

Governors Newsom and DeSantis affirm Israel's "right" to genocide against Palestinians in right-wing Fox News debate

Jacob Crosse
2 December 2023

On Thursday evening, Fox News host and Trump bootlicker Sean Hannity moderated a nearly 100-minute "debate" between Governors Ron DeSantis (Republican—Florida) and Gavin Newsom (Democrat—California). The right-wing spectacle was held in Alpharetta, Georgia, without a studio audience and with only two podiums. The aim was to give the appearance of a potential presidential match-up.

Before delving into the debased episode, in which both politicians endorsed Israel's ethnic cleansing campaign, it is appropriate to consider why the debate was even held in the first place. While DeSantis is running for president, Newsom, as of this writing, is not. Throughout the event, Newsom reiterated that he was a proxy for the Biden-Harris administration, which he defended to the hilt, and remarked that neither DeSantis nor he would be the presidential nominee of their respective party.

Newsom and the Democrats have been lobbying for DeSantis to debate since last year. That the fascistic governor finally agreed to the event is a measure of the anemic and desperate state of his presidential campaign.

Trump's lead over DeSantis and his other Republican rivals has continued to grow, as the 2024 Iowa Republican presidential caucuses, scheduled to be held on January 15, 2024, draw near. In a Messenger/Harris poll released on November 30, Trump garnered 68 percent of Republican primary voters, while DeSantis, who has sought to "out-fascist" Trump, registered a mere 9 percent support, followed closely by former UN Ambassador and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, at 7 percent.

In addition to hemorrhaging support from an already small slice of the electorate, the DeSantis campaign suffered another major setback earlier this week when Americans for

Prosperity (AFP) Action, the political network founded by the right-wing billionaires Charles and David Koch, revealed that it was throwing its capital behind Haley.

In a memo explaining the decision, the group cited floundering internal polling results by DeSantis in the first two Republican primary states, Iowa and New Hampshire, compared to Haley. AFP also noted Haley's commitment to addressing "out-of-control government spending" and support for "reforms to an entitlement system," i.e., cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other social programs that benefit the working class.

On Wednesday, Haley received another boost when JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, speaking for Wall Street, urged wealthy attendees at the *New York Times* DealBook conference to back her campaign. "Even if you're a very liberal Democrat," the billionaire banker said, "I urge you, help Nikki Haley, too."

While DeSantis attempted to use the stage provided by Fox News to salvage his presidential campaign, the right-wing network advertised Thursday's program as a display of the supposed differences in the governing philosophies of "red state" Florida and "blue state" California. However, in the course of the show—which frequently devolved into incoherent shouting—the differences between the two bourgeois politicians virtually disappeared. This was especially true when the candidates "debated" COVID-19, immigrants' rights and the genocide in Gaza.

In their comments, both Newsom and DeSantis made clear that they unequivocally backed the Israeli military campaign. Neither politician uttered a word about the massive Palestinian death toll as a result of Israeli carpet bombing, the forced displacement of over 1.7 million Gazans, the bombing of hospitals, or any of the other war crimes committed by the Israel Defense Forces with the full political, military and economic support of the Biden

administration as well as the Republican Party.

In framing the “debate,” Hannity, like Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer earlier this week, falsely claimed that since October 7 “a disturbing outbreak of virulent hatred, antisemitism” had erupted in “Congress, on American streets,” and on “college campuses.” Smearing all anti-genocide protesters, tens of thousands of whom are anti-Zionist Jewish people, Hannity falsely claimed that in “American cities... protesters are calling for global Islamic war and demanding that Israel be wiped off the map, or, in the words of Congresswoman [Rashida] Tlaib, ‘From the River, to the Sea.’”

Turning to Newsom, Hannity asked how Israel can “win the war” against Hamas “using surgical strikes and taking direction from Joe Biden?”

Newsom did not object to a word Hannity said. Instead, echoing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden, he replied, “This is not complicated to me. This is a fight between good and evil.”

“Hamas is a terrorist organization and they need to be eliminated,” Newsom added.

At many points throughout the program, Newsom, representing the Democratic Party as a whole, attacked DeSantis from the right. After DeSantis accused Newsom of being a “lockdown governor,” the Democrat replied, “You passed an emergency declaration before the state of California did. You closed down your beaches, your bars, your restaurants...”

“You had quarantines... You followed science. You followed [Dr. Anthony] Fauci.”

This prompted DeSantis to shout, “That’s not true!”

Newsom also attacked DeSantis from the right over his previous support for limited immigration reform while he was a member of Congress. “When he was in Congress he supported amnesty,” Newsom said, adding that DeSantis “supported Obama’s efforts to advance comprehensive immigration reform. He is the last guy you want to talk to on the issue of immigration.”

In response, DeSantis aped Trump’s Nazi talking points, claiming at one point that Biden “knowingly” allowed “eight million criminal aliens, terrorist” into the country, who are “poisoning our people.”

In response, Newsom sought to placate the fascists by proclaiming, “I support border security. I think our asylum system is broken. I’m the only one here that is a border state governor.”

“On the issue of immigration,” Newsom added, “Joe Biden put forward a \$14 billion immigration package in front of Congress.” The package, Newsom said, included “2,300 more border agents as well as customs officials” and “1,000 new law enforcement officers.”

Pressed by Hannity if immigrants presented a “clear and present danger to America,” Newsom replied, “That’s why the president of the United States put a \$14 billion package in front of Congress that they can act on today. ... I support the \$14 billion package the president has put forward. ... By the way, it also includes \$850 million in new technology for border security.”

Hannity then asked Newsom if he was worried about “illegal immigrants” coming “through our southern border” from “our top geopolitical foes, the number one state sponsors of terror—Iran, China, Russia, Afghanistan Syria.”

Newsom replied, “The answer is yes. Why else would I have put the National Guard—why else would I have increased it by 50 percent in the largest port in the Western hemisphere in my state?”

The degenerate event demonstrated the lurch of the entire political system and both capitalist parties ever further to the right, as the bipartisan policies of war and austerity fuel an explosive growth of social opposition and class struggle, against which the ruling class prepares dictatorial methods of rule.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact