

Iranian foreign minister: Kerry informed us of hundreds of Israeli covert actions

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(Kevin Lamarque/Pool via AP, File)

Talk about *burying the lede*. The New York Times got information that a high-ranking official in the Obama administration tipped off Iran to Israel's covert actions, and that news ended up in paragraph 21 ... in a 26-paragraph story. A leaked audio recording of Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reveals that John Kerry revealed that information to Tehran, presumably during the negotiations for the deal with Iran over its nuclear-weapons development:

Former Secretary of State John Kerry informed him that Israel had attacked Iranian interests in Syria at least 200 times, to his astonishment, Mr. Zarif said.

The context for this is Zarif's attempt to explain the grip that the Revolutionary Guards have on the government in Tehran. The "astonishment" comes from Zarif's apparent ignorance of this fact while the Guards knew it all along, or at least that *seems* to be Zarif's point. The reference to "at least 200 times" is written somewhat ambiguously too; it could mean that Kerry told them one time about 200 Israeli operations, or told Zarif on 200 separate occasions, but it's almost certainly a reference to one discussion.

Let's chalk that up to poor writing and editing. The decision to bury this lede speaks more to the leadership of the NYT. While no one would be surprised to hear that Israel carries out covert operations against Iran, why in the world would an American Secretary of State pass that information to a regime that leads "Death to America" protests in its streets? Isn't this the *real* news in the US, especially with Kerry now joining another administration as its "climate change envoy"? At

best, this shows that Kerry is enormously and irresponsibly indiscreet; at worst, he's exposing American intelligence to an enemy in order to attack an ally. And frankly, it looks a lot more like the latter than the former, and a lot more like an actual crime by a high-ranking US government official.

And the NYT thinks the big story here is — and I quote from the lead paragraph — “Zarif said the Revolutionary Guards Corps call the shots, overruling many government decisions and ignoring advice”? *Seriously?*

The Times reports that Iranians are demanding Zarif's resignation, apparently for revealing to the world that — *gasp* — Iran is a theocratic-military dictatorship whose government is just a puppet. **Where are the calls for Kerry's resignation, which matters a lot more to us here?** At the very least, this demands some explanation from Barack Obama and Joe Biden, especially the latter given his rush to re-enter the JCPOA and his decision to add Kerry back into his own administration. One can imagine that Israel will be demanding some explanations as well.