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# Cato 'disappointed' by Pawlenty speech

By Allen McDuffee

Just two days after announcing his bid for the GOP 2012 presidential nomination, Former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty reached out to a [free-market audience](#) Wednesday by making a pitch at the Cato Institute. But what seemed to be a savvy decision in selecting the libertarian venue may have quickly proven to be a misstep when he directly contradicted Cato's stance on defense spending.

"I'm not one who is going to stand before you and tell you we should cut the defense budget," Pawlenty said.

More than one Cato representative called the remarks "disappointing." Cato Executive Vice-President David Boaz said Cato put a [copy of a report](#) in Pawlenty's hands that reflects their position on defense spending, "with the hope we can change his mind." Cato has consistently argued for a severe reduction in military interventions which would, in turn, require fewer service members, less equipment and lower operating costs.

Cato President Ed Crane, who was visibly irritated at multiple points during Pawlenty's presentation, simultaneously [explained](#) why Pawlenty saw Cato as an attractive option and why the two are a mismatch.

"I think he probably views Cato as a symbolic venue for making it clear he's serious about spending reductions," said Edward Crane, the institute's founder and president. "He was one of four governors last year to get an 'A' grade from our fiscal report card. And he earned it. He did a good job there against a legislature that was very much against him."

[...]

"The Constitution provides for a military to defend the U.S. — not to democratize the world," Crane said. "One would hope that presidential candidates would consider America's commitments overseas very seriously before endorsing those commitments."

It remains unclear why Pawlenty did not seek another think tank that embraces spending cuts but also supports continued rates of defense spending. Representatives from the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute confirmed that neither think tank had been approached by Pawlenty's offices to host this event, despite reflecting Pawlenty's position on these issues.

Representatives from Pawlenty's office did not respond to a query by the time of this filing.

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