**Robbins: Probe Chief’s PLO Ties Show U.N.’s Anti-Israel Bias**

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By Jeff Robbins

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Adlai Stevenson once said that government should never be “the shelter of the corrupt.” This week’s resignation of the head of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s “investigation” into Israeli “war crimes” after it emerged that he had recently been on the PLO’s payroll reaffirms that when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the U.N. does not merely shelter the corrupt. It hires them.

When the U.N. chose William Schabas to judge whether Israel should be blamed for attempting to defend itself from 4,500 rockets fired at it by Hamas last summer, the appointment seemed to reflect perfectly that body’s unembarrassed anti-Israel animus. Defying ethical rules requiring judges to be both unbiased and free of the reasonable appearance of bias, the U.N. went ahead and appointed someone who had repeatedly made his bias entirely clear.

In the run-up to his selection as chair of the “fact-finding” exercise, Schabas had recommended “going after” Israel’s president, Nobel laureate Shimon Peres, and had declared that “my favorite would be [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu in the dock of the International Criminal Court.” He had asserted that “Those who are to blame are Israel and its friends.” He had given the keynote speech at a Tehran conference tied to former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has vowed to destroy Israel.

The tip-off, for anyone who needed one, might have been that the U.N.’s choice of Schabas was praised by Hamas. “Forming an investigative committee headed by Schabas,” noted Israeli diplomat Ron Pronsor, “is like inviting ISIS to organize Religious Tolerance Week at the U.N.”

Hillel Neuer, head of United Nations Watch, put it succinctly. “You can’t spend several years calling for the prosecution of someone,” he pointed out, “and then suddenly act as his judge.” But this was no inadvertent ethical lapse; it was a deliberate disregard of ethics by a body whose treatment of Israel is one part “Alice in Wonderland,” one part Pinocchio. As Schabas himself said in his resignation letter, his record of anti-Israelism was well-known to the U.N.

Georgetown University Law Professor Christine Cerna, whose candidacy for chair of the inquiry was apparently vetoed by the Arab bloc, has written that Schabas was selected precisely because of his bias. “I don’t think Bill Schabas could have been selected to lead the ‘independent’ inquiry,” she observed, “if he hadn’t made the comments he has made.”

Farcical treatment of Israel by the U.N. is nothing new. In 2008 the U.N. appointed as its special investigator into Israel a man whose suggestions that the Sept. 11 attacks were actually orchestrated by the United States and postings of anti-Semitic cartoons earned him condemnation from the U.N. secretary general himself.

Still, this week’s disclosure that Schabas had been recently paid by the PLO to win it favor at the U.N., and was nevertheless chairing what was to be an “impartial” U.N. investigation into Israel, reflected a lack of integrity that was striking even by U.N. standards. True to form, Schabas, who had falsely denied any bias for months before resigning on Monday, waited until his “research” was completed and his final report was underway before stepping down.

Waiting for the U.N. Human Rights Council to actually become credible, or even effectual, is a low probability strategy. American taxpayers help subsidize the council, which is a morally diseased enterprise. If sunlight is truly the best disinfectant, it is time for Congress to hold hearings on that body’s conduct, in the hope that, faced with the exposure that it has managed thus far to avoid, the Human Rights Council will begin living up to its name.