

Israel Should be Demoted From Full UN Membership

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The Palestinian Authority has once again called for the admission of Palestine to full United Nations membership and has been warned off by the US which says it would veto a Security Council resolution proposing this upgrade.

On November 29, 2012, the General Assembly voted to grant Palestine non-member observer status. The resolution was adopted by 138 with nine against and 41 abstentions. As could be expected the naysayers were the US, Canada, the Czech Republic, Israel and US hangers on — the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Panama. Among the abstainers were Australia, Germany, Holland, and, of course, Britain, the colonial power responsible for the Palestinians’ dire fate.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas made the point that UN membership would be a significant step towards rectifying the “unprecedented historical injustice” suffered by the Palestinian people since Israel’s establishment in 1948.

But, really, injustice has afflicted the Palestinians since 1917 when Britain promised to facilitate the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Then as now Britain regarded the indigenous Muslim and Christian people of Palestine as “non-Jewish communities”. Most of the West has adopted this view and continues to act in accordance with it.

It is bitterly ironic that on that same date in 1947, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Jewish, the other Arab. However, the vote was meant to take place on the evening of the 26th when the US, which strongly backed partition, did not have the 32 votes needed to approve the resolution. Under US pressure the vote was postponed because the 27th was the US festival of Thanksgiving and was conducted only when Washington had leaned on several opponents of the plan to vote yes. The deciding vote was 33 in favour, 13 against, and 10 abstentions. It must be pointed out that the General Assembly has the power to recommend a course of action, therefore the resolution was not mandatory and was vehemently rejected by the Palestinians and Arabs.

Although the Zionists considered the partition resolution as the foundation document of their state, they promptly violated the lines delineating Israel by conducting military operations to cleanse Palestinians from the Arab state. Consequently, instead of 45 per cent of their homeland allocated to the Arab state, Palestinians emerged at end of 1948-1949 with only 22 per cent of their country, including occupied East Jerusalem, which had been defended effectively by Jordan's Arab Legion. West Jerusalem had been targeted early on by the Zionist underground army, the Haganah and cleared of its Palestinian inhabitants although all of Jerusalem was meant to be a *corpus separatum* (separate area) under international administration.

By the time Israel had proclaimed its independence in mid-May 1948, Palestine was in the throes of a brutal war which drove 750,000 of the 1.2 million Palestinians from their homes and villages. On May 20th, the UN appointed as its mediator Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte who achieved the first ceasefire in the conflict. As he was critical of Israel's ethnic cleansing and grab for all of Jerusalem, he was assassinated in September by members of the Zionist terrorist Stern Gang, which had a four-man leadership including Yitzak Shamir, who became an Israeli prime minister.

The UN Security Council promptly condemned the murder and the General Assembly, on December 11th, adopted resolution 194 which in paragraph 11 called for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes when "practicable" and for compensation for their losses and the losses of Palestinians who did not seek to return. Palestinians regard this resolution as the basis of their "right to return" which has never been regarded as "practicable" by Israel and its allies.

The third UN resolution was adopted by the Security Council rather than the General Assembly. This was Resolution 242 of November 22nd, 1967. This resolution, once again, emphasised "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for, "Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces occupied in the recent conflict." These territories were occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights conquered by Israel that June.

As this resolution was adopted by the Security Council it was meant to be obeyed. While the US and the international community came to regard this as the "land for peace" formula which could resolve the "Palestine Problem", by the time the Council adopted this resolution, which should have been mandatory, Israel had begun to colonise the conquered territories in violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Although Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, UN special rapporteur Michael Lynk estimated that 700,000 Israelis now live in the occupied Palestinian territories. Some 25,000 dwell in the Golan. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who pulled out of Gaza, declared Israel will offer only "peace for peace".

Why discuss these long dead resolutions? Because, in fact, they are very much alive. Palestine as a cause and an issue has not gone away and the virtual Palestine that exists today despite Israeli colonisation has just as much right as Israel to be a UN member. Israel became a UN member on May 11th, 1949, but its membership was conditional on Israel's adherence to and implementation of Assembly resolutions 181 and 194. Of course, Israel's conditionality was ignored since to abide by these resolutions, it would have had to retreat into the 55 per cent of Palestine awarded to the Jewish state by 181 and allow the return of Palestinian refugees under 194. As Israel has not done either, the Palestinian Authority should demand Israel be demoted from full UN membership or even kicked out of the

organisation.

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