

# The American Conservative

## A ‘Not-Obama’ Foreign Policy That Keeps Obama’s Worst Policies

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April 8, 2017

As I’ve said before, Trump’s foreign policy mostly boils down to “anything but Obama”:

No matter how Trump ultimately comes out of the foreign-policy ideology test, what he really seems to want to be on the world stage is the not-Obama. And when faced with a choice, the best way to understand what Trump will do is to expect he will opt to differentiate himself as much as possible from his predecessor.

“He’s proved he’s not Obama—and that’s useful to him,” one former senior Obama official told me, one of many veterans of the previous administration I spoke with Friday who were supportive of Trump’s airstrike on Syria.

It fits the pattern I mentioned earlier this week. Whenever one party takes over the presidency from the other, there is always some of this, but in Trump’s case positioning against many of the things Obama was for explains more about his foreign policy because he has so few set views on these issues. Unfortunately, the anti-Obama positioning only seems to run in one direction: more intervention and less diplomatic engagement. Trump isn’t cancelling Obama’s support for the war on Yemen. On the contrary, he has increased U.S. support for that atrocious war, and may increase it even more in the future. He isn’t scaling back the war on ISIS, but instead has escalated it. He wants to undo the few things that Obama got right, and he wants to make Obama’s worst policies even worse.

Perhaps the most alarming way that Trump’s foreign policy is unlike that of his predecessor is in his decision-making process, or rather his lack of much of a process. Obama was usually slow and deliberative to a fault, and Trump is very hasty and erratic. If Obama sometimes seemed to want to ponder options endlessly, Trump is at the much riskier extreme of acting impulsively without considering the consequences. That has been on display in other ways for a long time, but it is particularly dangerous when it comes to ordering the use of force. As Emma Ashford notes, Trump “seems to be prone to making snap judgments on the use of force.” Given how poor his judgment seems to be, his willingness to order attacks quickly without thinking through the implications is that much more disturbing.

