

Secretary Kerry, There's No Excuse for Your Hot-Mic Criticisms of Israel

When Secretary of State John Kerry criticized Israel's military operations in Gaza by calling them a "hell of a pinpoint operation," he not only validated Hamas's human-shield strategy, he handed Hamas a key propaganda victory.

And he had no excuse for doing so.

Unlike the vast majority of Americans—including a vast majority of Americans in "public service"—Kerry has actual combat experience. He's fully aware of the enormous destructive capability of a modern military, and he's thus fully aware of what a truly unrestrained Israeli military operation would look like.

Further, as a senior leader in the Obama administration, he's aware—or should be aware—of our own rules of engagement and conduct in urban operations in Fallujah, Tal Afar, Najaf and other recent urban fights. If he is aware, he'd know that the Israelis often take even greater precautions that our own military does to limit civilian casualties.

The fact that he made such a statement on a day when 13 Israeli soldiers (two of them American citizens) died engaged in operations rendered far more dangerous because of the care Israel takes to avoid needless death only compounds Kerry's error.

Here is a basic, undeniable fact: If Israel (or for that matter, America) showed anything approaching the same disregard for human life that its enemies do, then Gaza would be in flames from end to end. While the explosions and gunfire on television look impressive to the untrained, inexperienced

observer, they represent the tiniest fraction of the full power of Israel's military.

Israeli soldiers—like American soldiers—voluntarily place themselves in harm's way again and again to kill terrorists and only terrorists. The jihadists try as hard as they can again and again to make sure that Israeli soldiers kill civilians and only civilians.

Tonight, there are dozens of Israeli families suffering the ultimate anguish of the loss of a child. Many of those families know that if their military had exerted even a fraction more of its power, their kids would not have been directly in harm's way. I can only pray that those families take solace in their sons' courage, both physical and moral, as they gave the ultimate sacrifice in part to protect not just their own country but also to protect Palestinians from Hamas.

The anguish felt by these Israeli families has been shared by thousands of American families, as our own sons and daughters have died protecting Iraqi and Afghan civilians.

Kerry knows these facts, yet he still focuses his anger on Israel and not on the designated terrorist organization that views each civilian death as a tactical victory. This anger betrays his own fundamental failings, not Israel's.

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