A Stupid Anti-Israel Policy

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By Mona Charen
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Secretary of State John Kerry used the word “conscience” over and over again as he attempted to explain and justify the Obama administration’s decision not to veto a one-sided U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel. He added that the U.S. could not “stand idly by” while Israel torpedoed any hope for a two-state solution.

The Obama administration knows all about standing “idly by” – that was its all-but-explicit policy toward other troubles in the Middle East. Obama came into office with one foreign-policy lodestar – Not George Bush – and has stuck with it mulishly no matter how much the facts on the ground demanded flexibility. An Obama official dubbed it “leading from behind” and, according to a well-placed journalist, Obama himself used the phrase “don’t do stupid s\*\*t.”

And so, when Syrian strongman Bashar al-Assad massacred up to 400,000 people by dropping barrel bombs on civilian neighborhoods, shelling hospitals, and imposing sieges of cities to starve out the inhabitants, the Obama administration stood very, very idly by. Even after warning Assad that the use of chemical weapons would trigger a U.S. response, Obama did nothing when Assad called his bluff.

When ISIS was rampaging through northern Iraq and southern Syria, beheading and crucifying people and burning them alive, the Obama administration stood idly by.

“There are 2.75 million Palestinians living in the West Bank,” Kerry thundered, without explaining why their misfortune is more urgent than that of 4.8 million Syrian refugees who are living in Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, and various European countries. An additional 6.6 million Syrians are internally displaced and desperately in need of assistance. The Palestinian refugees (the term is absurd after 68 years) are the only “refugees” in the world who have a United Nations program devoted exclusively to them (UNRWA) – which may be one reason they remain stateless.

Just about every single one of Secretary Kerry’s assumptions about the Israeli–Palestinian dispute is erroneous. Start with his assertion that the Palestinians want an independent state on the West Bank. They have been offered such a state at least twice. In 2000, at Camp David, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak offered a generous settlement including land swaps. Yasser Arafat not only rejected it, he started a new intifada. In 2008, Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert offered Mahmoud Abbas a state comprising nearly all of the West Bank (Israel would have kept about 5 percent), with East Jerusalem as the capital. Abbas rejected it. Obama-administration assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, the Palestinian Authority has not recognized that Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state. Palestinian propaganda ceaselessly depicts “Palestine” as comprising all of the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. They continue, as Kerry himself acknowledged, to glorify terrorists.

Kerry suggests that “solving” the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is the key to “stabilizing a volatile region.” Has he been asleep for the past 50 years? The region is roiled by Islamic extremism in both Sunni and Shiite guises. The Obama administration has heightened tensions in the region with its embrace of Iran. Civil wars, revolutions, attempted coups, and terrorism are destabilizing Libya, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, and others. For an Arab, the West Bank is one of the safest (not to mention freest) places he can live in the Middle East.

Kerry said the administration could not “in good conscience” let Israel build new settlements in “occupied” Palestinian land and thereby sabotage the “peace process.” 1) The land in question was never Palestinian, as Kerry surely knows. It was grabbed by Jordan in 1948 and then, reluctantly, taken by Israel in a defensive war in 1967. 2) Israel, bowing to Obama’s wishes, imposed a ban on settlements for ten months in 2009. There was no response from the Palestinians. 3) Kerry certainly also knows that the Palestinian strategy for years has been to end-run direct talks with the Israelis and force a recognition of maximal Palestinian demands through international pressure. The U.S.’s failure to veto the U.N. resolution is — far more than a few Israeli apartments — the true obstacle to peace because it encourages the Palestinians’ unrealistic expectations and despicable tactics. These have lately included stabbings, shootings, and driving cars into random pedestrians.

The world is aflame with threats and instability, yet Kerry and Obama, petulant leftists with an Israel fixation, could not resist this last kick in the teeth to the region’s sole democracy. They knew it would harm Israel’s moral standing – now the delegitimizers can claim that Israel is in violation of “Security Council” resolutions – and give an unmerited win to the Palestinians.

Perhaps most infuriating of all, they claim to be doing it all for Israel’s own good. Too bad they couldn’t follow their own advice: “Don’t do stupid s\*\*t.”