

## Revealing Controversy Over Tucker's TPUSA Remarks

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** There has been, of course, a very pronounced and vocal campaign to destroy the reputations of, and to use a term that the American right has long used, to cancel very prominent people in American conservatism, whose only crime, very obviously, is that they have become critical of the state of Israel. People like Candace Owens and Marjorie Taylor Greene and Thomas Massie are on that list. There are a variety of other ones, and probably the leading one is Tucker Carlson. He was, while at Fox News, the most watched primetime host in the history of cable news at his eight o'clock spot. I never once heard a conservative, even really a Republican, publicly criticising Tucker Carlson. He was a very unifying figure among conservatives, extremely popular, and that's why his show was the highest rated in the history of cable news. And now, if you go online, and particularly, and I'm not sure that it's contaminated offline discourse very much, but certainly online, there's a very obvious, coordinated, concerted effort to destroy the reputation of Tucker Carlson, to insist he be expelled from decent conservative circles, when the only thing that has changed is that after October 7th, like a lot of people, he began talking about Israel, whereas previously he didn't. And he began applying America First Principles, what he understood those to be, which is: Why are we financing this foreign country? Why are we risking going to war for this foreign country? Why are we constantly talking about them? Why are we censoring for them? Why are our leaders always going there? I thought it was America first. It seems like that's not consistent with this agenda.

And I don't need to tell you that anybody who publicly criticises Israel and the United States or the public platform is going to be the target of a very well-organised, well-funded campaign to destroy their reputation in one way or the other. And one of the ways that this has been happening is that Turning Point USA before Charlie Kirk's assassination was often associating itself with Tucker Carlson. In fact, Charlie Kirk invited Tucker to give one of the premier keynote addresses at the most recent major Turning Point's conference. This was shortly before Charlie was assassinated. And there was immense pressure, constantly applied to Charlie, including from billionaire donors who are very, very pro-Israel, or in Charlie's words, Jewish billionaires who supported Turning Point, who were saying: You need to stop allowing Tucker Carlson to have a platform at Turning Point events because he's critical of Israel. He went to Turning Point, Tucker did, at that most recent event, and explicitly said he believed Jeffrey Epstein was working with the Mossad and other aspects of the Israeli

government. We should have that disclosure. Obviously, if you're pro-Israel, you're enraged that a group that you're financing is giving a platform to that, he also, Charlie did, invited Dave Smith to come and debate one of those random hardcore pro-Israel neocons that fester within and poison the conservative movement, and they were enraged by that as well. But they were particularly raged that he allowed Tucker to come and speak, and not just allowed him to speak, but invited him, embraced him. And even in response to pressure from donors, he refused to vow not to invite Tucker again, even if it meant that he would lose donors, as Turning Point did, lost at least a couple of major donors.

The people who are now in charge of Turning Point, which is Charlie Kirk's sort of closest team as well as his wife, Erika Kirk, are doing everything possible, not just to continue Turning Point, but doing so in a way that best aligns with Charlie's views, his vision, his legacy. And one of the ways they're doing that is that they held a major event last night at Indiana University, and the primary featured speaker, at least one of them, I believe the principal featured speaker, was none other than Tucker Carlson. Notwithstanding how Turning Point obviously hears all the demands, including not just from the public and from pro-Israel campaigns, but from their own donors, that they don't want any association with Tucker any longer. And there's a large part of the conservative movement that's, at least online, that's pro-Israel, that is utterly devoted to destroying Tucker's reputation and good standing within American conservatism, again, solely because of his view on Israel.

So it is impressive, I must say, that the people in charge of Turning Point, they could have invited someone with relatively equal stature and influence within the conservative movement to speak, but he doesn't have Tucker's baggage when it comes to Israel; who's not necessarily – I'm not saying the only alternative was like Mark Levin or Ben Shapiro. It could have been somebody whose views on Israel have been suppressed, who isn't really associated with that issue one way or the other. And they could have just played it safe that way, but they didn't. They obviously feel some loyalty to Charlie Kirk's vision, which absolutely included centrally association with Tucker Carlson. And Charlie himself talked about how he was also becoming more sceptical of Israel, of the relationship of the US with Israel. Not saying he abandoned his pro-Israel stance. He definitely did not, but he was clearly in on the path of becoming at least a little bit more questioning. We did a lot of coverage of that when he was assassinated, as well as before.

So here was Tucker's entrance last night at the Turning Point event. It shows how many people were there, but also the wildly enthusiastic reception he received. Now, that was a standing ovation from pretty much everyone. I didn't see anybody sitting. The noise is very loud. But you also notice Tucker walked on stage with two of his dogs. He has, I think, five dogs, maybe more. He has multiple dogs. But he obviously travelled to Indiana with his two dogs and walked on stage with them. I talked briefly with him this morning about that, just about that point, and said it's amazing how well behaved they were. Not every dog would be comfortable walking onto a stage with a throng of a horde of screaming, applauding, cheering people. Many of my dogs would either immediately urinate out of territorialism or fear or some mixture of both. Many would cower, others would probably menacingly growl at the

audience. His are incredible. I mean, these look like they're veterans of the speaking tour, just kind of walking on stage, absorbing all the cheering and the love there. I know it's just a tangent, but I do think that the more we normalise bringing dogs everywhere, the better society is. People, not everybody, but most people get very happy when they see dogs, when they see people with dogs. People who have dogs are much happier, more relaxed, more balanced, more connected when they bring dogs to places. So it's not obviously usual or customary to see people walk onto a stage to deliver a political speech flanked by two of their dogs. But that's what Tucker did, and I think that deserves notice, and hopefully people will be inspired to do that as well, and to allow more dogs everywhere. It's only good for society.

All right, let's move to the substance, the non-canine aspects of this event that I really wanted to focus your attention on. One of the things that has been so interesting, and it's so so visible, it's so inescapable, is that essentially every time you now have an event at a campus or a gathering of large numbers of young people, just young Americans in general, but also every time you have an event now with large numbers of young conservatives, of large numbers of Trump supporters, of large number of young people who identify with MAGA, it's basically inevitable that you're gonna get, if you do a QA session – which I hope everybody does do when they appear – you're gonna get at least one or two or maybe more questions, depending on the time, from people who stand up and say: I still continue to be angry about [inaudible] by the fact that Donald Trump, despite running on an American First platform, keeps financing Israel, forcing us to pay for Israel's wars. Paying for Ukraine's wars. And we keep voting to end these wars, to end this dependency on funding and fueling other countries. And yet, no matter who we vote for, even if we vote for the person who vowed most to end it, it seems just to continue. We've gone over many times the polling data that shows that in every demographic group, support for Israel is unravelling in the United States, including even especially among young conservatives. Obviously, young liberals, young leftists were already very soured on Israel, have become vastly more so, intensely more so since October 7th. Pretty much the only demographic group that remains supportive of Israel – and even there, there's some weakening – are old conservatives. People who have been feeding on Sean Hannity and Fox and Friends for the last three decades. But other than that, the trend is so clear. That's why people like Larry Ellison are buying up TikTok and Paramount and CBS News and putting Bari Weiss in charge and putting an IDF soldier in charge of censoring TikTok when it comes to Israel and anti-Semitism because they see the same things. And although it's anecdotal, it's nonetheless incredibly visceral when you watch – and I don't mean just people like Tucker Carlson or Candace Owens. I mean Megyn Kelly went to an event a couple weeks ago, and she was bombarded with questions like that. Which trust me is extremely new to be a conservative media figure, conservative personality, conservative journalist, conservative political figure, in go and pretty much have it guaranteed that people from your own movement are going to stand up and demand to know why there continues to be so much support for Israel, demand to know your views on that. So here was one of the exchanges that took place last night at Tucker Carlson's appearance. It was during the QA session. I found this incredibly noteworthy, although also unsurprising.

**Student:** So I kinda just don't see a lot of change between the Biden administration and now the Trump one in foreign policy. You know, we're still giving a shit ton of money to like Israel and Ukraine. Nothing is happening. You know, the war's not stopped. He promised it'd be done in a day, and it's, I don't know, how many months? Eight months or something like that. It's a long time. Your dad was in the CIA. And I was wondering, does our government even want war to stop? Do they want conflicts to end? It seems like we have a difference of interests where we're getting told one thing and the other is happening and I feel like there's not enough communication between different segs of government and I just really think the deep state's controlling everything and we have no control.

**GG:** You know, let me just say, that may not have been phrased in the most erudite or sophisticated manner possible. You could probably, if you thought about it, express that view more eloquently if that were really your goal, but the substance of it was extremely perceptive. And you almost will never hear people who have worked inside media for a long time or who worked in Washington for a long time understand this view, let alone be able to describe it because the idea that we support Israel is just so assumed in the ether, it's so ingrained in their DNA that they don't they can't really even acknowledge this rapid and fundamental change that's taking place because it's so alien to their world view. And I should say, by the way, that it is interesting how people on independent media understand this way more. I think their finger is much more on the pulse of what people in the country are thinking. It's one of the reasons why Megyn Kelly, who is a steadfast supporter of Israel for decades, who more or less has the traditional Republican establishment worldview on foreign policy and war going back to the war on terror – and I don't think she's given up her support for Israel, she will tell you she hasn't, and I don't think she has – but she understands what's happening. She understands that there's this very serious movement within her own audience, within the conservative movement, especially among young people, because she talks about it openly. And there's pressure on her as well, she's talked about it, not to have people like Tucker on her show, not to have me on her show. And she refuses. She's saying this is a very active, viable, reasonable debate. And she knows. She even said when she had Charlie Kirk on her show, maybe Tucker on her show that nobody under 30 supports Israel. You know, I'm just saying a little hyperbole there, it's not nobody, but that's what she meant. She meant there's a huge wave of sentiment among people who are 30, overwhelmingly, they don't support Israel and polling data shows that as well. And you see here this question that he asked, as soon as he brought up the funding of Israel and Ukraine, huge numbers of cheers, vociferous cheers, could be heard from the audience. He's speaking for a lot of people. There was no booing, at least not detectable booing. Which again, for a conservative gathering, even five years ago, if you would question Israel, you would be certain to be booed. And I also thought it was very notable that he's not obsessed with Israel. He's not single-mindedly talking about Israel. He linked Israel and Ukraine. Basically, like we're constantly funding all these wars. You know, he didn't just focus only on Israel. He understands that the relationship with Ukraine is very, very similar. It's one of the reasons I spent so much time on the bipartisan support for the war in Ukraine and still do and object to it on the exact same grounds that I object to US financing of Israel. He understands that connection as well. I think it's just very interesting how these are, you know, young kids, these are students at

Indiana University, and they perceive what's going on in many ways so much better than people who have spent their adult lives in politics or journalism, who are paid to do it. And he spoke for a good while too. And a lot of times people might go on a tangent, they might say something just obviously false or conspiratorial; that was very, very solid analysis. And here's what Tucker said.

**Tucker Carlson (TC):** Let me let me start at, obviously you probably sense that I agree with a lot of that. Obviously leave my father out of it. I'm gonna have to kick your ass which I could do, by the way, if you bring him up again. Because he was a wonderful man, whatever you know he did for a living. So I really do hate that. But leaving that aside...

**GG:** By the way, I should just say here, I mean, Tucker loved his father, and people should love their parents if their parents are good parents. No matter what they do for work, no matter what their ideology is. I thought my father had very bad politics. I still love my father. I would defend my father, wouldn't let anyone say your father believed X, Y, and Z or worked here. It's my father. I wouldn't judge him the same way I judge other people. But I do just, by the way, think that that student who asked that question wasn't raising Tucker's father's connection with the CIA as a grounds for criticising his father or imputing Tucker or his authenticity. I think he was more just saying – because it was followed by, it seems like the deep state controls us – I think that that kid was just saying, your dad worked at the CIA, so maybe you have good insight into how the deep state functions. I understand why Tucker was sensitive to that. But in any event, this is the substance of what he goes on to say.

**TC:** And don't test me, son. I hate to say I agree with a lot of what you said, and I think you probably know I agree with a lot of what you've said, and it's enormously frustrating. It's shocking, actually. And I do know, I'm not shilling, I just happen to know some of the people who work in the administration, who are people who agree with you strongly. I think most Trump voters agree with you, that's why they voted for Donald Trump in the first place. And you know, no pointless wars was not just a thing he said at one campaign stop, it was a pillar of his campaigns and of MAGA itself. I mean, what is MAGA? There's a mad scramble, particularly since Charlie's passing to define what this is and to read some people out of the movement: You're not MAGA. Well, what is MAGA? Well, MAGA is five things, okay? MAGA is America First, which means Americans should put no country before America. American interests come first. That's not a crazy idea. No pointless wars, period. And by pointless, I mean wars fought on behalf of an ideology or another nation are totally unacceptable. They weaken this country. Wars fought because somebody running a country is bad. Okay...is bad... You're telling me a world leader is bad? All right. Yeah, no. It has dramatically weakened this country. It's social fabric, it's treasury, it's killed so many Americans, and it's really weakened America's position globally. So no pointless wars. Bring back American jobs, right? Of meaningful jobs. You know, the call centres who moved to South Asia, AIs crushing the lawyers; what do Americans do for a living? Like, think deeply about that and work to make work a reality for people. I mean, you all are, I assume, still in college. Wait till you graduate. I have a child who just graduated college. Once a week, I'm like, how many of your friends – and these are all like smart, pretty affluent, kind of

connected, you know, cute girls – how many of your friends have jobs in New York City? Four out of ten. You know, that's a disaster, actually. And someone needs to be thinking about that deeply, and the promise of MAGA was that somebody would. And then, of course, immigration. Like you have to control who comes in and out of your country, or else you're not a country. And I know that it's considered highly controversial to say that the population of America is being replaced by people from other countries, but it's not controversial, it's a mathematical fact, and the numbers are taken by the US Census. And that's just true. Now, some people are for it. I'm against it. I'm from here. I'm against that. I'm against replacing the current population. And it's happening in this country, it has completely happened in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia and the UK. It's happening to the English-speaking world. I'm not exactly sure what that is, but I'm totally opposed, and so is everyone who voted for Donald Trump. That's not a conspiracy theory, it's a mathematical reality. And stop it now. And the fifth pillar of MAGA, just to be totally clear, is free speech. Because it's our birthright as Americans. And so when we talk about cancel culture or the woke; the woke, what does that even mean? It means people who are attempting to abridge my ability to speak freely about what I actually believe. That's what that is. It's an attack on free speech. And by the way, the second Trump gets elected, all these people show up, who I've never heard of, who are MAGA people. I can't hear you. Can you scream louder? I love the solidarity fist.

**GG:** So a lot of that wasn't stated so overtly. I don't think it needed to be, given the context that was created by the question, which is about Israel and Ukraine. Last night we did a segment on the bizarre reality that Donald Trump is out there fundraising for neoconservatives and warmongers like Lindsey Graham while targeting the two members of Congress who arguably align most or among the most with the five planks of America First that Tucker laid out there, namely Thomas Massie and Rand Paul. Just as a libertarian, Rand Paul probably is weaker on immigration from that perspective, weaker in the sense of not aligning with Trump's agenda, more than most standard Republicans, but in all the others, especially foreign policy and free speech, this is part of what has angered Trump with Thomas Massie as well, are there objections to bombing Iran, bombing Yemen, expelling students and deporting people based on their criticism of Israel, imposing hate speech codes on American campuses, starting a new war with Venezuela because we don't like Maduro. All the things that Tucker laid out, the American First Agenda was supposed to prevent. And a lot of people inside the MAGA movement, despite the fact that they obviously support Trump or they're in red MAGA hats, are also starting to very vociferously question why this is.

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