



Written by [Steve Bonta](#) on August 4, 2023

Bolton: Trump “Unfit to Set National Security Policy”

John Bolton, President Trump’s former national security advisor and onetime U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is on the warpath. In a [scathing op-ed](#) published in *The Hill*, Bolton portrays Trump as an out-of-control, ignorant narcissist whose reelection would constitute a grave danger to U.S. foreign policy and to the world at large. Trump’s previous term as president proves him “unfit to set national security policy,” Bolton writes. He continues scornfully:



AP Images
John Bolton

Trump has neither philosophy nor policies. As president and candidate, his decisions and statements constitute what I’ve called an archipelago of dots, unconnected by chords of logic, salience or results. Trump knew little about international geopolitics upon taking office in 2017, and learned little during his term or thereafter.

Trump’s approach to decisionmaking verges on incoherence. Systematic consideration of the pros and cons of various policy options is rarely his chosen approach. Some issues he considers only glancingly. Others, like international trade, where he believes himself expert, he considers ad nauseum....

Trump disdains knowledge, seeing relations between the United States and foreign lands, especially our adversaries, predominantly as matters of personality: How is his relationship with Vladimir Putin or Kim Jung Un or others? If personal relations are good, Trump believes that country-to-country relations are good.

Bolton accuses Trump of having an unhealthy, envious regard for dictators such as Xi Jinping and Kim Jung Un, and warns that a second Trump term could be dangerously erratic because of legacy-related



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incentives. He rejects the idea that Trump's erratic behavior on the foreign-policy front is feigned in order to keep adversaries off balance.

In a separate [interview](#) with *The Hill*, Bolton also claims that credit for Trump's perceived foreign-policy successes is misplaced. He blames Trump, not Biden, for the debacle in Afghanistan, and maintains that, in many instances, outcomes that Trump took credit for were in fact the opposite of what he had intended to achieve.

Bolton's arguments boil down to this: Trump was in over his head, and is too deeply flawed to trust with such weighty concerns as foreign policy. Left implicit are two longstanding conceits of modern U.S. professional foreign policymakers, namely, 1) foreign policy must continue to operate along the same lines as it has since Woodrow Wilson first declared that America needed to take a leading, engaged role in world affairs, and 2) foreign policy is rightly the province of anointed experts of the same pedigree as the Dean Achesons, Cordell Hulls, and Henry Kissingers of the past. Bolton, of course, embodies both of these criteria; a foreign-policy hawk of Cold War vintage, Bolton's foreign-policy establishment credentials are impeccable. His chief concerns are standing up to evil dictators all over the world in the name of nebulous "interests," and maintaining the post-World War II status quo that includes the perpetuation and enlargement of the UN system and the continuation of NATO.

And here, as it turns out, is the real rub, the reason Bolton seemingly prefers Biden's senility and ineptitude to Trump's alleged erratic and self-serving behavior: Trump is opposed to the international system that foreign policy elites such as Bolton have painstakingly created and sustained. Trump's hostility to the United Nations is well-documented. But next time, Bolton says revealingly, Trump could do the unthinkable: withdraw the United States from one of the most storied of all international institutions. Bolton noted that, while president, Trump "threatened the existence of NATO, and I think in a second Trump term would almost certainly withdraw from NATO."

That, of course, is Bolton's biggest beef with Trump. Never mind that NATO's entire supposed *raison d'être* — standing up to the Soviet Union during the Cold War — disappeared decades ago. Instead of being dissolved after the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO embarked on an aggressive campaign of enlargement which, more than any other single factor, created the conditions for the disastrous war in Ukraine, with the ever-present threat of a nuclear third world war. Somehow, the anointed experts of foreign policy never get called to account for that. Or for building up China into a hostile superpower bent on destroying the United States. Or for maintaining the state of war on the Korean Peninsula for 70 years, which has allowed the appalling communist dictators in North Korea to target the United States with nuclear weapons. Or for the unmitigated disaster in Iran.

The reason that NATO, in apparent defiance of logic, is still with us, and continues to add new members, is that NATO is being used to promote globalism, not to fight communism. And the same could be said of foreign policy in Korea, China, and the Middle East. Most of the seemingly irrational policies being pursued around the world make perfect sense when recognized for the globalist initiatives they are.

Trump, be it noted, for all of his admittedly oafish behavior, somehow managed to forge a relationship with North Korea that did not feature the constant testing of more and more long-range missiles. He implemented a trade deal with China that, for once, did not completely disadvantage the United States. He brokered two major Middle Eastern peace deals, the "Abraham Accords," which the likes of Bolton never deign to acknowledge. He brought illegal immigration under control.



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But alas, because Trump does not have Ivy League refinement and good manners, and — in a city where humility probably disappeared for good when Congressman Davy Crockett left office — is deemed to have an ego problem, he is disqualified from holding public office and, in particular, from having a say in foreign policymaking.

All of Bolton's animadversions, however, are designed to conceal the real issue: Trump is not one of the elite foreign policy "club" under whose maladroit guidance America has stumbled through numerous international wars and policy directives designed to advance the interests of globalists, not ordinary Americans. Men like Bolton have little inkling of what it's like to run a business on Main Street, or to struggle to make car payments, or to deal with any of the myriad challenges that confront ordinary, unprivileged Americans every day.

And to the extent that Trump represents such people, he must be discredited and destroyed.



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