



IT'S TOO
EASY, FOR
DUCKS
SACK

Jetho H. Forclift

Nation Heist 2026

Which is the easiest country to steal?

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In case you actually use any of this as a basis to try to steal a country

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It's what we're both here for...and the winner is...

More attractive countries to steal

If this whole nation heist thing is just a vanity project for you, go ahead and leave happy already. But if you want more than just the kudos, you probably want to know the easiest countries to steal (relatively) that will give the largest base of slave labor or the most money per thief

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Refine your nation heist choices

Our average narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopathic authoritarian leader isn't always the most stable and predictable kind of individual. So, we have some fun thinking about some of the other things that they may consider to be important when planning to steal a country.

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Introduction to Nation Heist 2026

We never think about how fragile democracy is.

About how it relies on the trustworthiness of people to ensure its ongoing survival.

And that if someone wanted to steal a country and make it their own plaything, they could do so entirely legally with a shockingly small number of people.

A heist to steal a whole country seems like an excessive plot for a Hollywood movie, but our reality is that the majority of humans today live in countries that have already been stolen. The exact number varies depending on who's making the assessment and how they measure democratic freedoms or otherwise. So we can see the number vary from a bit over half of the world's population not enjoying full democratic freedoms to more than two-thirds of all humans.

The actual number is irrelevant to us, you and me, right now. The fact the number is significant is enough to demonstrate that the theft of total countries is a common occurrence. As it has been for about 12,000 years as we shifted from hunter/gatherers to farmers.

Easy, peasy

And oddly, it's become easier to steal countries as our numbers have grown.

Shouldn't more of us being able to stand up for ourselves make it harder for a few individuals to steal our freedom? It probably would if standing up for ourselves was the human default. But it turns out making a run for it is the human default. Thousands of years ago, our poorest ancestors could literally cause societal collapse by just walking out on authoritarian leaders who promoted unequal societies.

Voting with our feet is no longer an option with the world as packed as it is now. There's nowhere to run anymore.

Which means it becomes even more important to pick our political leaders carefully to ensure our representatives are focused on protecting our democratic freedoms and not stealing them. History is so informative because it has a habit of repeating itself.

Hitler has only got one ball

If the song was accurate, Hitler never let a deficient to the tune of one scrotum contents and a hereditary case of the schicklgrubers interfere with his goal of stealing Germany from the German people, many of whom voted for the politicians who were to give him unbridled power.

It's easy to overlook that the rise of Hitler to dictator wasn't the result of a coup or civil war, but, initially at least, through legitimate actions navigated through Germany's democratic institutions.

Of course, having the support of some of Germany's most powerful and wealthy elite who petitioned for Hitler to be appointed Chancellor will have helped. Clearly it's always good to have friends with deep-pockets. He was further aided by a mix of experienced and vainglorious politicians who believed they were smarter than him and could, while managing his most dangerous tendencies, use him to their own advantage.

And from that position, Hitler was soon able to persuade the politicians that the German people had elected to grant him unconstitutional powers for four years to counter a growing state of emergency. Meaning that little more than a year later, he was able to assume the power of head of state as well as head of government, completely cementing dictatorial control of the entire nation. That same day, German soldiers were required to make an oath of personal loyalty to Adolf Hitler, no longer to Germany's national Constitution.

Never gonna give it up

Fortunately, we can reassure ourselves that such hard won lessons from history aren't going to be easily forgotten. For once we sacrifice our democratic freedoms, it can be difficult and dangerous to get them back again.

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan described the 3.5% rule in their book, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, that looked at non-violent protests that overthrew autocratic governments. The rule came from their finding that of more than 100 non-violent movements, every one that gained the support of 3.5% of the population achieved its goal.

For context, the UK's largest protest was in 2003, against war in Iraq, which saw between one and two million people take to the street. Even at the high end of the estimate, that protest fell short of the 3.5% of the population at the time. The second No Kings protest drew as many as seven million protestors or little more than 2% of the population.

Obviously, the 3.5% rule doesn't mean non-violent protest will only work if that percentage of people join in. There have been successful movements with fewer people participating. And some argue that failures of some of the Arab Spring protests show that 3.5% doesn't guarantee success.

Either way, the best way to never have to worry about whether the 3.5% rule will work for us is to never let anyone steal our democratic freedoms.

Nation Heist 2026 will consider which countries should perhaps be most worried about such a prospect. Though purely on a simple numbers basis, rather than considering current socio-political situations.

Methodology

To pass the Enabling Act and gain unconstitutional powers for four years, Hitler needed to persuade two-thirds of the 647 members of the German parliament to vote in favor. So, just 432 people had the power to let Hitler and the Nazis steal the country from the nearly 66 million German citizens. Just some 0.00065% of the people were able to legally turn Hitler into Germany's dictator.

There lies the inspiration for this study. The understanding that democracy is not an eternally guaranteed system. It's a system that only remains secure if all sides agree to abide by the rules. If one side decides they want to steal a country to use it to generate huge personal wealth for themselves, there's not a lot the others can do if the thieves can convince the people to give enough of them the power.

And the desire to steal such wealth could be compelling when looking at other authoritarian leaders. China's president Xi is estimated to have wealth anywhere up to \$1.2 billion. The reality is, the real figure could be much lower, but perhaps much higher. It would have to be a lot higher to get close to Russia's president Putin. Some estimate his wealth as more than \$200 billion. Not bad, but if he'd stolen a country with a larger GDP, say the USA, for example, he could be worth well over \$2 trillion today.

Who wouldn't want to steal a country for such immense wealth?

So, we've set out to discover how few people would be needed to steal the various countries of the world. Not all the countries, though. A lot of them have already been stolen and their current owners are unlikely to hand them over without a fight.

What we need to do is concentrate on those countries still enjoying democracy to an extent, where we can rely on the people to vote for people who will sell them out. And this is an important point of our exercise, the heist has to have the outward appearance of being quite legal.

We are going to deviate from Hitler's approach though. Gaining enough thieves to effect constitutional change is not necessary under our rules. We just need enough representatives to pass laws, plus enough of the judges on the highest or constitutional court to confirm the legality of those passed laws.

If the constitutional court says that, despite it looking like a duck and quacking like a duck, it's actually a duck-billed platypus, who's to argue? When a constitution gives a court the ultimate power to decide if an action is or isn't constitutional, they effectively have the power to change that constitution without rewriting it.

The losing parties may complain, but with such divisive politics around the world now, the pointing and shouting might be largely ineffectual.

The world's idealists may see hope in the military siding with the people and standing against the theft. But would they? If the court says it's constitutional, any move by them would technically be a coup, an act of treason.

So, maybe they would, maybe they wouldn't (probably best you read the disclaimer if your motives in reading this report are questionable). And who's to say the military would want to return power to a civilian government. Or even be unified one way or the other anyway.

So, the bar we're looking to clear is the least politicians and judges to allow the passing of laws to enable the theft of each country.

The rules

That offers a broad overview of our plan, but we can offer some finer-grained rules too.

Appointed politicians can't be corrupted

Various countries combine elected politicians with appointed politicians. In some smaller countries, they may sit in the same chamber, but in the UK, for example, the House of Lords is made up solely of appointed peers. While the actions of some suggest they may be eminently corruptible, we're going to take the generous view that they'll oppose any heist.

Both houses onboard

With countries that have a bicameral parliamentary system, our thieves need to pass their laws in both houses, unless the lower house has the power to overrule the upper house. No unilateral law passing and ignoring the upper house is allowed.

Again using the UK as an example, the House of Commons can overrule the House of Lords, but only by successfully passing the law a second time in a new session of parliament. That may sound as if it adds a degree of awkwardness, but the Prime Minister can end a session when they like through prorogation and then start a new session. The Supreme Court could interfere, but we assume they wouldn't as they'd likely be required to assist the theft later.

In some countries there may be a time delay required before the lower house can pass the law a second time, but we assume they factored this into their plan.

Monarchs can be corrupted

While the monarchs of democratic countries no longer retain executive power, some do retain some ceremonial roles which offer some political control. Such as dissolving parliament, though at the direction of the serving Prime Minister. If we're going to insist that our heists operate within each country's legal framework, then these monarchs need to be on board.

Given that we've decided appointed politicians can't be corrupted, it may seem odd that we say that an appointed monarch can be corrupted.

Especially as they're generally appointed by God. However, for the purpose of our exercise, we assume that, due to the restricted aristocratic gene pool, any monarch is going to be an inbred half-wit who can be easily directed by our thieves. (Are our republican tendencies showing much?)

Votes require an absolute majority

We're not going to tolerate any shenanigans where our thieves block lawmakers from being present for a vote, so our votes for laws to allow a heist require an absolute majority. On such important issues, we assume every lawmaker will ensure they're present. We're applying that to the US Senate too, as we assume Senators involved in a heist of the nation would be happy to abolish the filibuster.

The same requirement for an absolute majority applies to the highest courts that will rule on the legality of the thieves' laws, except in those instances where a super-majority is required. In courts where a subset of judges are selected from a wider pool of judges, we assume the chief judge is onside and can appoint friendly judges to the case, rather than it being a random lottery.

Switzerland rules itself out

Switzerland starts to look like a queer fish from the moment we discover their head of state is a seven headed beast. Not literally, but it's a Federal Council of seven members. Fortunately, it's elected by the parliament, so if our thieves can corrupt that, they can get their choice of individuals elected to the Federal Council.

They have a bicameral parliament, with 200 in the lower house and 46 in the upper, so things still look good for a heist. The Supreme Court consists of 40 judges, but they're split into divisions, so our thieves might only need to corrupt three out of a bench of five.



**NO INBRED
HALFWITS TO
SEE HERE,
MATEY**

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But why bother? Switzerland allows any citizen to call for a referendum on a law that has been passed. They need 50,000 signatures within 100 days of the law passing and if they manage that, then the whole country gets to vote. In effect, if you want to steal Switzerland, you're going to need to sign up half of the country to your heist team. Ocean's 4.5 Million is the sequel no-one wants to watch, so we're ruling the country out of the running.

And so does Sweden

Unlike Switzerland, Sweden has a unicameral parliament, but to change laws, the single house has to vote for a law twice. The twist is that there has to be a new general election between the votes.

We've said that the heist needs to have the outward appearance of legitimacy and we're also assuming the heist is going to need law changes. So, in the case of Sweden, the heist team will need to effectively secure the votes of half the country before punting those laws up to the Supreme Court. Sorry, Sweden, but you're fired!

The data source

As stated earlier, we're only considering countries that are generally democratic. But who says whether a country is democratic or not. Different organisations may assess some countries differently and if they're at a cut off point, it could pitch them into or out of the running.

For simplicity, we're using the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2024, published February 2025. It's available to download at <https://www.eiu.com/n/global-themes/democracy-index/>

Data exceptions

If you download a copy of the EIU report, you'll notice a number of smaller states missing.

We've not included all of them. For example, based on the historic precedent of the Falkland Islands, we're pretty sure the UK government would intervene against any attempt to steal the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey or Gibraltar. And if they didn't, it would surely look like an opportunity too good to miss for the Spanish government not to intervene in the last of those. The same argument surely applies to Greenland and the Faroe Islands, though with Denmark intervening this time.

Of the missing UN member states, unless any of those clearly appear to be non-democratic, they're added to the list. It's not as strenuous a test as those applied by the EIU, but we're playing the cards we've been dealt the best we can.

Vatican City

Let's quickly focus on the Vatican City, as it's not a UN member, but it doesn't make the list because it's not a democracy. It's more of a dictatorship.

Ooh, did you hear that? The sound of 1.4 billion angry Catholics. Okay, let's say the Pope's more of an elected monarch, which opens up possibilities for a heist. Currently 127 Cardinals can vote in a conclave meaning we need to corrupt 85 men of God.

So how do we bribe a Catholic priest? Sure, back in the day we'd be knee-deep in choirboy jokes right now, but it's 2026, so we're not going there my friend. No, we're going to have to hope a decent bottle of red to take away the taste of the cheap stuff hits the mark. Oh, and maybe some proper biscuits. Oreos, perhaps, or a five-pack of Tunnock's Caramels? Yeah, I know, the latter are still wafers, but wafers done right.

However, for our purposes, we're going to assume those Cardinals are uncorruptible and the Vatican City is unheistable.

Liechtenstein

What's that? Ah, a fan of European soccer, then. I wondered if you'd bring up the matter of Liechtenstein. Well, here's where things get odd. For all its trappings of democracy, both representative and direct, it's an absolute monarchy. The monarch, the Prince of Liechtenstein, has the right to veto any law passed by the government, so good luck trying to convince him to let you steal his country.

Could the Prince be the laziest authoritarian leader in the world today? He has a government to take care of the day to day running of the country and the people can even propose new laws. Talk about hands-off and if the people or government get ahead of themselves, the Prince can just veto a law. Surely a lesson there for all aspiring authoritarians who enjoy a round of golf.

But yes, perhaps a more charitable view would be to paint him as a benevolent dictator...(☹_☹)...or perhaps that's not overly charitable?

Still, the concept of the benevolent dictator is one that persists in the popular psyche. Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus presents arguably the most romantic representation of this idea, claimed to have suspended his retirement on his farm to take the position of dictator of the Roman empire in order to defeat the Aequi. 16 days later, with a rapid victory tied up, he resigned his position and headed back to his farm.

What a guy!

Of course, the problem with benevolent dictators is that they're only really benevolent when they're doing what you want them to. The early 20th century Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is often cited as a prominent example of a benevolent dictator. Non-Kurdish secularists may have been fans of the way Atatürk governed Türkiye, but the tens of thousands of Kurds killed in the Zilan Massacre and the Dersim Massacre would probably feel rather differently. So, that's just a roundabout way of saying no to Liechtenstein.

Disclaimer

The possibility of stealing an entire country is obviously appealing to a specific type of person. Namely narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopaths who, despite making up just just 1% of the general population and 3% of the prison population, flock together in the boardrooms of big corporations at a rate of more than 20%.

Ever noticed how politicians so often come from corporate backgrounds?

I'm getting sidetracked.

Okay, here's the thing. If you're one of those narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopaths and you're reading this to work out which country to steal, it's time for the warning.

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So do your own due diligence before embarking on any power-crazed attempt to steal the democratic freedoms and human rights of any national population.

And if you find yourself, in a few years from now, locked in a cramped cell waiting for your upcoming execution for your treacherous acts of treason, oh boo hoo hoo, don't waste your time emailing us to complain that it's our fault. Because it's not.



Benito Mussolini (2nd left) hanging out with pals, 1945. Vincenzo Carrese

The easiest country to steal

Well, this is what you're here for, so let's get on with it.

Here are the 10 easiest countries to steal, including the number of people, politicians and judges, required to pull off the heist.

1. Tuvalu	12
2. Federated States of Micronesia	13
3. Nauru	13
4. Tonga	17
5. Andorra	20
6. Marshall Islands	20
7. Palau	21
8. Seychelles	21
9. Kiribati	28
10. Solomon Islands	29

Did you guess that Ocean's 12 and Ocean's 13 could have been about stealing a country?

In fairness, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Dominica can all feel aggrieved to have missed out on top ten placings here. On the basis of their own political systems and internal courts, less than 20 people should be enough to steal any one of them.

They miss out due to a quirk of their appeals court system. Each of them ultimately has a final court of appeal outside of their borders. The Caribbean Court of Justice for Dominica and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for the other three. We should consider corrupting high judges a challenge when they're your own countrymen, but this just seems to complicate things a little too much.

Hang on a mo', I hear you say, in that case, what about Andorra?

Ooh, yes, a very good question indeed and one I hoped you wouldn't think of. But yes, you're right, with one of Andorra's two co-princes being the President of France, surely the mountainous principality doesn't make the grade because it also requires corrupting a high-level foreigner. Truth is, that was our way of thinking too, until...Nicolas Sarkozy. On 25 September, 2025, the ex-President of France was sentenced to five years in prison for criminal association. Yay! Turns out we don't have to corrupt the French President, they're self-corrupting.

What d'you mean you don't like our reasoning? Too bad, our ball, our rules. Andorra stays.

And at the other end of the scale.

1. France	471
2. India	454
3. Indonesia	375
4. Japan	367
5. Germany	361
6. Thailand	358
7. UK	333
8. Spain	325
9. Italy	310
10. Brazil	306

These are the countries you most want to avoid if you're merely interested in owning a vanity country.

And if this is just a vanity land-grab for you, then you call it day here. Job done. Next time you're hanging out with your billionaire pals and Branson suggests "Let's all go back to my island", you can counter with, "No, let's all go back to my country!"

That should wipe the smug smirk from his crossdressing, gurning, pothead face.

Blimey, not sure where that sweet release came from. Still, if Rocketman wants to make a thing of it, we're pretty sure at least some of that's going to be defensible in a court of law.

Of course, maybe you're looking for more than just a vanity project for your first country theft. With a population of 10,643, Tuvalu's not going to stand you in good stead with the world's leading dictators. We're guesstimating a couple of thousand men of fighting age at best. If you decide to launch a war against Ukraine, that's barely going to get you through to teatime on the second day.

When it comes to declarations of war, you need to be setting your sights a lot lower. The Vatican City, for example.

Nooo, what are you doing, you loon? I'm messing with you! The Vatican City? Don't get suckered in by the headline numbers, population 882, and the fact most of the fellas wear dresses (someone have a word with them about their *warrior ethos*). Weren't you paying attention earlier? There's 1.4 billion Catholics across the world gonna be up for that fight.

C'mon man, get a grip.

TIMEOUT, TIMEOUT.

Okay, I can see how that may have felt a little sexist there, but the truth is that throughout history, most cruel and brutal dictators that have stolen countries have been narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopathic men.

However, that hasn't exclusively been the case, so if you just happen to be a narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopathic hell-bitch who's read all this way, then please, please accept our deepest and most sincere personal apologies. And please don't feel the need to hunt us down and slay us like the whining pig-dog manchildren that we clearly are.

Fingers crossed that does the job. The whistle blows and we're back to it.

You need to get realistic and set your target lower. Accept it, Nauru is more your level and even then, you're going to be punching up. Of course, if you'd stolen a country with more people, you wouldn't be in this absurd mess.

What kind of country should you have stolen? Let's have a look.

The easiest country to steal with a lot of people

Stealing a country with a big chunk of people opens up all sorts of possibilities. Obviously it offers you a huge workforce that you can put to work doing whatever you want them to do. Or as mentioned earlier, you could just send them off to war to win you more countries to add to your new collection. A Franklin Mint kind of hobby, but with a lot more blood and random body parts.

So if that appeals, here's where you want to be focusing your interest. We're also including the number of people you get for each thief playing a part in this grand heist, plus the number of thieves you need for your team.

1. India	3,146,757	454
2. USA	1,236,767	275
3. Indonesia	758,503	375
4. Brazil	697,454	306
5. Philippines	629,774	179
6. Colombia	368,503	143
7. Taiwan	349,195	67
8. Japan	336,131	367
9. South Korea	331,731	157
10. South Africa	247,121	255

If you like your bread flat and your food spicy, the winner here has to look good. Your 454 member heist team is stealing you a country of more than 1.4 billion people. Democratic countries don't come any larger than this.

Before we press on, I feel Taiwan needs a special mention here. One of the criteria for selecting countries for a heist was the requirement for them to ostensibly be functioning democracies. I'm sure we're both happy that Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, qualifies, while the People's Republic of China or China doesn't make the grade. President Xi has made no secret of his intention to reunite Taiwan with the mainland.

On that basis, pulling off a heist of Taiwan seems a bit risky, no? Right now, if China were to attempt to force reunification, they risk a significant response from the US, other near neighbors and democratic nations from further afield. If the island nation was stolen, might China suddenly find that the route to reunification was much easier? Would the rest of the world be so keen to intervene if an authoritarian leader had stolen Taiwan?

Of course they would!

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company is one of the most important manufacturers of computer chips for many of the world's biggest tech companies. Throw in United Microelectronics Corporation and between them, this island nation is producing in excess of 70% of the world's semiconductors by revenue. The West isn't going to want to let China steal all the associated wealth without giving their militaries the opportunity to fight for the greater good, glory and freedom of all mankind.

And the next list offers a very good reason for someone to want to steal Taiwan.

The easiest country to steal with a lot of money

Yeah, baby, now we're really getting down to why people really want to steal complete nations. The kind of wealth that makes even Musk and Bezos go weak at the knees.

Sure, some people may just like the optics of owning a country and if that's you, why not amuse yourself with Tuvalu. But if you're in this for the cash, here are the countries the smart aspiring authoritarian leaders are looking to steal this season. And to make you drool, we've included the amount of cash each thief is going to trouser in US dollars, if you pull any of these off.

1. USA	\$111.33 billion	275
2. Taiwan	\$29.34 billion	67
3. Germany	\$17.07 billion	361
4. Australia	\$14.77 billion	120
5. South Korea	\$11.84 billion	157
6. UK	\$11.53 billion	333
7. Japan	\$11.53 billion	367
8. Singapore	\$10.65 billion	53
9. Canada	\$10.30 billion	216
10. Netherlands	\$9.49 billion	134

Okay, the heist members aren't really going to make that much, some of the GDP is going to need to go towards feeding the little people. And surely George Clooney's character would always get a bigger chunk than Qin Shaobo's, so some thieves would likely be making a lot more and others a lot less. Still, if they can put their egos behind them, wouldn't you imagine the whole team's going to be pretty happy with any of these.

Though, I can't help but feel the list looks a bit silly with the USA topping it. With their ingeniously designed constitution separating the power of government across the three branches of president, Congress and the Supreme Court, I'm sure we're both agreed this wouldn't ever happen in the real world. Perhaps we should have ruled the US out, along with Switzerland and Sweden. Oh well, too late now, the damage is done.

Anyway, while that covers the most obvious reasons for stealing a country, surely there's more to life than this to most aspiring authoritarian leaders? Of course there is, life can't just be this simple. There are all sorts of other things that need to be considered.

Let us show you.



Portrait of Mr. Rockefeller, shot by Oscar White in 1914

Refine your nation heist choices

One last thing. Actually, it's a lot more than one last thing. It's a basket of last things.

We all know that our average narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopathic aspiring authoritarian leader is a deeply complex individual. Money and a nation of adoring subjects may tick the most obvious boxes, but there are more reasons why they might want to steal a country.

We've taken the Nation Heist 2026 algorithm and applied it to a series of the most obvious thorny issues that will be vexing the overwhelming majority of wannabe dictators.

The leader who wants to play soccer at the FIFA World Cup

Ever seen how president Vlad Pooty asserts his macho virility by playing ice hockey with a load of players who know they'll be in a freezing gulag by the morning if he doesn't score the winning goal? Why should an authoritarian leader restrict himself to national demonstrations of sporting prowess when the global stage awaits? What better opportunity than to play as a striker for a soccer team playing at the FIFA World Cup?

Combining the ease of theft along with their FIFA ranking at the time of writing gives us this enlightening list of the top 10 countries you should consider stealing if you want to install yourself in the national team for the 2026 World Cup.

1. Argentina	221
2. Spain	325
3. Netherlands	134
4. Portugal	174
5. Belgium	119
6. Croatia	89
7. Uruguay	71
8. United Kingdom (England)	333
9. Colombia	143
10. Denmark	101

Probably disappointing news for Donald Trump with team USA not making the cut, though I don't imagine that'll stop him taking center-stage.

On the other hand, though, a fantastic result for his good pal Javier Milei, the logical and natural replacement for one of the greatest soccer players of all time, Lionel Messi. With his flamboyant use of the chainsaw, not a traditional play-making role for a center-forward, the right-footed Milei promises to make the 2026 edition a World Cup to remember. If he can just avoid the constant stream of red cards that have afflicted his career to date.

The leader whose pals like their ladies on the younger side

The lifeblood of any soul destroying authoritarian regime is a ready supply of cheap labor to press into the work demanded by the governing elite. The sooner people marry, the sooner they start making babies (granted, perhaps not a faultless correlation in many nations today) so here's a key metric soon-to-be-dictators will be fascinated by.

Obviously, with girls hitting puberty sooner (I'm pretty sure I saw an authoritative and well-respected medical expert explaining this recently), any new leader worth their salt will be sure to want a low marriage age to ensure plenty of fresh stock for their 65-year-old plus elite friends to hose down with their buckets of much more potent sperm and testosterone.

1. Colombia	143
2. Kiribati	28
3. Solomon Islands	29
4. Timor-Leste	37
5. Vanuatu	31
6. Nauru	13
7. Lesotho	83
8. Panama	44
9. Maldives	53
10. Somalia	170

Looking at that list of the easiest to steal countries with young people getting married, the great news is that several of them look like ideal locations for a tropical honeymoon too.

It feels like the stars are aligning, but maybe substitute the more traditional tropical wedding garb for the groom with a pedobear costume to ensure the happiest day of their week has sufficient gravitas.

The leader who wants his subjects sozzled

As the saying goes, "Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy," so stealing a country that enjoys a drink should help ensure the people remain happy while being shafted by their new leader.

1. Latvia	59
2. Moldova	56
3. Lithuania	77
4. Namibia	80
5. Seychelles	21
6. Austria	132
7. Andorra	20
8. Bulgaria	130
9. Hungary	109
10. Poland	291

Good news for any aspiring Europe based authoritarian leaders. You're not going to have to travel too far to find a suitably sozzled general population whose country is ready for a heist.

So, "To alcohol! The cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems." Thanks, Homer Simpson, for the line.

The leader who's a well-balanced genius

Some aspiring dictators are really good at balancing, while others have a genius level IQ. It's almost unheard of to find one with both. That's a tiger, a giraffe and an elephant. No, I mean elephant, then giraffe. Yeah, that's it, we just got a bit confused because we're not really super-smart dictatorial leader material.

Anyway, it's likely our new dictator will favour a country with a low IQ to ensure that his own immense intelligence (or otherwise) will stand out.

1. Ghana	146
2. Dominican Republic	174
3. Costa Rica	36
4. Colombia	143
5. Uruguay	71
6. Brazil	306
7. Chile	116
8. Argentina	221
9. South Africa	255
10. Indonesia	375

There's the results, but this was a surprisingly awkward ranking to work out. Not for any complex algo issues. No, because there's some astonishingly racist data online about average IQ scores by country. We eventually had to use a data source that omitted most of the smaller nations that we added that weren't in the EIU dataset.

Initially we ran this with a data source that covered more countries, but we got thrown by the results when we looked at them. So we went back and looked more closely and discovered that many of the African nations in the list, possibly more than half, had an average IQ score of less than 70. Back when I was a kid, the chain-smoking doctor at our local surgery would have classed someone with an IQ between 50 and 69 as a moron. Nowadays, we're more likely to refer to it as indicating mild intellectual or learning disabilities.

Does it really seem likely that in the majority of African countries, more than half the population have intellectual disabilities?

Exactly, which is why we tried a different data source. Things didn't improve at the first attempt. Apparently the average Nepalese citizen has an IQ of 43. So more than half the population of Nepal would be what our chain-smoking

doctor would refer to as imbeciles, though suffering from moderate intellectual disabilities might be a better turn-of-phrase.

It's absurd, You'd have to be a literal imbecile to publish datasets like this and present them as reliable and trustworthy.

Our eventual data source presented a much more moderate range, with less extreme outliers. However, this is data aggregated by a site that invites users to take IQ tests online, so shouldn't be considered definitive.

Not to worry, there's an easy way to deal with this situation.

Fish consumption

It's brain food, baby!

With its omega-3 fatty acids, particularly docosahexaenoic acid, fish offers a less contentious way to assess the brain brilliance of various countries' general populations. So these are the easiest to steal countries that eat the least brain-boosting fish.

1. Mongolia	70
2. Botswana	47
3. Lesotho	83
4. Somalia	170
5. Timor-Leste	37
6. North Macedonia	67
7. Hungary	109
8. Cape Verde	41
9. Albania	77
10. Bulgaria	130

Does that make things clearer?

Education rank

If it didn't, surely this will help. Let's look at the easiest countries to steal combined with their low global ranking in education standards.

1. Andorra	20
2. Somalia	170
3. Tonga	17
4. Botswana	47
5. Vanuatu	31
6. Palau	21
7. Namibia	80
8. North Macedonia	67
9. Cyprus	47
10. Marshall Islands	20

So there we go, surely from these three lists, aspiring autocratic leaders can narrow down their choices if they want to ensure that their own genius shines through.

The leader who's self-conscious about his penis size

Authoritarian leaders invariably hate being laughed at, but laughing at their penis elevates their fury to whole new levels. So, it makes sense that any aspiring dictator worth his salt is going to want to steal a country where the average penis size is at the smaller end of the spectrum, to ensure that theirs stands out, both figuratively and literally.

1. Sri Lanka	123
2. Thailand	358
3. Singapore	53
4. Mongolia	70
5. Philippines	179
6. South Korea	157
7. Tonga	17
8. Cyprus	47
9. Costa Rica	36
10. Luxembourg	37

After concerns with the IQ scores, we can appreciate why some may want to question the accuracy of these, and considering the data came from a random account on GitHub, that seems reasonable.

Still, if you're upset about any entry on that list, don't worry, you're probably well above average. Also, we just took the length and girth measurements and calculated the volume of a cylinder. If we'd been able to calculate the weird geometries of Mario Kart-like toadstools and then used just length, maybe the list would have looked very different.

The leader who enjoys holding big military parades

That last section flows quite naturally into this. When it comes to dictators and their military, bigger is always better. We all know what they say, "Big military, big...military parade." So here we consider the options available for easy to steal countries with big numbers of military personnel.

You need the numbers to ensure the bestest military parade through the streets of your capital on an annual basis. Which clearly demonstrates to your subjects and the world at large that you're not a leader to be messed with. Think Frankie Goes To Hollywood's take on Reagan/Gorbechev in the video for Two Tribes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO1HC8pHZw0>).

1. South Korea	157
2. India	454
3. Taiwan	67
4. United States	275
5. Brazil	306
6. Philippines	179
7. Israel	70
8. Singapore	53
9. Seychelles	21
10. Vanuatu	31

No disrespect to Vanuatu, but we didn't have money on them making the top ten here, but that's the algorithm at work. Of course, size isn't everything.

The leader who knows the importance of military firepower

While it's not unusual for the military capabilities of authoritarian regimes to atrophy over time as the ruling class suck more and more wealth out of the economy for themselves, the smart dictator knows he needs a strong military that he can unleash against his subjects if they ever get a bit uppity

This list ranks easy to steal countries along with their military's firepower.

1. South Korea	157
2. Israel	70
3. United States	275
4. Australia	120
5. Taiwan	67
6. United Kingdom	333
7. Italy	310
8. Singapore	53
9. Brazil	306
10. Japan	367

Seeing the UK make the list raises worries over the level of the rest of the democratic world's war readiness. After all, the UK is the country that built two huge aircraft carriers, but couldn't afford to equip them with launch catapults. Of course, that became much less of a concern when they realized they couldn't afford planes either.

The leader who likes to date (screw) beautiful ladies

Clearly we can't judge the attractiveness of a nation's females based on the arbitrary and Western biased views of beauty promoted by the Miss Universe contest, but heck, watch us do it anyway!

What aspiring authoritarian leader isn't going to be a sucker for pretty girls on stage in swimming costumes and surely he'll want to be sure to steal a country with a big pool of prospects.

1. United States	275
2. Philippines	179
3. Finland	112
4. Australia	120
5. South Africa	255
6. Colombia	143
7. Panama	44
8. Botswana	47
9. New Zealand	66
10. Israel	70

And there we have it, the US owned (till late 2022) Miss Universe competition has been won nine times by Americans, while the next highest number of winners by a single country is four. Suspicious, much? And it's not sour grapes because the UK has never had a winner. Incidentally, did you catch the 2025 result of the now Thai/Mexican owned event? A win for Miss Mexico and Miss Thailand the runner-up. Well, well.

The leader who knows the importance of the price of eggs

What is it with people banging on about the price of eggs? Let them eat cake. Or do you need eggs to make cakes?

Look, let's not get caught up in the nitty gritty of cake making and just accept that it's best for aspiring dictators to pick countries that don't eat a lot of eggs. That way, there's no worries about everyone getting upset if the price of eggs goes up. So here are the easiest to steal countries combined with those that eat the least eggs.

1. Solomon Islands	29
2. Lesotho	83
3. Botswana	47
4. Namibia	80
5. Samoa	31
6. Ghana	146
7. Timor-Leste	37
8. Vanuatu	31
9. Kiribati	28
10. Sri Lanka	123

So, Lesotho, Botswana and Timor-Leste don't eat a lot of eggs or fish. Wonder what they are eating?

The leader who doesn't get squeamish about women as 2nd class citizens

Women's jobs are to look pretty, do the washing and have dinner on the table when the heroic man of the house rocks in from the strip club at three in the morning. That's surely not a controversial view, is it? At least in any country run by a narcissistic, Machiavellian, psychopath, that's going to be the prevailing view.

Obviously, picking a country where there's already a larger gender gap should make achieving this fantasy an easier reality. So these are the countries that are easiest to steal, combined with larger gender gaps.

1. Maldives	53
2. Sri Lanka	123
3. Vanuatu	31
4. Mauritius	47
5. Malaysia	157
6. Hungary	109
7. Lesotho	83
8. Timor-Leste	37
9. Israel	70
10. Cyprus	47

Without meaning to judge, we were a little surprised to see Israel appear, as the country's policy of conscription applies equally to Jewish men and women. Guess things go downhill once the delicate little flowers are out of uniform.

The leader who doesn't want his subjects using him for target practice

Surely, it's a no-brainer that any aspiring authoritarian leader is going to prefer to steal a country where there's as low a proportion of gun ownership as possible. You'd surely be a priceless kind of stupid to choose to steal a country with more civilian-owned guns than civilians. Your unadoring subjects could be taking potshots at you on a daily basis. Even the blind ones are going to get lucky eventually.

So let's see which are the easiest countries to steal that also have attractively low levels of civilian gun ownership.

1. Solomon Islands	29
2. Marshall Islands	20
3. Palau	21
4. Timor-Leste	37
5. Kiribati	28
6. Singapore	53
7. Tuvalu	12
8. South Korea	157
9. Malaysia	157
10. Moldova	56

Of those, the highest rate of gun ownership is 3.4 guns per 100 civilians, while the highest rate of gun ownership among all democratic nations is 120.5 guns per 100 civilians.

The leader who likes his subjects unhappy

There are two ways to use the levels of happiness in a country to gauge its attractiveness for a caper filled heist.

Firstly is to favor a country where the people are happiest. That way, when you come in and crush their human rights and aspirations, they're not going to immediately feel down and want to launch a revolution. Well, not at first, anyway, but that may change as they feel more and more crushed over time.

So, it's much better to pick a country with lower levels of happiness from the start. That way they have a shorter distance to fall as the soul-destroying demands of your dictatorial regime just heighten their existing depression and self-loathing.

1. Lesotho	83
2. Botswana	47
3. Sri Lanka	123
4. Ghana	146
5. Namibia	80
6. India	454
7. Albania	77
8. North Macedonia	67
9. Montenegro	46
10. Bulgaria	130

Well, what a bunch of saddos. Relatively speaking.

The leader who wants a Nobel Prize...like, really wants a Nobel Prize

Obviously trivial trinkets like Nobel Prizes mean nothing to any strongman leader...oh, hang on, there was one, I think, who quite fancied the status and recognition of a Nobel Prize...forget who it was, though.

Anyway, for them, whoever it was, why not pick a country that has citizens who have received lots of Nobel Prizes and just steal theirs - job's a good'un!

1. United States	275
2. United Kingdom	333
3. Germany	361
4. Israel	70
5. Luxembourg	37
6. Timor-Leste	37
7. Costa Rica	36
8. Iceland	37
9. Cyprus	47
10. Austria	132

Just five individuals have ever won more than one Nobel prize, so any dictator-to-be who wants to join that club should ignore Costa Rica and Iceland.

The leader who likes his buildings on the tall side

Can you name me a dictator who doesn't love a big, phallic tower and the taller they are, the better.

The smart dictator around town knows to steal a country with some nice tall buildings to start with rather than waste time building towers that would be better spent on building gilded dance halls.

1. South Korea	157
2. Taiwan	67
3. United States	275
4. Malaysia	157
5. Australia	120
6. Singapore	53
7. Panama	44
8. Chile	116
9. Philippines	179
10. Canada	216

A bit of a disappointment right there for European based aspiring authoritarian leaders. Not to worry, Europe's punching above its weight next.

The leader who loves beautiful things...to blow up

For those occasions when the rest of the world are tut-tutting about your murderous dictatorial reign, few responses will give you the heady delight and satisfaction of dynamiting a unique and globally treasured site of historic significance. They tut, we splat, kind of a thing, I guess.

1. Italy	310
2. Germany	361
3. France	471
4. Spain	325
5. India	454
6. United Kingdom	333
7. United States	275
8. Australia	120
9. Canada	216
10. Japan	367

What's that, boy scout? You think it seems a bit irresponsible to be suggesting to crazed aspiring dictators that they blow up historic and natural monuments. You may not think that when a crazed dictator is thinking about blowing you up, instead.

Conclusion

For anyone alive today in much of the Western world, it would be easy to believe that democracy is the natural state of human societies.

However, across the past 100 years or so, billions of humans have enjoyed an unprecedented period of democratic freedoms. Largely the result of two wars that inflicted unprecedented destruction on unprecedented numbers of humans.

While human nature is largely egalitarian by default, human societies naturally default to hugely unequal and exploitative systems. Societies where the few at the top capture almost all the wealth on offer is and has been the natural state for thousands of years.

The past five or six generations' enjoyment of broad democratic freedoms have been a historic blip, rather than the norm. The heist of nations is only going to increase from here as free societies return to their natural point of balance.

As the Nation Heist 2026 report shows, even taking complete control of large and seemingly secure democratic nations requires a remarkably small number of people to pull off. Clearly those people need to be in specific positions of power, but pushing populist messages has proven an effective way to gain the necessary support to put people into those positions.

And once the heist's members are in position, finding willing stooges to assist presents little difficulty. There will always be an abundance of weak and ineffectual people keen to advance their own interests by siding with and doing whatever the thieves tell them to do.

Once the thieves are able to complete their heist, ostensibly in a legal manner thanks to the support of judges in the highest court, who will remove them? That will require an illegal act, technically an act of treason.

Bloodless coup

Finally, there's one more thing that needs clarifying about Hitler's assumption of dictatorial control of Germany in 1933. We described it as being achieved completely within the constraints of Germany's constitutional system. A completely legal takeover of a democratic country.

While it is generally presented this way, there is another way to frame this little piece of history, though. While to all intents and purposes, we can say that Hitler gained total control of Germany through a legitimate vote in the country's parliament, that doesn't present the full story. Following an arson attack on the German parliament building, Communists were presented as an immediate threat to the legitimate government and Hitler claimed that emergency powers were essential to maintain peace in the country.

By the time of the vote on the Enabling Act, in March 1933, that would give Hitler unconstitutional powers for four years, the Nazis had established two large paramilitary forces, in the SA, commonly called Brownshirts, and the SS. The former had about 2 million members by the time of the vote and the latter was on course for more than 200,000 members by the end of 1933.

With members of both forces surrounding the German parliament, when Hitler gave the politicians inside the choice between "war and peace", they might have reasonably interpreted that in more than one way.

So, yes, Hitler became dictator through fully democratic means, but would it be a big stretch to also describe his final grab of power as a bloodless coup?



**THE
FUTURE'S
SO BRIGHT, WE
G[☠]TTA WEAR
SHADES**

**BRIGHTER
THAN A
THOUSAND
SUNS**

Auschwitz SS guards and female staff auxiliaries enjoying themselves on vacation in Solahütte - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust

Jethro H. Forclift

Jethro H. Forclift is widely regarded as the preeminent English language author writing in Lugar Fontao (population 17), top-left Spain today. His gut-bustingly funny and thought-provoking book, *When did Everything stop being great?* is available from <https://forduckssack.com> on a Pay What You Want basis.

The time travelling Roman Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus played the fiddle as Rome burned; the Titanic house band played *Nearer, My God, to Thee* for their encore as the ship finally sank; and I played the first couple of bars of *Silent Night* on the piano as our world heads to hell in a hand cart.

The latter, something I vaguely recalled from childhood, was arguably the biggest tragedy of the three. And like our addiction to fossil fuels, AI and fast fashion, it simply wasn't sustainable.

So I stopped and wrote a book instead. A funny book, about an unfunny subject.

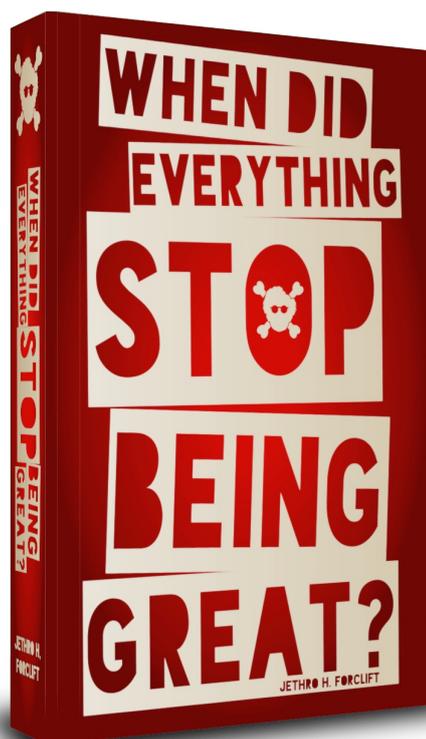
In a fictional, yet familiar world that occasionally intersects our own, we listen in as aspiring authoritarian leader, Hugo Sensationist, persuades rising liberal star, Troy Laboy, to switch sides. In the process we get to consider the many different times that the nation of Everything could have stopped being great, all the time highlighting the huge unfairness in society.

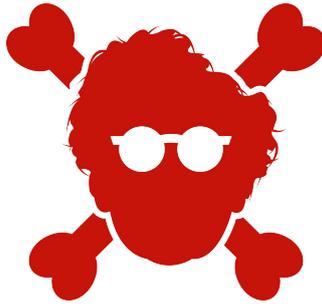
*Surely the recipe for a dark and dull, yet worthy snoozefest. Nope, they're an oddball pair who swing effortlessly between wisdom and stupidity, ensuring a gutbustingly funny and greased easy read to make even the least questioning of us ask, "**Whose side am I on?**"*

If you reach the end and aren't cheering for the losers, you're clearly one of the sleazy, grubbing upper-class barstewards who've been laughing at the rest of us for 12,000 years. Congratulations, but it just ain't funny anymore.

Jethro H. Forclift

Loser





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Loser

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