

Talking Turkey: America, Alone Among Democracies, Is 'Autocratizing'

By JIM SMITH

The chart at right is extracted from one compiled by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace with figures for all the 100+ nations invited to President Biden's recent "Summit for Democracy." My version is limited to the major "liberal democracies," designated as "free" by Freedom House.

While democracy and freedom of expression is declining in the majority of liberal democracies, only Israel scored lower than the United States, which was the only liberal democracy tagged as "autocratizing," meaning that it is moving toward an autocracy. In columns 2 and 4, the further below 1.00 the score is, the less democratic the country is and the less freedom of expression it has. We don't rank well.

Sadly, this is not news to me, nor probably to most of my readers. The passage of voter suppression laws in Republican controlled states has gotten a lot of press, but that's only the tip of the iceberg. You've also read, here and elsewhere, of the master plan to overturn any election of a Democratic presidential candidate in 2024 by having key states declare their voting results "fraudulent" to justify sending a Republican slate to the Electoral College — in other words, succeeding where they failed on Jan. 6th. If they succeed in 2024, we'll probably fall off the list of liberal democracies altogether.

Should that legal maneuver (which, it should be noted, the Constitution allows) fail, insurrection is Plan B. It is actually being planned by the heavily armed militia types within the so-called Republican Party. Their support within the rank and

Combining Freedom House's index scores with tallies from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project yields revealing results.

	V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index 2021	Freedom House Global Freedom Scores 2021	V-Dem Freedom of Expression Index 2020	Change in Freedom of Expression 2010-2020	Digital Repression Index 2020
Canada	0.869	98	0.969	+0.012	-1.26
Costa Rica	0.899	91	0.954	-0.028	-1.15
Denmark	0.910	97	0.988	-0.005	-1.62
Finland	0.878	100	0.979	-0.006	-1.40
France	0.877	90	0.975	-0.002	-0.62
Germany	0.879	94	0.962	-0.022	-0.95
Ireland	0.881	97	0.981	0	-1.17
Israel	0.737	76	0.873	+0.022	-0.28
Italy	0.861	90	0.963	+0.011	-1.06
Japan	0.822	96	0.878	-0.064	-1.14
Netherlands	0.870	98	0.940	-0.011	-1.19
New Zealand	0.894	99	0.965	-0.004	-1.25
Norway	0.899	100	0.967	-0.005	-1.50
Sweden	0.905	100	0.968	-0.008	-1.67
Switzerland	0.892	96	0.985	-0.002	-0.36
United Kingdom	0.872	93	0.964	-0.005	-0.64
United States	0.815	83	0.923	-0.062	-0.60

file, however, is what's so shocking. A CNN poll in October showed that over three-quarters of those who identify as Republicans think Joe Biden was fraudulently elected. Although the militia types are a small percentage of those Republicans, having that kind of widespread support makes "hitting the streets" easier to justify. If, as is possible, the Supreme Court rules in mid-2022 that Americans have an unrestricted right to carry a gun anywhere in the country, that could make a repeat of Jan. 6th even more deadly. (D.C.'s gun laws reduced that likelihood last January.)

According to a scary msn.com article for which there's a link at [JimSmithBlog.com](http://www.JimSmithBlog.com), 17 million Americans bought

Thanks to the support I've received at FundTalkingTurkey.com, this column will now appear monthly in YourHub.

40 million guns in 2021 and are on track to buy 20 million more. "If historical trends hold, the buyers will be overwhelmingly white, Republican, southern and rural." There is "a growing belief among many Republicans that the federal government is an illegitimate tyranny that must be overthrown by any means necessary."

On the subject of climate change, we debate where the tipping point is — the point at which climate disaster is irreversible. Some think we have already passed it, given, for example, the loss of summer ice in the Arctic Ocean.

Well, we may have passed the tipping point of civil war/insurrection. This is not hyperbole. If mask mandates and vaccine mandates trigger death threats and armed violence, the pronouncements of Tucker Carlson and others that our democracy has been stolen can lead the armed wackos who believe that

lie to make the lie come true through armed rebellion. The 2022 mid-terms could be a major tipping point. If the Republicans gain control of one or both houses of Congress, it will indicate that enough of America has fallen for the big lies and the lesser lies and there may be no turning back. Follow that with the election of Donald Trump of Tucker Carlson in 2024, and we can likely kiss the American Experiment goodbye.

With the posting of this column at www.JimSmithBlog.com, I provide links to the following articles:

◆ The MSN.com article referred to above: **Millions of Angry, Armed Americans Stand Ready to Seize Power If Trump Loses in 2024**

◆ Column by Christy E. Lopez in the Washington Post: **Beware the extremist, dangerous and unconstitutional 'constitutional sheriffs'**

◆ Column by Dana Milbrank in the Washington Post: **'We are closer to civil war than any of us would like to believe,' new study says**

Do You Believe in 'American Exceptionalism'?

Conservatives love to talk about "American exceptionalism," boasting that the United States of America is the greatest country on earth.

I agree that our country was founded on ground-breaking principles expressed so well in the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, but I also recognize that the U.S. Constitution did not put into practice the core principle that all men are created equal.

I have not yet read *The 1619 Project*, but I heard an interview with its creator, Nikole Hannah-Jones on the PBS show "Throughline" in which she responded to the "exceptionalism" theme in a way that really resonated with me:

"We have an exceptional amount of

income inequality. We are the only Western industrialized nation that does not guarantee health care for its citizens. We are the only Western industrialized nation that does not guarantee paid leave when you have a child. We have the stingiest social safety net of all of the countries [with which] we like to compare ourselves. We incarcerate more people than any country in the world. These are legacies of settler colonialism, and these are legacies of African slavery. And until we are honest about that upon which we are built, we will never become the country that we believe ourselves to be."

I have posted a link to the full 50-minute Throughline interview with Hannah-Jones at www.JimSmithBlog.com.