**UN Human Rights Council Quicksand:**

**Get Out or Drown**

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The U.N. “Human Rights” Council starts its main annual session on Monday in Geneva with elected members and human-rights aficionados such as Saudi Arabia, China, and Qatar settling into their seats. The question hanging over the head of President Trump is whether his administration will take its place beside these other states and legitimize the most anti-Israel, twisted bastion of moral relativism in the U.N. system.

Barack Obama deliberately designed a quicksand trap before leaving office. He put the U.S. forward for Human Rights Council membership in a U.N. election that occurred just ten days before the American presidential election. Attempting to rule from the grave, Obama knew full well that the U.S. would be occupying a three-year spot that officially commenced on January 1, 2017. The Bush administration had refused to join the Council, or to pay for it, when the Council was first created as a faux renovation of the discredited U.N. Human Rights Commission back in 2006. Joining the Council was one of Obama’s very first foreign-policy moves in 2009.

The only way out of the quagmire for the Trump administration, therefore, is to resign.

The State Department’s Obama holdovers are pushing hard for the status quo. State Department spokesman Mark Toner told *Politico*: “Our delegation will be fully involved in the work of the HRC session which starts Monday.” This result would be the very opposite of draining the swamp.

Moreover, the only survivors in the U.N. Human Rights Council swamp are the crocodiles. There is a permanent agenda of ten items that governs proceedings at every Council session. One agenda item is devoted to human-rights violations by Israel and one generic agenda item is for all other 192 U.N. member states that might be found to “require the Council's attention.” In classic State Department double-talk, the Obama administration promised that by joining the Council, the U.S. could reform the Council agenda from the inside. The Obama administration tried and predictably failed. But the Obama administration then justified staying on the Council -- despite back-of-the-bus treatment for the Jewish state -- as a price worth paying for other people’s human rights. Pitting minorities against each other was, after all, an Obama specialty.

Every year at the Council’s main March session, the Council’s Israel agenda item gives rise to four or five resolutions condemning Israel. That is four or five times more than the Council condemns any other state on the planet. Ten years of Council practice incontrovertibly indicates that we can expect a small handful of other countries to be subject to a single resolution and that about 95 percent of states can count on none at all.

Fully aware of this scenario, the Obama routine went like this. The United States would vote against the anti-Israel resolutions, often 46 to 1, with slight variations for the times that European Union states screwed up the courage to abstain. Team Obama would make a nice speech for public consumption about supposedly unacceptable bias against Israel at the U.N. and then turn around and spend American taxpayer dollars to implement those very resolutions.

The quandary cannot be avoided: Is the Obama strategy going to be the Trump team plan? There is no middle ground. Staying on the Council means paying for the Council.

A 2016 Council resolution calls for the creation of a blacklist of all companies that are connected with or do business with so-called Israeli settlements “directly or indirectly.” Not surprisingly, the Council has no comparable boycott scheme for the world’s most heinous regimes. The boycott plot is a full-scale assault intended to strangle Israel economically, in order to compensate for successive failed attempts since 1948 by Israel’s enemies to annihilate the Jewish state on the actual battlefield. American companies that do business with Israel are clearly in the Council’s crosshairs.

The current Council session will reaffirm the blacklist initiative, and various other regular absurdities, such as demanding a return of the Golan Heights to “the Syrian motherland” in order to better protect Syrian human rights. In light of the Council’s composition, there is no chance whatsoever of reversing the outcomes. Merely to whine while being outvoted by a majority of states, for which Israel is either an enemy or a convenient diversionary tactic, would legitimize the vehicle attacking American corporations for doing business with Israel -- and our fundamental principles.

Substituting a Human Rights “Council” for a Human Rights “Commission” that retains the same fatal flaws -- starting with membership for the quintessential very bad dudes -- is the classic example of what the U.N., and the Obama administration, have meant by “reform.” Will the Trump administration follow suit and make yet another speech about fixing the unfixable?

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