

Trump attacks media in diatribe to Conservative Political Action Conference

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President Donald Trump delivered a violent, ultra-right speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on Friday, attacking the media and reprising many of the “America First” themes outlined in his inauguration address one month ago.

The annual CPAC conference was a festival of political reaction. Trump boycotted the event during the election campaign last year, amidst sharp divisions within the Republican Party over his candidacy. But this year’s gathering of fascistic-minded activists and college Republicans greeted him with rapturous applause, repeatedly interrupting his speech with chants of “USA! USA!”

Among those addressing the meeting, held this year in National Harbor, Maryland, just south of Washington, DC, was Trump’s chief strategist Stephen Bannon, who spoke alongside White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus on Thursday.

In his remarks, Bannon said the administration would press forward aggressively with what he called the “deconstruction of the administrative state”—that is, the dismantling of social programs and government regulations—along with an expansion of police state measures and the implementation of a nationalist trade war economic policy.

There was more than a whiff of fascism in the air when Bannon, the former head of the ultra-right Breitbart News, denounced the “corporatist globalist” media.

Trump’s remarks focused on two main themes. He began with a rambling diatribe against his critics in the media, repeating his previous statement that the “fake news...are the enemy of the people. Because they have no sources, they just make them up when there are none.” The “large media corporations,” he added, “have their own agenda... it doesn’t represent the

people, it never will represent the people, and we’re going to do something about it.”

Apparently following up on this threat, the White House took the unprecedented step later on Friday of barring major media organizations from a briefing held by Press Secretary Sean Spicer. Among the journalists who were prevented from attending the press “gaggle” in Spicer’s office were those from the *New York Times*, CNN, the BBC and the *Los Angeles Times*. Other establishment news outlets, as well as right-wing journalists from Breitbart News, the *Washington Times* and One America News Network, were allowed to attend.

The media responded with typical cowardice. The White House Correspondents’ Association issued a statement of protest lamely declaring that it would be “discussing this further with White House staff.”

Trump is seeking to capitalize on widespread hostility to the corporate media to advance a right-wing, authoritarian policy, using the power of the state to attack the media as a whole and individual journalists. This is aimed at creating the conditions for an ever more violent attack on democratic rights as the Trump administration prepares an escalation of war abroad and social counterrevolution at home.

After denouncing the media, Trump reviewed the right-wing measures his administration has carried out in its first month, including a crackdown on immigrants that has provoked protests throughout the country and internationally. Referring to the US border with Mexico, he declared, “We’re going to build a wall, don’t worry about it.” He said of the thousands of people being deported, “These are bad dudes... if you watch these people, it’s like, oh, gee, that’s so sad. We were getting bad people out of this country.”

Of the anti-Muslim travel ban that has been held up

by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Trump said his administration “will not be deterred from this course, and in a matter of days we will be taking brand new action to protect our people and keep America safe.”

While presenting his domestic program as aimed at creating jobs to benefit the “American worker,” he outlined a series of pro-corporate measures, including authorization of the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines, “bold action to lift the restrictions on American energy,” moves to “put the regulation industry out of work and out of business,” and a reduction in corporate taxes.

As for social programs, Trump proclaimed, to much applause from his audience, “It’s time for all Americans to get off of welfare and get back to work. You’re going to love it.”

The fascistic tenor of the Trump administration is anchored in its ultra-nationalism, aimed at diverting social tensions outward and forcing Washington’s rivals to pay for the crisis of American capitalism. Both Trump and Bannon doubled down on promises to pursue aggressive trade war measures.

The corollary of this “America First” economic policy is world war. “We’re also putting in a massive budget request for our beloved military,” Trump said. “And we will be substantially upgrading all of our military, all of our military, offensive, defensive, everything.”

“It will be one of the greatest military buildups in American history,” he added. “Nobody will question our military might again.” The military, Trump said, will be directed to develop a plan to “totally obliterate ISIS,” that is, organize a major escalation of the US war drive in the Middle East.

Trump’s speech Friday came one day after he gave an interview to Reuters pledging a buildup of the US nuclear weapons arsenal. “If countries are going to have nukes,” he said, “we’re going to be at the top of the pack.”

Putting an exclamation mark on his jingoistic nationalism, Trump declared, “There’s one allegiance that unites us all, and that is America... No matter our background or income or geography, we’re all citizens of this blessed land, and no matter our color or the blood, color of the blood we bleed, it’s the same red blood of great, great patriots.”

Trump’s speech before CPAC makes clear that his

administration has no intention of retreating from its efforts to witch-hunt immigrants, escalate war abroad and dismantle democratic rights at home. As for the Democratic Party, it has spent the past month spreading complacency about the incoming administration, pledging to work with it on economic nationalist measures while seeking to divert popular opposition to Trump behind its own campaign for war with Russia.



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