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Donald J Trump answering questions at a recent press conference at Trump Tower, in New York City

AN UNCONVENTIONAL PRESIDENT

George Washington became the USA's first president about 230 years ago. Since then there have been 44 American presidents. Most have been politicians. A few were elected after becoming successful military commanders.

Donald J Trump is the country's 45th president. Last year, he celebrated his 70th birthday. He is both the oldest and wealthiest person to be elected as the President of the USA. What's more, Mr Trump has never been a politician before. Nor has he been a senior military commander.

The American president is often described as the most powerful person on the Earth. This is because the USA is the world's biggest economy. Its military forces are far more powerful and better equipped than those of any other nation. The American president is the commander-in-chief of the country's army, navy and air force.

Mr Trump has spent most of his life building a successful business empire. Called The Trump Organization, it owns residential buildings, office blocks, hotels, holiday resorts, and golf courses in several countries. Not all his business **ventures** have succeeded. Some have failed, or been forced to close. Mr Trump also hosted a popular reality television show for 11 years. He lives on the top floors of a large residential block, in New York City. It's called Trump Tower.

Mr Trump declared that he would be 'running' for president about two years ago. Then, many people laughed, or thought it was a joke. Those who did greatly underestimated Mr Trump. They also misunderstood the mood, worries, anger, and concerns of millions of Americans. Many voted for Mr Trump because he was not a politician. Normally, politicians are very careful what they

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say. Mr Trump isn't. He has said things that have shocked or upset many people. Yet his supporters admire Mr Trump for saying what he thinks. They claim that most politicians are too afraid to do this.

Since winning the election two and a half months ago, Mr Trump has had disagreements with the bosses of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and several news channels. The CIA is a secret organisation. One of its main jobs is to spy on other countries. The CIA claims that Russian computer hackers helped Mr Trump win the election. Hillary Clinton was Mr Trump's opponent. Emails written by senior officials working for her were hacked and then published. Some contained embarrassing information.

The CIA also produced a damaging secret report about an 'incident' in a hotel room in Russia. This, the report says, happened when Mr Trump visited the country several years ago. This information is supposed to have come from Russian spies. The CIA admits that the report could have been made up. Somebody passed it to a number of newspapers and news channels. Two included it in their news reports. Other news companies then reported what these organisations had done. Normally, news companies would only publish damaging information if they were sure that it was true.

Mr Trump insists that he has not received any help from Russia. He described the CIA report as a 'joke'. Russian officials also declared that the report was untrue. They also denied hacking the emails and interfering with the election. Normally, American presidents like to have a good relationship with news reporters. This

is likely to change with Mr Trump in charge. He believes that some American news companies want to damage his reputation. He is unlikely to cooperate with them.

There used to be many large car-making factories in the USA. In recent years, some carmakers have shut down their operations and opened new ones in Mexico. They do this because it is less expensive to make cars in Mexico. When this happens, American factory workers lose their jobs.

Over 20 years ago, the USA, Mexico and Canada signed a trading agreement. It's called NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). This agreement means that goods made in each of these countries can be sold easily in the others. American carmakers can assemble vehicles in Mexico and sell them in the USA. Mr Trump says that he wants to end or change the NAFTA agreement. He pledged to bring back American jobs that have 'moved' to Mexico and other countries.

Mr Trump likes to use Twitter. Recently two carmakers announced that they were planning to build factories in Mexico. Mr Trump did not speak to the companies' bosses. Instead, on Twitter, he said that a tax, or tariff, would be put on their cars made in Mexico. This would make them very expensive to buy in America. Soon afterwards, the bosses announced that they had changed their plans. Now, the cars are to be made in the USA. No American president has done this before.

Mr Trump has also made some surprising comments about other countries. He said that the UK was right to vote to leave the European Union (EU). He predicted that the EU would break up and criticised its leaders. Eighteen months ago, Angela Merkel, the German leader, or chancellor, allowed over one million migrants to move to her country. These people mainly come from Syria, Afghanistan and countries in North Africa. Mr Trump said that Mrs Merkel's decision was a 'disaster'. Other elected leaders may agree with him, yet none would dare say so.

The new president has also annoyed China. Soon after winning the election, Mr Trump spoke to Tsai Ing-wen on the telephone. She is the president of Taiwan. The Chinese leaders insist that Taiwan is part of China. They do not recognise Taiwan as a separate country. Traditionally, other countries (including the USA) try not to upset China. For this reason, few speak with Taiwan's leaders directly.

Mr Trump will be an unconventional president. He is a divisive figure. Many Americans are delighted with their new leader. Almost as many are dismayed. Some fear for their country's future. Others are very optimistic. Mr Trump's slogan is 'Make America Great Again'. The next presidential election is in four years' time. If, by then, the USA is 'becoming great again', Mr Trump is likely to be re-elected. If it's not, he'll probably lose. ■



Trump Tower, in New York City