

Trump foreign policy speech draws 'snickering and scorn' across the board

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On Wednesday, GOP front-runner Donald Trump gave a prepared address to what Politico described as an "elite, invitation-only Washington foreign policy audience" in an apparent bid to demonstrate his grasp of the job he seeks. But, Politico added, the speech, which was read from a teleprompter, failed on many levels and "drew snickering and scorn from foreign policy insiders who remain unconvinced that Trump is up to the job."

"It struck me as a very odd mishmash," Doug Bandow, a foreign policy scholar at the libertarian Cato Institute, told Politico. Bandow, Michael Crowley added, shares many of Trump's beliefs on America's role in the world. "He called for a new foreign policy strategy, but you don't really get the sense he gave one."

Robert "Bud" McFarlane, a national security adviser to former President Ronald Reagan, also attended. McFarlane, Politico added, found Trump's speech "lacking in policy prescriptions," and said its "strident rhetoric masked a lack of depth,"

Trump praised the "greatest generation" for defeating the Nazis and Imperial Japan, and lauded efforts by both major parties during the Cold War. But after the Berlin Wall fell, he added, America's foreign policy veered off course.

"We failed to develop a new vision for a new time. In fact, as time went on, our foreign policy began to make less and less sense," he said. "Logic was replaced with foolishness and arrogance, and this led to one foreign policy disaster after another."

He also blamed U.S. foreign policy mistakes in countries like Iraq, Egypt and Libya for the rise of ISIS. It began, he said, "with the dangerous idea that we could make Western democracies out of countries that had no experience or interest in becoming a Western Democracy."

Declaring himself the "only" person running with the ability to fix the problem, Trump called for allies to pay their "fair share" of the bill for defense. Countries who don't pony up, he said "must be prepared" to "defend themselves."

Worse yet, he said, President Obama has "picked fights" with allies, leading them to look elsewhere. He also said that America's rivals -- like Iran -- no longer respect us.

In short, Trump promised an "America first" policy while deriding what he called "the false song of globalism." But, the Washington Post said, the speech contained very few details.

"There was no mention of Mexico, let alone the construction of a wall to keep out undocumented immigrants," Karen DeYoung and Jose A. DelReal said. "Although he spoke vaguely of a 'pause for reassessment' of immigration policy overall, he did not repeat his pledge to stop all Muslims from entering the country or his acquiescence to the spread of nuclear weapons."

Appearing on CNN, retired Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling also criticized Trump, saying that negotiating with other countries is not the same as negotiating with other businesses. According to the Post, Wednesday's address was the first in a series of formal policy speeches.