. The IDF was until recently headed by Lt Gen Dan Shomron. On his retirement he said that the Palestinian uprising could not be quelled by force. Further, the conduct of the IDF is making brutes out of young Israelis. Why continue?

The other way to stop IDF oppression is for it to leave the occupied territories. The diplomats and politicians must determine which way to proceed. But that will take time. Meanwhile, do not humanitarian values require that we focus on the people of the land, <u>all</u> lands, and not just on their government? If there is room for morality and justice in a "new world order", what will <u>you</u> do to help bring them to, among others, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?