Center Field: Joining the Jackals

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When Jimmy Carter betrayed Israel in the UN with his self-defeating, cheap parting shot in December, 1980, The Washington Post wrote: “The American vote against Israel in the Security Council Friday… the essential Carter.” In abandoning its “friends,” the editors charged, Carter “join[ed] the jackals.”

In February, 1981, liberal Democratic senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan agreed, excoriating Carter’s amorality and incompetence in Commentary.

“American failure was total,” Moynihan concluded.

“And it was squalid.”

When Barack Obama became president, many hoped he would be a Democratic Ronald Reagan – effective, patriotic, and unifying. Instead, he became another Jimmy Carter – ineffective, petty, and polarizing.

Obama’s vindictive, counterproductive Security Council bludgeoning of Israel proved he didn’t just stumble into duplicating Carter’s errors – these were premeditated blunders.

Joining the UN’s Israel-bashing-fest is an act of bullying, beneath America’s dignity. The UN lost its credibility regarding Israel in 1975 with its bigoted ‘Zionism is Racism’ resolution.

Friday’s reprehensible Security Council vote came nearly 25 years after the General Assembly tried restoring its credibility by revoking that modern blood libel, on December 16, 1991. Alas, the UN has continued to skewer Israel, like a high school thug addicted to bullying, even after reform school.

That 1991 repeal highlights why the new resolution is so terrible. The resolution masquerades as anti-settlement and pro-peace in intent, but is pro-settlement and anti-peace in effect. Anyone favoring settlements and stalemate should cheer this resolution. The more left-wing you are and the more you want Israelis and Palestinians to compromise, the unhappier with Obama and the Security Council you should be.

History shows that these UN resolutions radicalize Palestinians while infuriating and – behind the bluster – terrifying Israelis. The result is more settlements, more recalcitrance, more conflict.

By contrast, when the world sensibly rejected the Zionism is Racism resolution, Israel joined the Madrid Conference, then nearly two years later signed the Oslo Peace Accords.

Besides undermining his own vision – as he has done repeatedly in foreign affairs – Obama also repudiated 50 years of America’s historically accurate ambiguity regarding the territories Israel won legitimately in the Six Day War.

In 1967, America’s UN ambassador Arthur Goldberg helped draft Security Council 242 requiring “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” – not the territories.

Friday’s resolution condemns Israel’s presence in “the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.”

Injecting the word “the” let alone “Palestinian” before the now singular word “territory,” while adding the phase “including East Jerusalem,” has America validating the world delusion that Israel conquered some historic and legal Palestinian entity called ‘The West Bank.’ That territory’s history is so convoluted and disputed that Jordan controlled it illegally before the Six Day War – and England before that.

Goldberg dropped the “the,” because the former Supreme Court justice knew that “historically, there have never been any secure and recognized boundaries in the area,” given that the ‘green line’ defining the West Bank was the improvised ‘armistice lines of 1949.’ He knew that legally, there were disputing claims, and the British Mandate still granted Jews rights to build settlements in those territories. And he knew that Israelis would never return to those pre-1967 ‘Auschwitz borders’ without Jerusalem’s Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall.

Most American presidents, including Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush, grew in office, shifting from approaching Israel warily to enthusiastically supporting America’s one reliable democratic ally in the Middle East. Not Obama. He arrived thinking Israel was a shitty little county, an obstacle to peace, misreading today’s West Bank as yesterday’s American South – and leaves with his prejudices intact.

Barack Obama’s parting gift to Israel makes him look small, spiteful, and silly. It mocks his Jewish worshipers who slavishly called him Israel’s “best friend ever,” ignoring his foreign policy incompetence or his disdain for Israel’s current government – and Israel’s live-or-die 1967 victory. It threatens the peace and the concessions he seeks. It reinforces the ‘Big Palestinian Lie’ that their territory is somehow the only clear, undisputed, perfectly defined, piece of real estate in the mottled, muddled, messy Middle East.

This isn’t a gaffe – it’s a sin. It greenlights more Palestinian crimes, emboldening terrorists and Palestinian rejectionists with Obama’s blessing as he tries recruiting America to the ‘Blame Israel First, Last, and Always’ club headquartered in the UN’s East River tower of anti-Western lies.

Like Jimmy Carter, Obama has joined the jackals. He will now lead the Carter-Obama school of foreign policy weaklings who cower before anti-American dictators but kick Israel, reflecting an obsession with the Jewish State echoing the traditional antisemitic obsession with ‘the Jew’ – despite their many Jewish friends and enablers.

He has solidified the Democratic Party’s new role as the American Party welcoming Israel bashers. He has encouraged the on-campus Israel-haters while dog whistling to the far left’s anti-Zionist, antisemites. Obama’s abstention – and rhetoric – will spawn hundreds of anti-Israel boycott initiatives that do indulge in Jew hatred. And – memo to those still mourning Hillary Clinton’s Election Day loss – politics isn’t binary: you can still hate Donald Trump yet find enough intellectual courage to detest this destructive unbecoming presidential temper tantrum.

The moral, political, and diplomatic failure is total – and squalid. Behold the ‘essential Obama’ – and understand why Syria is aflame, Russia ascendant, the Israelis and Palestinians paralyzed, and why millions of Americans turned, in desperation, to Trump. While not fully responsible for these and other calamities, Obama’s fingerprints are all over them – sometimes, as we see, intentionally.