


Mary Robinson, War Criminal?

An Appropriate Career Move

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 Articles & Testimony

On September 12, 1997, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Mary Robinson as the United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights. On paper, Robinson is as eminently qualified as any other U.N. political appointee. For seven years, she served as president of Ireland. The website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights trumpets Robinson's "outstanding legal qualifications" and her long record in human rights. Chief among Robinson's accomplishments are her attendance and participation in many United Nations conferences and her travel. The official website crowns, "Ms. Robinson was the first head of State to visit Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide there. While in Rwanda, she met representatives of, and was briefed by, agencies on the ground, as well as by the United Nations Human Rights Monitors. She was also the first Head of State to visit the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia."

What the United Nations trumpets as qualifications look like little more than empty grandstanding to anyone caught outside the U.N.'s labyrinthine bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the International Criminal Tribunal might be an appropriate place for Robinson to return, albeit for a slightly longer visit.

The trouble starts with Robinson's tenure as president of Ireland. During the last four years of Robinson's tenure, the European Union donated large sums of money to the Palestinian Authority. Ireland even held the presidency of the European Union for the second half of 1996. During this time, Arafat siphoned large amounts of European aid money away to pay for terror. Robinson can plead ignorance, but documents seized during the recent Israeli incursion into the West Bank revealed that the Palestinian Authority spent approximately \$9 million of European Union aid money each month on the salaries of those organizing terror attacks against civilians. While European officials like Robinson looked the other way, the Palestinian Authority regularly converted millions of dollars of aid money into shekels at rates about 20 percent below normal, allowing the Palestinian chairman to divert millions of dollars worth of aid into his personal slush fund.

Remember the young boys, students, and old women killed in the rash of Palestinian bus bombings back in 1996? It's hard to believe that European politicians are so incompetent than to notice that Palestinian violence grew in proportion to their aid money. European funds enabled Arafat to purchase \$50 million worth of sophisticated Iranian weaponry for use against civilians. While the world knows the story of the Karine-A's interception last January, few remember that the ship represented only one of many Palestinian weapons schemes (Remember the Calypso? The Santorini? The smuggling tunnels from Egypt into Gaza?) European leaders may claim ignorance, but Robinson should be the first to admit that indirect responsibility is no mitigation for war crimes. The sad fact is that aid given by Robinson helped build the organizations that now kill children at pizzerias, teenagers at discos, and

pensioners at Passover seders, not to mention numerous American citizens along the way.

Robinson's tenure at the United Nations has been little better than her record as Ireland's president. She was the driving force behind the Orwellian "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." At the conference, Robinson presided over little more than an intellectual pogrom against Jews and Israel. She remained largely silent as the preliminary Asian Regional Conference in Tehran (to which Israel was excluded) inserted blatantly racist statements into the conference agenda. She failed to speak out when, on the grounds of the U.N. conference itself, the Arab Lawyers Union distributed pamphlets depicting hook-nosed Jews as Nazis spearing Palestinian children. In the same tent where nongovernmental organizations depicted Israel as a "racist, apartheid state," were distributed fliers entitled, "What if Hitler had won?" The answer: "There would be no Israel, and no Palestinian bloodshed." While Robinson takes no responsibility for enabling the greatest single display of anti-Semitism in 50 years, she failed to lift a finger when the South African government denied visas to European anti-slavery activists critical of human rights in Islamic nations like the Sudan, where over two million people have perished in a war since the regime in Khartoum declared a jihad against non-Muslims in 1983. Either black Sudanese are less worthy of concern to the human-rights commission, or it would be inexcusably politically incorrect to actually protest human-rights violations conducted in the name of Islam.

Robinson's post-Durban record is little better. On April 15, Robinson's commission voted on a decision that condoned suicide bombings as a legitimate means to establish Palestinian statehood (six European Union members voted in favor including, not surprisingly, France and Belgium). The vote came after Robinson initiated a drive to become a fact finder to investigate the now-famous massacre in Jenin (also known as "the massacre that never happened"). Curiously, in the months preceding Israel's incursion into the U.N. refugee camp in Jenin, suicide bombers launched from the camp wearing explosives likely bought with European money killed more than 100 Israeli civilians. However, for Robinson, a massacre is the deaths of seven Palestinian civilians in a war zone (47 Palestinian militants and 23 Israel soldiers also died). The deaths of more than 100 Jewish civilians by suicide bombers is worthy of little more than deafening silence interrupted by an occasional pithy statement of moral equivalence. The world still waits for Robinson to use her bully pulpit to call for an investigation of the terrorist murder of Jews (but then again, such an inquiry might lead uncomfortably close to UNRWA and European Union officials).

Of course it's farcical to believe that Robinson will ever be brought before the International Criminal Tribunal, or that she even should be. With her double standards, amazing ability to look the other way, and her record at the Human Rights Commission, Robinson has done more than any other international official to demonstrate that international courts, commissions, and agencies are more about politics than ethics, human rights, or morality, and therefore should never the legitimacy of U.S. endorsement.

The charge of indirect responsibility for crimes against humanity is a reasonable charge so long as it is levied against those whom the chattering classes in Europe wish to condemn. Otherwise, dozens of Dutch peacekeepers would be in prison now for handing countless Muslim men and boys to Serb gunmen in a so-called U.N. safe haven. U.N. peacekeepers might be defending their actions in The Hague for working feverishly to avoid taking any action in Rwanda as all hell broke loose. UNIFIL observers might need to explain under oath why they helped cover up Hezbollah's kidnapping of Israeli soldiers from across a border the secretary general himself certified. Speaking of the secretary general, he might wish to explain, at least as a witness, why he saw fit to meet with and legitimize Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah just two months after Nasrallah declared, "Jews invented the legend of the Nazi atrocities." UNICEF director Carol Bellamy might want to explain why slaves (oops.. "abductees" in U.N. and E.U. parlance: We mustn't antagonize the Sudanese government) liberated by UNICEF in Sudan never returned home, but ended up dead at government check points a day after UNICEF representatives crowed triumphant and foreign

journalists departed. Then again, with UNICEF workers in West Africa trading emergency food and medical assistance for child sex, why question a few dead Sudanese so long as the photo-op was successful?

The European Union and the United Nations are sick with self-righteousness, moral equivalence, and appeasement, but Mary Robinson is just one symptom. Worthy international causes have been hijacked for narrow political agendas.

Accountability has become a dirty word. And looking the other way, especially regarding terrorism, has become a form of art. But then again, why reform if bashing Israel and sponsoring forums to promote anti-Semitism can reinforce your credentials in the eyes of your peers? ❖

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