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European Languages

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23.02.2025

CPAC 2025: A festival of fascist reaction



Elon Musk holds up a chainsaw he received from Argentina's President Javier Milei, right, as they arrive to speak at the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC, at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, in Oxon Hill, Maryland. [AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana]

Trump administration officials and fascists from around the world are currently gathering at Maryland's National Harbor for the annual US Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). What began in 1974 with a keynote speech by then-Governor of California Ronald Reagan has transformed into the most prominent gathering of fascists on an international scale.

Donald Trump is slated to give the keynote speech on Saturday. Prior to Trump, the world's richest fascist Elon Musk, Vice President JD Vance and Speaker of the House Mike Johnson took the stage to hail their leader and repeat "Great Replacement Theory" talking points.

In his remarks, JD Vance reiterated comments he made at the Munich Security Conference that the “greatest threats” facing the “leaders of the West” was “millions and millions of unvetted foreign migrants ... that is the biggest threat to Europe and frankly remains the biggest threat to the United States, because yes, we have four years of President Trump’s leadership, but I guarantee you, if the Democrats ever get power again, they are going to try and do it again.”

In a bizarre performance, Musk appeared on stage with a chainsaw handed to him by Argentinian President Javier Milei. Wielding the chainsaw above his head while wearing all black clothing, large sunglasses and a black hat that featured “Make America Great Again” in a Gothic font, Musk bellowed, “This is the chainsaw for bureaucracy. Chainsaw!”

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Musk was interviewed for roughly 30 minutes, in the course of which he praised his “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE), new FBI Director Kash Patel and President of El Salvador Nayib Bukele.

He spent the rest of his time on stage railing against immigrants and repeating neo-Nazi talking points that have animated several mass shootings in recent years. Musk said, “I think it is really important for people to understand that the Biden administration sent any possible money that they could send, if there was money they could send to facilitate and amplify illegal immigration, they sent it.”

Asked if he thought the Democrats were trying to “build a new voter class,” Musk responded, “Yes,” and added:

You don’t actually have to assume some grand conspiracy, you just need to look at basic incentives. Fundamentally, the probability that an illegal is going to vote Democrat at some point, whether it’s cheating, but eventually they become citizens—probability, probably, like 80 or 90 percent.

Then the incentive is to maximize the number of illegals in the country. That is why the Biden administration was pushing to get in as many illegals as possible and spend every dollar possible... because every one of them is a customer. Every one is a voter. So the whole thing is a giant voter importation scam.

Musk said it was “treasonous” and a “real scam to tilt the scale of democracy.”

In addition to Musk, this year’s event has featured several high-level Republicans and Trump administration officials, including his National Security Advisor Michael Waltz, White

House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, Attorney General Pam Bondi, and Sebastian Gorka, a deputy assistant to Trump.

Congressional Republicans in attendance included the aforementioned Johnson, as well as Florida Representative Byron Donalds and Texas Senator Ted Cruz. International attendees at this year's event included Nigel Farage of Britain's Reform Party and Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico. Both men hailed Trump and his war on immigrants. In his comments, Fico pledged to enshrine in the Slovakian Constitution the definition of marriage as between "a man and a woman."

Emboldened by the return of Donald Trump to the White House, two speakers so far at this year's event have given *Sieg Heil* Nazi salutes during their speeches.

On Friday, after announcing his intention to join Musk and Trump's fascist movement, Mexican actor Eduardo Verástegui delivered a Nazi salute.



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After the salute, he railed against "socialism," which, he said, "makes a majority of the population very poor. These people love poverty and they multiply. ... Socialism is a cancer, it destroys everything it touches. ... If we do not act soon, it will be too late."



Eduardo Verástegui after pledging loyalty to Trump and Musk, gives a Nazi salute at CPAC, February 21, 2025. [Photo: C-SPAN.org]

Verástegui called for Trump to run for president again in 2028, a violation of the US constitutional two-term presidential limit, and announced that he would be building a new

conservative party to “free Mexico from socialism, communism, the radical left, woke ideology and the corrupt globalists,” drawing laughter and applause from those in attendance. On Thursday, former Trump White House adviser and current host of the *War Room* podcast, Steve Bannon, delivered his own Nazi salute at the conclusion of his speech.



Steve Bannon gives a Nazi salute at CPAC, February 20, 2025. [Photo: C-SPAN.org]

Prior to the *Sieg Heil*, Bannon declared that the 2020 election had been stolen and that the “J6ers”—formerly imprisoned Trump insurrectionists— “are here at CPAC. All of them.”

Bannon said, “The reason the J6ers are here and they are patriots is because that was a fedsurrection, totally set up by the FBI, by the Justice Department, all of them.” Bannon referred to Trump’s enemies as “demonic” and called Trump “an instrument of divine providence.”

Backing Trump’s dictatorial ambitions, Bannon said, “The future of America is MAGA. And the Future of MAGA is Donald J. Trump. We want Trump in ‘28!”

Stoking up the Republican faithful in attendance before delivering his fascist salute, Bannon screamed, “Are you prepared to fight? ... Are you prepared to fight for Trump? ... Fight! Fight! Fight!”

Bannon’s Nazi salute was so obvious that Jordan Bardella, president of the French neo-fascist National Rally, felt compelled to distance himself from this year’s gathering and cancelled his planned speech. In a statement to the French news agency Agence France-Presse, Bardella wrote:

In this gallery, when I was not present in the room, one of the speakers allowed himself, by provocation, a gesture referring to the Nazi ideology. Therefore, I took the immediate decision to cancel my scheduled speech this afternoon at the event.

Asked Friday to comment on Bardella's action, Bannon hissed to a French reporter, "I want to be quoted. He's a little boy, not a man, and only men or women of strength can lead France."

In his speech, which was warmly received, Republican operative and neo-Nazi Jack Posobiec declared, "Donald Trump is the living embodiment of the American Constitution." Like other speakers, Posobiec praised the confirmation of Kash Patel, saying:

We are going to be going after the real criminals, we are going to go after the pedophiles, we are going to go after the traffickers, we are going to go after the illegals, we are going to go after the cartels, we are going to go after the foreign agents in this country, and, yes, that includes the foreign agents that are working and have penetrated the United States government and the United States Congress.

Posobiec said that Trump's election victory, in which he failed to receive a majority of the vote, was a "mandate" that the "American people put on his head. And as President Trump said just a few days ago, 'A man who saves his nation violates no law.'"

In addition to a number of speakers, at least one group at the conference, the "Third Term Project"—which was given media passes by CPAC—was actively lobbying for an unconstitutional third Trump term.

In an interview with independent journalist Ford Fischer, Shane Trejo of "Third Term Project" said Trump needed another term to fight against the "forces of evil."

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Asked about his group portraying Trump in the image of Julius Ceasar, Trejo responded:

Well, we believe that Trump is the Caesar figure that America has needed. Trump is the Napoleonic figure that's emerged to lead our country out of perdition and into greatness.

The fascist hysteria that dominated the conference is a reflection of the crisis character of the dictatorial Trump regime, a function of the desperate economic, social, geo-political and political crises of American capitalism. The fascist scum who populate CPAC are petrified over the coming eruption of class conflict in America, the initial signs of which are already emerging in the form of protests by thousands of federal workers against mass layoffs and protests across the country against Trump's attacks on immigrants.

They know they have nothing to fear from the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy, but they sense that to defeat the working class only a fascist dictatorship will suffice.