

Trump retweets video of supporter shouting, “White Power”

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On Sunday morning, President Donald Trump retweeted a video showing supporters riding golf carts decked out in American flags and Trump election paraphernalia through a Florida retirement complex, while other residents angrily denounced them as fascists and racists. The video includes one Trump supporter pumping his fist and shouting, “White Power!”

In the tweet, Trump wrote: “Thank you to the great people of The Villages. The Radical Left Do Nothing Democrats will Fall in the Fall. Corrupt Joe is shot. See you soon!!!” The video was left on Trump’s timeline, viewable by his 82.5 million followers, for over three hours before being deleted.

The video went viral and was viewed by millions, evoking anger and revulsion in the vast majority. The obvious continuity with Trump’s 2017 praise for fascist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia as “very fine people” following the murder of antifascist protester Heather Heyer has not gone unnoticed.

Sunday’s tweet is only the latest in an ongoing string of provocative statements by Trump denouncing protesters against police brutality as “thugs” and “terrorists” and threatening to mobilize the military to put down the ongoing demonstrations.

The explosion of new coronavirus infections has completely exposed the criminal character of Trump’s response to the pandemic. At the same time, strikes and protests by workers against the back-to-work campaign are growing, and Trump’s poll numbers are falling. Under these crisis conditions, Trump is stepping up his efforts to incite the most right-wing elements in his core base of backward and disoriented social layers.

The video was taken during a dual Flag Day and Trump birthday celebration held June 14 by Republican supporters at The Villages retirement complex, located

90 miles northeast of Tampa Bay in central Florida. It was the second year in a row that the golf cart rally was held in the 55+ retirement community.

The Villages was developed by Harold Gary Morse, a former Chicago advertiser and land developer worth an estimated \$2.9 billion at the time of his death in 2014. Morse contributed millions of dollars to Republican campaigns throughout his life and was co-chair of Mitt Romney’s 2012 Florida finance committee. In his obituary, the *Tampa Bay Times* described Morse as a “political kingmaker for a generation of Republican candidates.”

The Villages is a sprawling community covering three counties. It comprises over 100 restaurants, golf courses, tennis courts and other amenities for the more than 110,000 residents. Most of the residents live in small Sumter County, where Trump won nearly 69 percent of the vote in 2016.

After the video was denounced by millions on social media around the world, White House Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere was forced to issue a statement Sunday afternoon attempting to distance Trump from the racist content of the video. Deere said that Trump “is a big fan of The Villages,” but “did not hear the one statement made on the video.” He added, “What he did see was tremendous enthusiasm from his many supporters.”

When asked by Jake Tapper on CNN’s “State of the Union” program Sunday morning about Trump’s tweet, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar replied, “I’ve not seen that video or that tweet, but obviously neither the president, his administration nor I would do anything to be supportive of white supremacy or anything that would support discrimination of any kind.”

Just over a month ago, Azar, a former pharmaceutical

executive and lobbyist, blamed America's world leading COVID-19 death toll on the diversity that "unfortunately" exists in the population.

This latest provocation followed a Thursday "town hall" hosted by Sean Hannity on Fox News in Green Bay, Wisconsin that underscored the continued danger of a military coup by Trump and his continuing cultivation of fascistic elements.

In the nearly 40-minute rambling interview, Trump boasted that state and police forces had arrested "hundreds of people," including protesters in Washington, D.C. He repeated previous attacks on young people and workers protesting against the police murder of George Floyd as "vandals," "agitators" and "terrorists."

On the topic of immigration, Trump touted the "220 miles" of border wall that had been constructed, as well as the "phenomenal numbers on the border." He declared that "border patrol has done a great job."

He advocated bringing "stop and frisk" policing to Chicago. The unconstitutional program, which has particularly targeted poor and minority youth for arbitrary harassment and arrest, was first implemented in New York City by Rudy Giuliani, the two-term mayor who has since become Trump's personal lawyer and "fixer."

"If I've ever seen a case," Trump said, "I know it's very controversial to say stop and frisk, okay. Stop and frisk, you take guns away. Chicago is the greatest example I think I've ever seen of that. Rudy Giuliani was a great mayor, he did it in New York. ... Rudy Giuliani started stop and frisk and he did a great, it was a great thing he did for New York."

Trump repeated the dictatorial threats he made June 1 in his Rose Garden speech, when he called for imposing martial law and unleashing the US military against the protests. Referring to the ongoing occupation of a small section of downtown Seattle by protesters, Trump declared, "[I] could stop it quickly. And at some point in the not too distant future, I'm going to do it. And if they don't do something with Seattle, we're going to do that. We're going to go in there..."

In recent days, fascistic elements have responded to Trump's incitements by showing up at anti-police brutality demonstrations to threaten and, in some cases, attack and shoot protesters.

On Saturday in Boston, a small "pro-police" group known as Super Happy Fun America gathered roughly 100 people near the State House for a "Restore Sanity" rally. Last year, the same group organized a "Straight Pride" parade. The group was given police protection and separated from the thousands of counterprotesters who were arrayed on the opposite side of the street.

Joining the pro-police protesters were roughly a dozen members of a group called the National Social Club. They identified themselves to reporters from the *Boston Herald* as a "pro-white street fraternity." One member had a swastika tattoo, while another wore a shirt featuring Nazi iconography and the word "Liftwaffe."



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