

In response to January 6 hearings

Trump, Republican lawmakers incite fascist violence at far-right conference in Florida

Jacob Crosse
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Over the weekend, Turning Point USA, a far-right billionaire-funded student organization led by right-wing political operative Charlie Kirk, held a three-day “Student Action Summit” in Tampa, Florida. The event was attended by dozens of Republican politicians and media figures, culminating in a headline speech given by Donald Trump.

Prior to Trump giving his speech on Saturday, roughly a dozen Nazis carrying Swastika flags marched outside the Tampa convention center to show their support for their Republican leaders. In a video taken by freelance journalist and photographer Dave Decker, the Nazis are heard shouting anti-Semitic slurs and threatening an African-American man.

“We kicked all your n*gger asses in Rhodesia,” one Nazi threatens. In another video, the Nazis call on onlookers to “vote for [Florida governor] Ron DeSantis.” Repeating Republican talking points that the media is controlled by a “globalist cabal,” the Nazis shouted that “96 percent of the media” was controlled by “Jews.”

“It’s a Jewish conspiracy, just like the Holocaust,” said the Nazis, who also carried banners proclaiming that Florida was “DeSantis Country” as well as anti-Semitic caricatures and flags bearing SS bolts.

Not a single Republican who spoke on Saturday at the Turning Point USA event denounced the Nazi demonstration outside the conference center. As of this writing, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has yet to publicly denounce the Nazis who were proudly proclaiming their allegiance to him and his far-right politics.

No fascists were arrested or charged by the Tampa police for attacking abortion rights counter-protesters.

Turning Point USA played a critical role in the January 6 coup. Kirk has admitted that he chartered seven buses and brought over 300 people to the Capitol on January 6. Following

Trump’s loss to Biden in the 2020 election, the organization, which until recently had among its board members Virginia “Ginni” Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, promoted Trump’s lie that the election was stolen, and continues to do so.

The event was live-streamed by Fox Nation, Real America’s Voice and Turning Point USA.

It featured a number of Republican lawmakers who backed Trump’s coup attempt, such as Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Florida Representative Matt Gaetz, Missouri Senator Josh Hawley and Texas Senator Ted Cruz, all of whom voted against certifying the election after the attack on the Capitol. Other speakers included Fox News and right-wing media personalities such as Laura Ingraham, Jeanine Pirro, Benny Johnson and Dave Rubin.

Florida Governor and potential 2024 Republican presidential candidate Ron DeSantis also spoke. In the course of his speech he denounced Jewish billionaire and Holocaust survivor George Soros.

“You see these prosecutors that are funded by George Soros,” DeSantis said. “They are not prosecuting cases... it is destroying these societies... We are proud to be a law and order state in Florida.”

In a straw poll conducted after the conference, which asked attendees whom they would vote for if Trump ran in 2024, over 78 percent said they would vote for the ex-president. DeSantis came in second, with roughly 19 percent. No other Republicans who spoke at the event garnered more than one percent.

In his fascistic diatribe Saturday night, Trump repeated much of what he has said repeatedly on the campaign trail. He attacked the January 6 House Select Committee as a group of “political thugs” and said that the coup was a “hoax.”

He lashed out at Wyoming Republican Liz Cheney, calling her “unhinged,” while labeling House Speaker Nancy Pelosi a “psycho.” As he does in all of his speeches endorsing far-right candidates in Republican primaries, Trump warned that America’s greatest enemies come “not from outside, but from

within.”

Stoking violence against immigrants, Trump claimed that President Joe Biden was allowing an “invasion” along the Southern border. He attacked immigrants as “invaders” and “criminals,” while lauding the Border Gestapo as “brave and tough ICE patriots,” who “go into these nests of killers” and “get them the hell out of the country.”

Trump recalled “American greatness,” saying that he “loved watching the old movies, black and white, the documentaries... from the 1940’s.”

He recalled “all the pictures of the massive bombers” and questioned “if we have the ability to do this anymore?” He avoided identifying the enemy target of US bombers as Nazi Germany.

In his retelling of US history, “American Greatness” began in “1776” followed by the “battle of Gettysburg” in 1863 and then “the battles with Soviet Communism.” Again, no mention of Hitler’s Nazi regime.

Nearly every Republican politician who spoke at the event signaled his or her support for Trump’s coup and attacked the January 6 Committee. The exception was DeSantis, who has avoided talking about the attempted coup because he is positioning himself as an alternate far-right presidential candidate to Trump.

During his speech, Missouri Senator Josh Hawley bragged that he was the first senator to object to the Electoral College certification of Biden. “I objected on January 6th last year to the state of Pennsylvania,” said Hawley. “And I just want to say to all those liberals out there, in the liberal media, just in case you haven’t gotten the message yet, I do not regret it. And I am not backing down, I’m not going to apologize.”

That Hawley and the rest of the 147 Republicans in Congress who voted to overturn the election following the mob attack on the Capitol feel free to threaten the January 6 Committee and overthrow elections in the future is attributable to the actions of the Democratic Party. More than 18 months after the coup, Attorney General Merrick Garland has yet to charge Trump or any of his high-level accomplices with a crime related to the attempt to overthrow the Constitution and establish a dictatorship under the defeated president.

While the Justice Department does nothing, President Biden and House Speaker Pelosi continue to call for “unity” with their “Republican colleagues.” The Democratic-controlled January 6 Committee is promoting right-wing Republican war hawk Liz Cheney and covering up the complicity of the

military, police, intelligence agencies and at least two members of the Supreme Court--Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito--in the attempted coup.

Data compiled by OpenSecrets.org shows that so far during this election cycle, Democratic candidates, political groups and nonprofits have spent “nearly \$44 million on advertising campaigns across five states” to boost “the profile of far-right [Republican] candidates in California, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Maryland.” In lieu of charging and jailing the perpetrators of January 6, including Trump and most of the other politicians who spoke at the conference, the Democrats are cynically calculating that Trump’s election-denying cronies will be easier to beat in the fall midterm general election than their more traditional right-wing Republican rivals.

On the second day of the conference, held on Saturday, roughly 100 abortion rights protesters marched outside the hall in opposition to the Supreme Court’s ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade*. As they approached the conference center, they were confronted by fascistic media personality Alex Stein, backed by dozens of Trump supporters.

In a video Stein posted on his Twitter account, he is shown going into the crowd of mostly young people, grabbing their signs and calling them “baby killers,” while the police look on and do nothing. Eventually, the police warned off Stein and his mob.

There is no question that Stein’s intervention was coordinated with the Republican Party. On Friday, the first day of the conference, Stein tweeted a photo of himself having dinner with Marjorie Taylor Greene. On Sunday, Taylor Greene retweeted Stein’s video with the caption, “There’s my Alex,” followed by clapping emojis.

In her comments at the conference, she declared, “I am a Christian... I also call myself a Christian Nationalist, and that’s not a bad word.”



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