Obama's Shameful Parting Shot at Israel

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The United Nations stooped to a new low last week, passing a Security Council resolution with the transparent goal of delegitimizing Israel and damaging the prospects for a lasting negotiated peace with the Palestinians.

The Obama administration’s decision to abstain, allowing the UN’s highest body to condemn Israel in such harsh and biased terms, declare settlements an illegal obstacle to peace, and call the eternal capital of the Jewish people “occupied,” is unprecedented and dangerous.

The resolution passed by the Security Council suggests that the location of the most holy site for the Jewish people, the Western Wall, is not in Israel, and that the Old City of Jerusalem is a "settlement."

The decision to allow it to come to a vote runs counter to American interests, and more importantly, it flies in the face of our values.

Since Israel’s founding in 1948, the United States has recognized the special bond we share with the people of the only true democracy in the Middle East.

Based on shared values and mutual interests, this special relationship has led the United States to veto countless resolutions aiming to undermine the state of Israel.

The fact that this vote comes just days after the Security Council sat silently through the siege and fall of Aleppo only to condemn Israel in this biased manner underscores just how far the institution has fallen.

That’s why this abstention is so alarming and so cowardly. Back in 2011, the Obama administration [vetoed](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/18/AR2011021805442.html) a resolution focused on settlements. That resolution, though heavily biased against the Jewish state, was far less hostile than the one allowed to pass last week.

It has long been the United States’ official policy that peace can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It cannot be imposed by outside bodies like the UN.

That’s a matter of policy, but it’s also a matter of fact.

President Obama’s personal animus against Netanyahu has irrevocably altered the course of Middle East peace for the worse.

Rather than taking a step toward peace, this resolution makes a negotiated settlement almost impossible to achieve, and it cannot be undone. This diplomatic side-stepping is counter-productive to achieving a real and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Creating a Palestinian state through unilateral means — such as through the UN — would lead to a failed state.

The Palestinian Authority lacks political and economic institutions. It has no clear sovereignty over the territory it claims, and what little functioning government exists is deeply divided between Fatah and Hamas — a terrorist organization bent on Israel’s destruction.

Even more than that, failing to exercise the American veto in this instance severely damages American credibility on the international stage, demonstrating that we stand by our friends only when it is convenient.

As the Middle East has erupted in conflagration, the Obama administration has been consistent only in its unwillingness to play a productive role in ameliorating conflict or supporting our allies.

President Obama’s parting shot has done irreparable damage against America’s strongest ally — the only true democracy in the Middle East — at a time when Israel needed American support more than ever.

The United Nations was founded to unite the world under the banner of law and make armed conflict less likely. This resolution, by making a negotiated peace more difficult to achieve, increases the likelihood of such conflict.

The UN, once a great institution, has squandered its credibility. It has demonstrated consistent systemic bias against just one of its members.

This latest example is particularly jarring, but just two months ago UNESCO passed a resolution denying any Judeo-Christian connection to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

These resolutions are nothing short of an embarrassment, and they make it clear that the institution no longer has any moral standing.

I served seven terms in Congress, where support for Israel was a cornerstone issue for members of both parties. Broad bipartisan majorities in Congress urged the administration to veto any one-sided resolution attacking Israel’s legitimacy.

Though this is a sad day in the history of the U.S.-Israel relationship, the special bond between our two nations must and will endure.

The United Nations has demonstrated time and again that it has devolved into nothing more than a venue for attacking Israel. Every time it moves to single out the only true democracy in the Middle East for special condemnation, the value the UN provides to the world erodes further.

Even worse, President Obama’s shameful decision to vote to abstain on this resolution has done irreparable harm to the cause of peace and has compromised America’s national security interests in the Middle East.