



## Trump Announces Fake News Awards: Flake, McCain Criticize; Polish President Praises

Using his preferred method of communicating with the public, President Trump tweeted the winners of his “Fake News Awards” on the evening of January 17. His tweets included a link to an article entitled “The Highly-Anticipated 2017 Fake News Awards” on the Republican National Committee website. He declared,



Below are the winners of the president’s 2017 Fake News Awards.

1. The *New York Times*’ Paul Krugman [who] claimed on the day of President Trump’s historic, landslide victory that the economy would never recover.

[That item displayed a headline originally run by the *Daily Caller*: “Paul Krugman Says Markets Will ‘Never’ Recover From Trump; Dow Hits Record High.”]

2. ABC News’ Brian Ross CHOKES and sends markets in a downward spiral with false report.

[This item included a graphic of a headline reading: “ABC demotes Brian Ross after bungled report on Trump, Russia” and a graph illustrating the precipitous decline in the Dow Jones Industrial Average immediately after the release of the ABC report on December 1, 2017.]

3. CNN FALSELY reported that candidate Donald Trump and his son Donald J. Trump, Jr. had access to hacked documents from WikiLeaks.

[This item included a graphic of a Fox News headline reading: “CNN botches dates, inaccurately reports Trump campaign had WikiLeaks sneak peak.”]

4. *TIME* FALSELY reported that President Trump removed a bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. from the Oval Office.

[This item included a photo of Trump in the Oval Office with a bust of King.]

5. *Washington Post* FALSELY reported the President’s massive sold-out rally in Pensacola, Florida was empty. Dishonest reporter showed picture of empty arena HOURS before crowd started pouring in.

[This item included a photo of the Pensacola arena showing that it was filled. After that was Trump’s tweet, reading: @DaveWeigel @WashingtonPost put out a phony photo of an empty arena hours before I arrived @ the venue, w/ thousands of people outside, on their way in. Real photos now shown as I spoke. Packed house, many people unable to get in. Demand apology & retraction from FAKE NEWS WaPo!]

6. CNN FALSELY edited a video to make it appear President Trump defiantly overfed fish during a visit with the Japanese prime minister. Japanese prime minister actually led the way with the feeding.

[This item included a video of Trump with Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, showing that Abe



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dumped his box of fish food into the tank before Trump followed his lead.]

7. CNN FALSELY reported about Anthony Scaramucci's meeting with a Russian, but retracted it due to a "significant breakdown in process."

[This item included a graphic of a *Washington Post* headline reading: "Three CNN employees resign over retracted story on Russia ties."]

8. *Newsweek* FALSELY reported that Polish First Lady Agata Kornhauser-Duda did not shake President Trump's hand.

[This item included a photo of Trump from INSTAR images showing him shaking hands with Kornhauser-Duda.]

9. CNN FALSELY reported that former FBI Director James Comey would dispute President Trump's claim that he was told he is not under investigation.

[This item included a screen capture showing two CNN news broadcasts with the following captions displayed on them: "Sources tell CNN: Comey to testify he never told Trump he was not under FBI investigation." "Comey: Told Trump he was not under investigation."]

10. *The New York Times* FALSELY claimed on the front page that the Trump administration had hidden a climate report.

[This item included a graphic of a *Washington Post* headline reading: "*New York Times* guilty of large screw-up on climate-change story."]

11. And last, but not least: "RUSSIA COLLUSION!" Russian collusion is perhaps the greatest hoax perpetrated on the American people. THERE IS NO COLLUSION!

Trump expanded on this charge in a tweet:

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

Well, now that collusion with Russia is proving to be a total hoax and the only collusion is with Hillary Clinton and the FBI/Russia, the Fake News Media (Mainstream) and this phony new book are hitting out at every new front imaginable. They should try winning an election. Sad!

8:32 AM - Jan 5, 2018

The president's message continued as follows:

While the media spent 90% of the time focused on negative coverage or fake news, the President has been getting results:

1. The economy has created nearly 2 million jobs and gained over \$8 trillion in wealth since the President's inauguration.
2. African Americans and Hispanics are enjoying the lowest unemployment rate in recorded history.
3. The President signed historic tax cuts and relief for hardworking Americans not seen since President Reagan.
4. President Trump's plan to cut regulations has exceeded "2 out for every 1 in" mandate, issuing 22 deregulatory actions for every one new regulatory action.



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5. The President has unleashed an American energy boom by ending Obama-era regulations, approving the Keystone pipeline, auctioning off millions of new acres for energy exploration, and opening up ANWR.
6. ISIS is in retreat, having been crushed in Iraq and Syria.
7. President Trump followed through on his promise to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and instructed the State Department to begin to relocate the Embassy.
8. With President Trump's encouragement, more member nations are paying their fair share for the common defense in the NATO alliance.
9. Signed the Veterans Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act to allow senior officials in the VA to fire failing employees and establishes safeguards to protect whistleblowers.
10. President Trump kept his promise and appointed Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Public reaction to Trump's fake news awards was somewhat predictable, but also included some surprises. Jeb Lund, a former political columnist and reporter for *Rolling Stone* and *The Guardian*, wrote a hit piece for NBCNews.com headlined "Trump's Fake News Awards were just another front in his fraudulent war on truth." The article carried a subheading: "The president's list of supposedly bad reporting is more fake than any of the 'fake news' cited in it."

A main critique about the "Fake News" items released by Trump is that the media eventually retracted most of the items or even apologized for them — so Trump's detractors say that they are not Fake News, but simply errors. While it is true that even the best-intentioned media can make mistakes, the mass media's bias is so apparent that even when they tell the truth in general, they spin the stories so as to chastise the president for something. Such bias makes errors in reporting inevitable. Moreover, rarely do capitulations and retractions by those media receive the same stature or air time as the original stories.

While one might expect Trump's campaign against "fake news" to draw criticism from Democrats in Congress, his two most outspoken critics were the two Republican senators from Arizona, John McCain and Jeff Flake.

McCain published an op-ed in the ultra-liberal *Washington Post* that tore into the president's use of his terminology. "The phrase 'fake news' — granted legitimacy by an American president — is being used by autocrats to silence reporters, undermine political opponents, stave off media scrutiny and mislead citizens," McCain wrote.

Flake, the other senator from Arizona, delivered a speech on the Senate floor against Trump, in which he compared Trump's treatment of the free press to that of Joseph Stalin:

It was a year in which a daily assault on the constitutionally protected free speech was launched by the same White House, an assault that is as unprecedented as it is unwarranted. The enemy of the people was how the president of the United States called the free press in 2017. Mr. President, it is a testament to the condition of our democracy that our own president uses words infamously spoken by Joseph Stalin to describe his enemies.

With Republican "allies" such as that in the Senate, Trump might be better off taking his chances building a consensus with Chuck Schumer and Dianne Feinstein. He would at least know what to expect from those two liberal Democrats.



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However, Trump did receive a favorable reaction from Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, who said on his Twitter account on January 17, just hours after Trump announced the recipients of his Fake News Awards:

President Trump just stressed again the power of fake news. Thank you. We must continue to fight that phenomenon....

Poland experiences the power of fake news first hand. Many European and even U.S. officials form their opinions of Poland based on the relentless flow of fake news.

Image: Screenshor from [DonaldJTrump.com](#)

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