From: JP Tristani
To: NJ09BPIMA@mail.house.gov; adam_zipkin@booker.senate.gov; micheal.lusko@mail.house.gov; senator_menendez@menendez.senate.gov; updates@menendez.senate.gov; senschepisi@njleg.org; asmauth@njleg.org; njassemblygop@njleg.org; asmdefuccio@njleg.org; contentfeedback@gannett.com; bcrodirector@gmail.com; countyexecutive@co.bergen.nj.us; alane@gardenstateinitiative.org; ramseydemclub@gmail.com; president@northjersey.com; sforza@northjersey.com; youngp@northjersey.com; kellym@northjersey.com; stile@northjersey.com; sobko@northjersey.com; balcerzaka@northjersey.com; beckerman@northjersey.com; fallon@northjersey.com; kcowart@gannett.com; sbarchenger@gannettnj.com; mdiamond@gannettnj.com; mdavis@gannettnj.com; aford3@gannettnj.com; info@vfw.org; info@njgop.org; info@bergencountypolicechiefs.org; info@jewishfederations.org; information@icj-cij.org
Subject: THE JB REPORT: Obama, Hamas and 'Complicity' + Obama's Foreign-Policy Team Won't Get It Done
Date: Thursday, November 16, 2023 9:28:28 AM

The Report

7 NOVEMBER 2023

Obama, Hamas and 'Complicity'

The former president seeks to shift the blame for the attack on Israel. He ought to look in the mirror.

By Elliot Kaufman
Nov. 6, 2023 , WSJ

Former President Barack Obama speaks during the Obama Foundation Democracy Forum in Chicago, Nov. 3. PHOTO: PAT NABONG/ASSOCIATED PRES

Even Barack Obama supported Israel in dismantling Hamas, a senior Israeli official was eager to tell me early in the war. The former president said so in a 73-word statement on Oct. 9.

But on Oct. 23, in a 1,130-word statement, Mr. Obama called for Israeli restraint. Now, on the “Pod Save America” podcast, Mr. Obama counsels “an admission of complexity.” In a part of the interview released Saturday, Mr. Obama says: “What Hamas did was horrific and there’s no justification for it. And what is also true is that the occupation and what’s happening to Palestinians is unbearable.” To get to the full truth, “you then have to admit nobody’s hands are clean, that all of us are complicit to some degree.” He adds: “As hard as I tried—I have the scars to prove it—but there’s a part of me that’s still saying, ‘Well, was there something else I could have done?’ ”

Only a part? Mr. Obama sent Iran $1.7 billion in cash, released some $100 billion in frozen assets and unshackled Iranian industry. His plan to extricate the U.S. from the Middle East was suitably complex: find a rapprochement with Iran that would empower it to stabilize the region for us. Predictably, Tehran used the money to build up each front—Gaza, Lebanon, the West Bank, Syria, Iraq and Yemen—in today’s war on Israel.

The rest of Mr. Obama’s policy paved the way. In August 2012, he drew a “red line.” The U.S. would respond militarily if Syria used chemical weapons. When Syria did a year later, Mr. Obama blinked and then let Russia bail him out by pretending to remove all the chemical weapons. Russia never left Syria, and propping up Bashar al-Assad solidified its alliance with Iran. The Journal reports that Russia plans to give Hezbollah better air defenses in Lebanon, and Syria is

a key Hezbollah staging ground and transit point for Iranian weapons.

Mr. Obama pulled out of Iraq in 2011, only to see Iran-backed militias fill the vacuum. Once ISIS, which the president had dismissed as the “JV team,” established itself, reluctance to commit further to the region led the Obama and Trump administrations to work with the Iranians to defeat the group. This elevated Tehran’s Iraqi proxies, which have been attacking U.S. forces almost daily to pressure the U.S. to constrain Israel.

Israel had an early chance to destroy Hamas in the 2008-09 Gaza war, but the incoming Obama administration signaled its displeasure. Israel stopped short, declaring a unilateral cease-fire. That only prepared the next war, in 2014, but overthrowing Hamas wasn’t even on the table with Mr. Obama in the White House.

The Obama strategy of pressuring Israel and indulging the Palestinians made no progress toward peace. A 2009-10 Israeli settlement freeze was shrugged off. John Kerry shuttled around, banging his head against the wall called the “peace process.”

Mr. Obama’s parting shiv—enabling a United Nations Security Council resolution that condemned the Jewish state and undermined its claim to Jerusalem—did nothing for Palestinians but indulge the fantasy that U.S. pressure on Israel will obviate the need for them to compromise.

If everyone is responsible for this war, as Mr. Obama says, then Hamas becomes only one guilty party among many, and Oct. 7 a mere link in a long causal chain. Blame shifts to Israel. As the U.N. secretary-general put it, “the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum.”

But if anyone has been complicit in enabling Hamas’s atrocities, Barack Obama has.

Mr. Kaufman is the Journal’s letters editor.

++++++++++++++++

OPINION

LETTERS , WSJ , Nov 8, 2023

Obama’s Foreign-Policy Team Won’t Get It Done

The Biden administration is full of retreads, too invested in failed ideas to change.

What do **CIA Director William Burns, national-security adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Antony Blinken** have in common? ("Biden Needs a New Foreign-Policy Team" by Garry Kasparov, op-ed, Nov. 3). They're all former Obama administration appointees.

They were all participants in eight years of unilateral U.S. military cuts, conventional and nuclear. They all largely ignored, or swept under the rug, the early aggressive actions of Vladimir Putin in Ukraine as well as Russian violations of arms-control treaties. They were all complicit in President Barack Obama's disastrous refusal to enforce his famous "red line" in Syria. Their joint fingerprints are all over Mr. Obama's toothless nuclear deal with Iran.

Messrs. Burns, Sullivan and Blinken simply have sunk too much into eight years of foreign-policy mistakes to be the clear-eyed and coldly rational national-security team we require now. One other Obama appointee who shows difficulty in coming to terms with these prior mistakes: President Biden.

Peter Wolf

Sedona, Ariz.

++++++++++++++++++

Pace et Salute...JP

PORKQUOTE: ***Relax...You may only have a few minutes left***