

**TRANSCRIPT:**  
**Is Disarming America Smart Politics?**  
**The Security and Economic Costs of Obama's Policies**

**February 9, 2012**  
**CPAC 2012**

**AL ZAPANTA:**

I'm going to try to focus around three major areas. One is, during my tenure at the Reserve Forces Policy Board during President Bush's first term, I had the ability to work with all the services and the Guard and the reserve, which was basically half the military in uniform and, as you well know, just approximately half of the boots on the ground during Iraq and Afghanistan were in fact Guard and reserve from all our services. And there were some very specific things that have now started to impact as we look forward. And that is the whole reset of the Guard and Reserve. And I'm talking equipment, I'm talking training, I'm talking resources. And I don't think anybody would argue that when you start to reset the priority is on your active force. Now there's a change that happened during this last go around, meaning the last ten years, where we heard the term operational reserve. I don't think there's such a thing as operational reserve.

I think there's a Reserve and National Guard that are trained up to go in and actually partner with the active forces whether it's at the battalion or the brigade level, but in fact it's almost a plug and pull concept that we had worked on post-Vietnam. I'm a Vietnam veteran, captain – I was a captain once, too. As with the general. So we understand what it's like to be one. And so as you look forward and you start to think about how do we refit and reorganize the Guard and Reserve, it's – that's a challenge. And that's going to be a challenge. Just like when these young people came off of active duty, we actually dumped them back on their communities with very little support systems that they had, both in the ability to get the kind of medical and health care treatment, etceteras, etceteras. So now the impact of the cutback is a question in my mind on the resourcing side. The second is, jobs. You know, all these billions of dollars that are going out, they're going out to community colleges or they're going out to all the institutions that, thank God we have them, but they're there to educate and train. The fallacy in all that money going out, there's not a job at the end of that. And until we can focus jobs on those young people that are coming out – and let me tell you where the problem is. We in the military have a thing called MOS. Military Occupational Specialty. Each service has its own classification. You come out as a heavy equipment driver or operator, you have that training and that classification in the military, it doesn't translate in the civilian side. You have to either go get a certificate, you have to go through whatever you have to get to. And so – and secondly, by the way, DOD does not share that information with the Department of Labor. Who sets the civilian classification. So guess what, we have another disconnect. So I give you that because that's a concern that I had during my term at DOD. The other is, the whole idea of the industrial base. Some of you may have heard about the Mara Initiative [PH] which is the money that is being spent, a billion and a half over five years, about half of it has been spent, to help plus up the Mexican military, the security forces, the ability to get them the kind of technology and equipment, but also to train them, to help train – I think there was twenty-one hundred prosecutors and judges to try to really

instill the rule of law. So there's a reason for that.

What's going to happen to that funding? Because if you don't think we have a situation on our southern border, forget immigration. I mean, that is what it is and it will be there. But take a look at what we've got coming in the way of flow of arms, the flow of cash that is going south, what's coming north in the way of drugs, methamphetamine, cocaine, I mean, marijuana, I could go on and on. The bottom line is, our focus really isn't in our backyard. Stop and think about during the Reagan Era and the Contras. Now who do we have in charge of Venezuela? Who do we have in charge of Nicaragua? Ecuador? Bolivia? Okay? So you got to kind of really think about what's right here. And as we start to cut back, I will tell you, this whole initiative was started in the previous administration to really help deal with that in that country called Mexico so it doesn't come here. Well, guess what? It's flowing over here whether we like it or not. It's an over three hundred and fifty cities. Our country. And I'm talking gangs that are actually in concert with what's going on and the drugs. So I'm going to leave you with that. Let's talk about the industrial base. Seventy percent of the aerospace and air frame industry is now coming into Mexico in a place called Carretero [PH] and other parts in Mexico. Why? The labor cost is now half of what China is. So it's coming back. Saving money on transportation, it's securing the supply chain. So you've got some really interesting positions going on. One of my times that I spent both as a White House fellow in the seventies and President Reagan's senior policy adviser in 1980, when I was finishing my doctorate work, on NAFTA. And the whole idea was to – how do we take a look at North America as a trading regime? To then position us, vis a vis, EU and Asia/Pacific? And now you've got this thing called the BRIC, Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Well, at the end of the day, if you don't think we don't have an implication as we cut back on our defense and security and the implications toward trade and the economy, wake up. Cause it has major implications. And that's a much harder head to turn or like a ship at sea than when you're dealing with the defense. And I really have to say to you all, I'm really glad you take the time to come and do this and hear. Some of us have a lot of concerns. I want to thank Frank and our panel because it's a pleasure and an honor to be here because we need to hear our voices together about this. Thank you, Frank.