

The Irish on Israel: Why Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore Lambasted the Jewish State

by Robert Harris (November 2011)

call to annihilate Israel in the PLO charter, a vital requirement of the Oslo peace process. Hamas repeatedly denies Israel's right to exist and has called for a mass genocide against the Jews. The PA and Hamas formed a mock government for the UN bid. If their past conduct is anything to go by, a state they constitute would surely make a mockery of Article Four.

The nature of a Palestinian state is again conflated with existent states in an assertion about borders:

Some would seek to argue that Palestine cannot be recognised as a State because its borders remain to be agreed. But if the borders of Palestine are still a matter for negotiation, then so, by definition, are those of Israel which is rightly a full member of the UN.

On the face of it, his point sounds reasonable. Yet when analysed the point represents a non-sequitur that misleads as it strips each case of their differing contexts. Distilled down, he essentially argues that recognition and/or membership of a Palestinian state equates with the same status afforded to Israel: A is justified as B has already been so. He appears to argue that both are conditional on each other being valid, regardless of the matter of disputed boundaries. Since he parallels the two, we can infer that both must have some form of similarity in terms of the conditions of their recognition/membership. This could be a distant similarity where equivalencies are artfully drawn out or a closer similarity in terms of circumstance. Does this bear out? Not really. The UN afforded an extant Israel full membership in May 1949, around the time the Armistice Lines were being finalised with the other nations involved in the 1948-49 war, which the International community now seek to re-use to carve up the State permanently.

anti-Western Non-Aligned Movement representing a majority of UN members.

Gilmore goes on to extol the virtues of the Charter, seemingly as the basis of all that is

good in the UN:

Hostility toward Israel, and Judaism in general, is a sizeable element in the movement.

A similar aggression toward Christians has been especially damaging because they lack the protection of a state like Israel. The destruction of Mid Eastern Christians has increased in recent months. Isolated events have reached the news occasionally but the phenomenon has otherwise been [100,000 Christians have left since the fall of Mubarak](#) and worse is to come.

Aftermath of the speech

calling on the government to recognise a Palestinian state at the UN meeting, Senator Terry Leyden, of the Friends of Palestine parliamentary group, said that Alan Shatter, the sole Jewish minister in Government, had an undue influence over foreign policy on Palestine. He also accused American Jews as having an undue influence over Obama. His assertions raised the sceptre of antisemitism, which he furiously denied.

haranguing the government with accusations of following Obama's stance at the UN, even though they had already said they would vote in favour of a Palestinian state.

After the speech Gilmore [used the event to incite violence](#).

The recent permission for the construction of more homes in Gilo was also a source of consternation:

established the methods that greatly advanced Israel's demonisation in the following years of the decade, e.g. re-introducing the apartheid slur to achieve Israel's isolation akin to South Africa. Durban should have been a cautionary tale about the dark side of pro-Palestinianism but she expressed pride of the event rather than remorse, continues to bash Israel, and is regarded as something of a paradigmatic example of secular sainthood!

It is common to hear comparisons between the Northern Irish conflict and that found in the Israeli-Palestinian territories. This comparison is alluded to by Gilmore:

In Ireland, we know from our own experience that peace does not come easily. It requires political will and difficult compromises. But we also know the benefits of peace. There can be no doubting the hugely transformative power for the Middle East region of a final end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is a tendency to parallel the catholic Irish with the Palestinians, and the Britain

with Israel. Yet in reality these comparisons have only a very limited validity. The Irish have a great deal in common with the Jews historically, having been persecuted and pushed out into a diaspora by occupying empires, and Ireland is as much the homeland of the Irish as Israel is a homeland to the Jews. Indeed some Irish revolutionaries are known to have expressed sympathy for Zionism in the early 20th Century.

There are numerous divergences between these two conflicts as well so lessons from one are not easily transposed to the other. However, some understanding can legitimately be taken from the resolution of conflict in Ireland. The first is genuine compromise. The Irish have accepted that the unification of Ireland is not a precondition for ending conflict. As part of the Good Friday Agreement, a referendum removing the claim to Northern Ireland in Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic of Ireland Constitution was overwhelmingly accepted by voters. There was a mutual acceptance of the fears of the opposing sides, which were then addressed in a meaningful fashion. Within a short time a remarkable transformation took place in Northern Ireland. Even seasoned political commentators were astonished at the results.

resident of Jerusalem stated when faced with the likely division of his city: