

Video: Rep. Greg Steube Calls Out Double Standards on Political Violence; Biden China Policy
AMERICAN THOUGHT LEADERS

At the 2021 Conservative Political Action Conference, we sit down with Rep. Greg Steube (R-Fla.) to discuss reshoring manufacturing from China and double standards when it comes to political violence and “domestic terrorism.”

Jan Jekielek: It’s great to have Congressman Greg Steube back on American Thought Leaders.

Greg Steube: Thanks for having me.

Mr. Jekielek: You’re here at CPAC 2021. You’re very local.

Rep. Steube: I’m only two-hour drive from here, so it’s nice to have CPAC in Florida.

Mr. Jekielek: We spoke almost a year ago, maybe 10 months ago or something. We were talking about the

reshoring of manufacturing for starters because these supply chains were exposed, China's supply chains were exposed. Secondly, we were also talking about the prospects of holding the Chinese Communist Party accountable for unleashing this pandemic on the world. Let's start there. Let's look back. Where are we at today 10 or 11 months later?

Rep. Steube: The challenge is, [it's] still a Democratic-run Congress and Nancy Pelosi still has the gavel. I filed a bill that would have held the Chinese Communist Party financially responsible for what happened with the pandemic because we know that they had information they didn't share with the world, in fact, and they could have stopped it in Wuhan [but] they didn't.

I had a bill that would allow the president to negotiate the terms of how that would look. Do we get less interest on the debt that we owe to them? Whatever the case may be, it would give him the flexibility to negotiate that under his foreign negotiation powers as the president. Obviously, that's not going to go anywhere with Biden in office, and it's not going to go anywhere with Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House.

What's been interesting is, you would think there would be bipartisanship around the Chinese Communist Party. John Ratcliffe, in December right before the Trump administration was out—he was the Director of National Intelligence—said the Chinese Communist Party is the number one national security threat to the United States unequivocally.

Yet you're seeing now that Biden's in office, this complete turn to, we're going to go back to the way it was under the Obama administration as it relates to taxes, and shipping our jobs offshore, and businesses, and all those different types of things, which is not the direction that we should be going and why so many people, I think, supported President Trump because he puts America First, bringing jobs back to here.

The economic numbers, pre-pandemic, don't lie. We had our lowest unemployment rates, highest economic numbers that we've had in history of our nation before the pandemic, and it's because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 that the Republican

Congress passed and the things that President Trump did to put America First.

Mr. Jekielek: Let's talk about the supply chains though, because it does look like the Biden administration is interested in protecting those supply chains. At least they're doing, from what I understand, a deep study right now. Frankly, they are talking a lot [about], it sounds like, having manufacturing jobs in America and some kind of America First policy that they might not call it that.

Rep. Steube: I think the pandemic showed us how important it is to have, say, PPE manufacturing in the United States, pharmaceutical manufacturing in the United States, things that protect the safety and security of Americans, not just from a health standpoint but from an overall security standpoint.

It's very important to have that manufacturing here. To be reliant upon China or Italy where some of our pharmaceuticals come from, or anything offshore, when there's a countrywide pandemic, they're not going to be shipping us PPE, like China wasn't early on, because they wanted to keep it for their own citizens. I think is very problematic. You would

think that the Democrats would be working with Republicans on things like that to try to encourage or bring back manufacturing.

I've had a lot of conversations with a lot of the big business groups nationwide. What can we do from a tax perspective to incentivize manufacturing [or] these types of activities and pharmaceuticals back to the United States? You're not hearing that now under the Biden administration and they're going to go back to the Obama-Biden policy where we shipped all this stuff offshore because it benefits their billionaire friends and Wall Street; it doesn't benefit American workers that are here.

Just look at what he did with the Keystone Pipeline where he, literally, with the stroke of a pen, put thousands of people out of work. Unfortunately, you're not seeing what we should be focusing on from a country of being defensive towards China, being fighting against their aggressive behavior nationwide, and unfortunately, I don't think you're going to see that from the Biden administration.

Mr. Jekielek: I do believe that President Biden has said that the number one national security threat is

actually domestic terrorism. I believe he said that. What are your thoughts on this? I know you've been somewhat vocal.

Rep. Steube: ... All you have to do is go to this week's hearing that I sat on in the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, the way Democrats define domestic terrorism is white nationalism, far right extremism—it's not Antifa, it's not Black Lives Matter—because I put every one of the Democratic witnesses, after I showed a video of all the atrocious things that happened in this country over the summer and all the violence that happened over the summer, I asked each one of them, and read them the definition of what domestic terrorism is, and not a single one of them would agree that what Antifa and Black Lives Matter did to our country and these cities all over were domestic terrorism.

They wanted to focus on white extremism, obviously, what occurred on January 6. And that's what they're going to use as an example to try to clamp down, and I'm afraid that there's going to be a political test or an ideological test on what they define as domestic terrorism. If you're far left and

you're Antifa and you're Black Lives Matter, then we're not going to prosecute you, we're not going to look at that, we're not even going to define that as domestic terrorism. In fact, one of the Democratic witnesses called that community uprising or something that's not criminal.

Whereas we're going to look at white nationalism, far right groups, and what happened on January 6, that's 100 percent domestic terrorism. So I'm sure that's the direction that they're going, and it's because they want to demonize an ideological belief system that doesn't believe what they believe, and they are going to allow groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter to continue to do what they're doing, and call it community response or peacefully protesting.

Mr. Jekielek: I think it's quite a stretch in some of the ways that this concept, white nationalism or certain kinds of right wing extremism, maybe those are things that we should be concerned about, but the definition of what those things are appears to be broader these days than what I might think is the definition.

Rep. Steube: I believe if you've committed violence—just like I called out the attack on our Capitol on January 6, I've equally called out what Antifa and Black Lives Matter have done to people, to property, to federal property across our country. If you're going to start delineating lines and not looking at it through a criminal lens—here are the elements of the crime, this is what it says for domestic terrorism, and if you are doing those things regardless of what the group is, you're going to be held criminally liable—if we're starting to focus on one side of the political ideology and not the other, I think is very, very dangerous for the future of our country.

Like January 6, the administration, the DOJ, are using the [USA] PATRIOT Act to go after these individuals without a warrant. You saw reporting where Bank of America was giving information of people who are using ATMs in Washington, D.C. on January 6. I know, in fact, that they've been going through cell phone records of those people that were there on January 6. You normally wouldn't be able to do that without a warrant under our Fourth Amendment rights under our Constitution but they're using the PATRIOT Act to go after domestic

terrorism in their ideological lens, which I think is very, very dangerous for the future of our country.

Mr. Jekielek: This is fascinating to me because—people say I'm old enough to remember but it was actually not too long ago—I think it was Apple [that] wouldn't open an iPhone of someone who was involved in a very serious alleged criminal act. So this is like taking things to a whole different place.

Rep. Steube: They say that Apple agrees with privacy concerns, and I don't know if Apple's given this information, but there are a lot of these other private companies like Bank of America, the cell phone companies that are complicit with DOJ, and they're using the PATRIOT Act and that's why they're defining it domestic terrorism. If they define it as domestic terrorism, then they can use the PATRIOT Act and investigate and surveil American citizens without a warrant, and I think that's just a dangerous road to be going down if you're going to use an ideological test to be doing that.

Mr. Jekielek: Where is this definition? Where can we find it?

Rep. Steube: Domestic terror—I can give you the site. I used it in my committee hearing. It's in federal law. There is a federal law that defines what domestic terrorism is. If you read that, what Antifa did, what Black Lives Matter did, what happened in Minneapolis after the George Floyd shooting, all of that would be considered domestic terrorism. So to say that's not and that's peacefully protesting, and then what happened January 6 is domestic terrorism, is not appropriate. It's not an appropriate application in the law, and again, you're weaponizing the Department of Justice for political reasons, just like what we saw that happened in "Russia collusion," just like what we saw happen to the Trump campaign before Trump got elected.

Mr. Jekielek: With respect to January 6, which of course was horrific, a lot of people have been saying: there were these people that entered the Capitol, there were these people that committed violence, [and] like you said, they should be held accountable, but then there are all these people around there who are peaceful protesters and frankly, there were other people who weren't even exactly there but were supportive of it. The people

are concerned that all these people are going to be labeled domestic terrorists.

Rep. Steube: Under the way that Biden and the Democrats want to do that, it's a very probable situation and it's a very dangerous situation. I've said, if you violated the law by illegally entering the Capitol on January 6 and caused destruction of property, illegally entering a federal building, you should be held legally accountable for that, just like the protesters in Portland and Seattle, and Antifa and Black Lives Matter, and what happened in Minneapolis where they destroyed federal property—they should be held accountable too.

But the Democrats don't want to go after the left, far left progressive, violent actors. They only want to go after conservative violent actors. We're seeing that, and are complicit with their big tech counterparts and their mainstream media counterparts with censoring conservative speech. You now hear the Democrats talking about how they want to take Newsmax, and they want to take OAN, and they want to take Fox News off of cable networks because they don't agree with their ideology. That is

a very dangerous place to be in, in a country that believes very strongly of the First Amendment.

Mr. Jekielek: It's kind of unprecedented.

Rep. Steube: I've never seen anything like this.

Mr. Jekielek: Let's talk about this since you mentioned that. Technically, if this happened, private companies would actually be deplatforming these TV networks with some, I suppose, government pressure. What do you think about that?

Rep. Steube: It's the same thing that you see pressure being placed on big tech to censor conservatives. It's the same pressure you see being put in place in the mainstream media. You can have a set of facts and the left-leaning progressive mainstream media is going to report it very differently than people like your news network and Fox, and that's just dangerous because people don't know what to believe. So you're searching for integrity in journalism and when there's a political viewpoint that they're trying to push, [that's] what is very dangerous about what the Democrats are doing right now.

Mr. Jekielek: Any final thoughts?

Rep. Steube: I just want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you, and I would encourage people to be frustrated but to use that frustration to get engaged in the political process, support their viewpoints, and support our Constitution, our country.

Mr. Jekielek: Congressman Greg Steube, great to have you on again.

Rep. Steube: Thanks. Thanks for having me.

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