

A Blameless, Clueless President

Charles Krauthammer frequently quips that he is no longer a practicing psychiatrist. But the good doctor put our president on the proverbial couch this week and declared him 'delusional.' Not once, but twice in the same segment.

Of course, it doesn't take a trained shrink to conclude that President Obama sometimes seems to inhabit another world. It's a realm where everything he does, or has ever done, is pretty much on the money. A world where he is doing a bang-up job. A place where only Republicans and Fox News don't recognize the wisdom of his governance.

Dr. K's perspicacious diagnosis was in reaction to the president's sit-down on '60 Minutes,' where he was pressed surprisingly hard by Steve Kroft. Even Kroft, who often goes pretty easy on the big guy, looked incredulous when President Obama assured him that the 'community of nations' will eventually destroy ISIS.

Have you seen that elusive 'community of nations' stepping up to the plate in the Middle East? Didn't think so. It's a community talked about in the faculty lounge, but seldom found in the real world.

Then there was President Obama's declaration that he knew all along that training moderate Syrians to fight Assad was doomed to failure. Why, then, did we authorize \$500-million and wind up with four or five trained fighters? Not four or five platoons. Four or five men willing and able to confront the Syrian butcher.

Put another way, the president was against the training program before he was for it, telling Kroft he was 'skeptical from the get-go.' Washington Post foreign affairs columnist

David Ignatius, hardly a raging conservative, concluded that the president's claim was simply 'weird.'

The commander-in-chief habitually sets up a false choice in the Middle East. It's either do nothing or send in 'several hundred thousand troops,' as he accuses his critics of advocating. But surely there are other options between those extremes.

General David Petraeus, former boss of the CIA and a legendary military strategist, testified that we could be doing more in Syria, especially with air power. The president derided that as 'mumbo jumbo,' one more example of the many 'half-baked ideas' floating around.

He also dismissed Hillary Clinton's suggestion that a no-fly zone should at least be on the table. You expect Bernie Sanders to ridicule that notion, as he did in Tuesday's debate. But you don't anticipate the president of the United States giving the back of his hand to his former secretary of state.

In the end, the president seems to honestly believe that his Middle East strategy is working. Forget about his disappearing 'red line' or his demands for regime change in Syria. Never mind the hundreds of thousands who have been killed by Assad, or their luckier brethren who are flooding into Europe. To this president, we are winning, Putin and Assad are losing, and the refugee crisis has absolutely nothing to do with him.

No president wants to admit failure. Not Jimmy Carter, not even Richard Nixon. They prefer to remember whatever good things happened on their watch. Especially when they promised so much more. And no one has ever promised more than Barack Obama.

In 2009, soon after his first inauguration, President Obama implied that his election would radically and permanently transform relations between the USA and the world's Muslims.

'I am a Christian,' he told a crowd in Cairo, 'but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the Azaan at the break of dawn and the fall of dusk.'

Six years later, that implied promise has run aground. President Obama looks to the Middle East and sees, instead of peace and progress, nothing but carnage and chaos. Faced with that reality, he tends to do two things. First, deny that he is in any way responsible. We saw that in the revealing '60 Minutes' interview. When that doesn't work, he'll just change the subject.

Climate change, anyone?