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Jay Ambrose: Antics aside, Trump is fixing Obama damage

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He is doing it sloppily at best, but President Donald Trump is helping this nation recover from President Barack Obama. Yes, that might seem an astonishing thing to say given Trump's ignorance, his narcissistic juvenilia, his verbal klutziness, his vulgarity and a sea of tweets testifying to all this. Still, consider an issue of the moment that helps make the case.

It's about discontinuing insurance-company subsidies for Obamacare, a program that essentially converted these firms into charities for many. To make a sustaining profit, they depended on young, healthy people forced by penalties to sign on and who were soon enough hit with sky-high deductibles and premiums.

That payback was not enough. To stay in the program and still survive, the insurance companies needed federal subsidies, and the program's supposedly omniscient architects simply failed to write an important one into law. It would help insurance companies live up to their required sacrifices, and the administration properly asked Congress to pass a new law financing it.

Congress said no, and so Obama improperly stole the money from other federal purses. He and his team thereby said phooey to Congress and, as precisely as he had enunciated the words, to Obama's pledge to uphold the Constitution. It then became Trump's turn to disobey the law, and he refused. He preferred the democratic solution of turning to Congress again to pass a new law fixing this and other ailments of a program writhing on its death bed.

Oh, what a horror, Democrats screeched, although Trump was hardly refusing to make things right and the real culprit was Obamacare itself and something else. It was a predecessor who would rather get his way than let our precious system stay reasonably intact.

Obama is not crass like Trump. He is highly intelligent, knowledgeable and charming, the problem being that he put those attributes to skillful use in undermining basic American principles. Some 22 times this constitutional lawyer said it would be unconstitutional to grant temporary amnesty to

young immigrants brought here as children, but did it anyway. His Clean Power Plan would have illegally wiped out state laws. You need a treaty on an Iran deal? Forget that. It involves Congress.

Unconstitutionally, Obama unilaterally rewrote laws, he intervened illegally in state and local affairs, and he refused to enforce federal laws as required by his duties. In defense of this autocracy, his defenders say he confronted an obstructionist Congress and had no choice. What that argument really says is that revoking democracy is OK if you cannot get the policies you want legitimately.

Yes, Trump is an embarrassment a day, but much of what he has done has been hugely needed, such as rolling back many of the Obama administration's record numbers of regulations and taking on various ideologically amiss fumbles. In the Middle East, for instance, Trump has been letting generals fight their own fight without White House instructions, thereby helping to reduce the Islamic State to a quivering bunch of murderers on the run.

On some policies, he is worrisome, but on many others he is far more on-target than Obama, whose eight years of sophisticated incompetence actually helped get Trump elected along with a gradual Republican uplift nationwide. Where Trump offends with words, Obama resorted to deeds, as in attacks on a free press.

Right now, critics are having at Trump with fire and fury, not least among them such members of his own Republican Party as Sen. Jeff Flake, Sen. John McCain, Sen. Bob Corker and ex-President George W. Bush, and some of it makes sense. Still, when you get beneath the surface, when you see things in context, when you look directly at Obama's betrayals and how he helped make so much worse in this country, Trump seems more the doctor than the sickness.

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