

That Time Trump Spent Nearly \$100,000 On An Ad Criticizing U.S. Foreign Policy In 1987

A jab at Reagan?



[Donald Trump](#) once spent nearly \$100,000 to place a full-page advertisement criticizing U.S. foreign policy in the [New York Times](#), the [Washington Post](#), and the [Boston Globe](#).

"There's nothing wrong with America's Foreign Defense Policy that a little backbone can't cure," the ad's headline blares. Below, the reader finds "an open letter from Donald J. Trump" -- addressed "To The American People" -- "on why America should stop paying to defend countries that can afford to defend themselves."

The ads appeared in the papers on September 2, 1987. According to [an Associated Press story](#) published the night before they appeared in print, Trump paid \$94,801 to run the advertisements.

"For decades, Japan and other nations have been taking advantage of the [United States](#)," the letter declares. "The saga continues unabated as we defend the Persian Gulf, an area of only marginal significance to the United States for its oil supplies, but one upon which Japan and others are almost totally dependent."

"Why are these nations not paying the United States for the human lives and billions of dollars we are losing to protect their interests?" the ad continues.

"The world is laughing at America's politicians as we protect ships we don't own, carrying oil we don't need, destined for allies who won't help."

Trump writes that Americans could "help our farmers, our sick, our homeless by taking from some of the greatest profit machines ever created -- machines created and nurtured by us."

"'Tax' these wealthy nations, not America," suggests the tycoon. "End our huge deficits, reduce our taxes, and let America's economy grow unencumbered by the cost of defending those who can easily afford to pay us for the defense of their freedom."

"Let's not let our great country be laughed at any more," Trump's letter concludes.

At the time the ad ran, there was speculation that Trump might oppose George H.W. Bush for the Republican nomination for president. The same day the ads ran, [an article](#) elsewhere in the *Times* reported that the developer had scheduled a trip to New Hampshire.

Ultimately, Trump did not enter the 1988 race -- bringing the first of his many flirtations with a presidential bid to an end.