



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 24, 2017

## Trump Criticizes “Fake News” and Unveils Ambitious Plan at CPAC

President Trump received a warm response from an enthusiastic crowd at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on February 24, as he walked onto the stage while “God Bless the USA” played over the sound system.

A statement released by the White House on February 23 describes CPAC as “a gathering of conservative activists from all across the country who meet to learn from each other, receive training in activism and campaign management, and hear from prominent conservative leaders.”



Trump made his first appearance at CPAC in 2011, followed by speeches in 2013, 2014, and 2015. While warming up the audience with some casual remarks, the president said:

I would’ve come last year but I was worried that I would be, at that time, too controversial. We wanted border security. We wanted very, very strong military. We wanted all of the things that we’re going to get....

... People consider that controversial but you didn’t consider it controversial.

During the early part of his speech, Trump pursued what has become a familiar theme for him — the “fake news” produced by the major media. He said:

They’re very dishonest people. In fact, in covering my comments, the dishonest media did not explain that I called the fake news the enemy of the people. The fake news. They dropped off the word “fake.” And all of a sudden the story became the media is the enemy. They take the word “fake” out. And now I’m saying, “Oh no, this is no good.” But that’s the way they are. So I’m not against the media, I’m not against the press. I don’t mind bad stories if I deserve them.

On February 17 Trump tweeted: “The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!”

This tweet was widely portrayed by the media and others as saying that the media, as opposed to the “FAKE NEWS media,” is “the enemy of the American people.”

Trump said he was particularly dismayed by reports that attribute statements about him to unnamed sources. He then went on to say that there were some good reporters in the news business, however:

I had a story written yesterday about me in Reuters by a very honorable man. It was a very fair story. There are some great reporters around. They’re talented, they’re honest as the day is long. They’re great. But there are some terrible dishonest people and they do a tremendous disservice to our country and to our people. A tremendous disservice. They are very dishonest people. And they shouldn’t use [unnamed] sources. They should put the name of the person. You will see stories dry



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up like you've never seen before.

The president also criticized inaccurate opinion polls, such as those that predicted before the presidential election that he was too far behind to win:

Take a look at polls over the last two years. Now you'd think they would fire the pollster, right?... Look at CBS, look at ABC, also, look at NBC, take a look at some of these polls. They're so bad, so inaccurate and what that it does is it creates a false narrative. It creates [a] narrative that is just like we're not going to win. People say, I love Trump, but you know, I'm not feeling great today, he can't win, so I won't go and vote. I won't go and vote. It creates a whole false deal. And we have to fight it, folks, we have to fight it. They're very smart, they're very cunning and they're very dishonest.

Trump then moved on to other topics that were key parts of his presidential campaign, including trade and defending our nation's borders. He emphasized that his promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border would soon be built. He stated:

We've defended other nations' borders while leaving ours wide open, anybody can come in. We're going to build a wall, don't worry about it. We're building the wall. We're building the wall. In fact, it's going to start soon. Way ahead of schedule, way ahead of schedule. Way, way, way ahead of schedule. It's going to start very soon. [Homeland Security Secretary John] Kelly by the way has done a fantastic job. Fantastic job he's done.

Trump went on to criticize the way our interventionism in the Middle East wasted U.S. resources while making the situation there worse than before:

We've spent trillions of dollars overseas, while allowing our own infrastructure to fall into total disrepair and decay. In the Middle East, we've spent as of four weeks ago, \$6 trillion. Think of it. And by the way, the Middle East is in — I mean, it's not even close, it's in much worse shape than it was 15 years ago. If our presidents would have gone to the beach for 15 years, we would be in much better shape than we are right now, that I can tell you. Be a hell of a lot better. We could have rebuilt our country three times with that money. This is the situation that I inherited. I inherited a mess, believe me.

Trump then continued to talk about ObamaCare: "We're changing it. We're going to make it much better, we're going to make it less expensive. We're going to make it much better."

Trump continued, "Millions of people were very happy with their healthcare, they had their doctor, they had their plan. Remember the lie, 28 times. You could keep your doctor, you could keep your plan. Over and over and over again, you heard it. So we're going to repeal and replace ObamaCare."

Among the other areas that Trump spoke about in his speech where his administration would implement new policy changes:

- "To secure the southern border of the United States and to begin the construction of a great, great border wall."
- "We'll stop the drugs from pouring into our nation and poisoning our youth."
- "I've also followed through on my campaigning promise and withdrawn America from the Trans-Pacific Partnership."
- "We have authorized the construction, day one, of the Keystone and Dakota Access Pipelines."



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Regarding those pipelines, Trump said he has issued a new rule — if the contractors want a pipeline in the United States, they are going to use pipe that's made in the United States.

Continuing with his plan to implement his agenda, Trump said his administration would take the following steps:

- “We’re preparing bold action to lift the restrictions on American energy, including shale oil, natural gas and beautiful clean coal and we’re going to put our miners back to work.”
- “Another major promise is tax reform. We’re going to massively lower taxes on the middle class, reduce taxes on American businesses and make our tax code more simple and much more fair for everyone, including the people and the businesses.”

One area where Trump indicated he would increase spending was for the military: “We will be substantially upgrading all of our military, all of our military, offensive, defensive, everything, bigger and better and stronger than ever before. And hopefully, we’ll never have to use it, but nobody’s gonna mess with us, folks, nobody.”

Continuing with a promise to fight terrorists, Trump said: “As part of my pledge to restore safety for the American people, I have also directed the defense community to develop a plan to totally obliterate ISIS.”

Almost as an afterthought, Trump added: “And by the way, we will protect our Second Amendment.”

He continued, “You know, Wayne [LaPierre] and Chris [Cox] are here from the NRA and they didn’t have that on the list. It’s lucky I thought about it.”

During his talk, Trump took advantage of the fact that he was playing to a sympathetic audience and pulled out all the stops. The agenda he unveiled is a very ambitious one. It will be interesting to see, for example, how he can manage a massive military buildup while at the same time implementing a large-scale tax cut. He and Congress will have much work to do in trying to accomplish even a fraction of what he proposed. His only chance for success is if the elimination of government regulations and a more favorable tax climate for businesses generates increased profits and tax revenues sufficient to balance the budget.

Trump often compares himself to Ronald Reagan, but not even “Reaganomics” managed to build up the military while balancing the budget. (Furthermore, during Reagan’s presidency, the national debt grew from \$997 billion to \$2.85 trillion.)

*Photo: AP Images*

*Full disclosure: The New American’s parent organization, The John Birch Society, participated in CPAC 2010 and CPAC 2011, but was disinvited in 2012.*

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