

# Sharing thoughts on Northern Ireland politics and American policy

Monday 19 February 2024, by [MCALISKEY Bernadette](#) (Date first published: 9 February 2024).

**SDLP leader Colum Eastwood's decision to absent himself and his party from 'rocking the sham' in the White House is very welcome.**

The Irish government parties and Sinn Féin might want to reconsider their positions.



Palestine is more fundamental than party politics. It is the test of conscience, integrity, humanity and courage.

Colum Eastwood made his courageous decision on that basis.

SDLP leaders will, instead, actively give Irish voice to the ethnically diverse and growing campaign within the USA opposing Biden's genocide policy.

This will not, for now, sit well with the Irish government or the USA but it is morally correct. I trust Palestine supporters will electorally remember that.

Michelle O'Neil is mistaken in thinking her attendance is required within her 'First Minister for All' policy.

St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the White House are not an occasion in which the President formally represents the ethnic diversity of the USA, and his guests likewise that of their own populations. Not at all!

This is a USA internal 'knees-up' primarily for the great and the good of Irish-American politics, economic and cultural life.

Irish-Americans as a self-identified ethnic population within the USA Census, numerically second only to those claiming German ancestry.

The political influence of the 'Hibernian' vote is second only to that of the Zionist lobby, and less well organised.

The USA Jewish population – not to be confused with Zionism – has traditionally had a much stronger liberal and radical lobby than the Irish.

The latter is not non-existent, but has become weaker since the mid-1990's as a direct consequence of Sinn Féin officially throwing their lot in with the 'People with Clout', as the late Fr. Denis Faul was wont to call them.

The right-wing of Irish-American politics within both the Democratic and Republican parties will predominate among those invited, and seeking invitation to the President's Paddy's Day Bash.

Those participating will be US politicians seeking Irish-American votes; people with money being acknowledged for their investment in various 'Irish' interests or projects, or to be hustled for their patronage.

Shamrocks, business cards and promises that may not be kept will be lightly exchanged over cocktails before dinner; good wine and food, music, and after-dinner mingling.

The only lobbying intent of all present is to further their own political and pecuniary interests.

In this Presidential election year, Joe Biden needs to be seen to be universally loved by the Irish, and embraced by Mother Ireland like no other Tammany Hall gangster has ever needed it before.

Not one serious word will be uttered about the USA being complicit in genocide in Gaza.

It will be considered neither the time or place, and viewed as social bad manners to do so.

There will be no tolerance, even in the restroom banter, to the mildest side-bar criticism of USA war-crimes.

Irish politicians are deluded in believing that they can drop a 'friendly word' in the right ear of the right people.

They will do well to keep their dinner in their stomachs if the table conversation turns to Gaza when tongues are loosened by the ambience.

Should Sinn Féin politely 'beg to differ' with views expressed at the bar, they can expect to be reminded where they came from, and the basis on which they are temporarily tolerated by the big guns in the room.

The Taoiseach and his government team will see to that.

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**Bernadette McAliskey**

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**P.S.**

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