

Free Speech? “First They Come for ... Before They Come for You.”

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*Last Monday, I attended an [event](#) at which the Director of National Intelligence, **Avril Haines**, spoke on “Digital Authoritarianism: A Growing Threat”.^[1] While bemoaning the infringements on press freedom by “authoritarian” regimes like the one in Russia, Ms. Haines reminded us how lucky we are to live in a country where our democratic institutions prevent the government from acting in such an authoritarian manner (With all the censorship taking place in this country—from persecuting nonconforming investigative journalists like Julian Assange to limiting our access to alternative points of view by, for instance, banning the Russian TV channel RT from our airwaves,^[2] you can’t help but feel Ms. Haines needs to get out more).*

Ironically, and contradictorily, Director Haines spoke on the same day we learned that Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson had been dumped by his employer. Different explanations have been offered as to why Carlson lost his job, but I had always been amazed that Carlson could say such critical things about our foreign policy and provide a platform for fellow critics you would never see on CNN (like ex-congresswomen Tulsi Gabbardi, Edward Snowden-collaborator Glen Greenwald, and The Gray Zone’s Anya Parampil) without being quashed by the Deep State.^[3] I figured his days were numbered despite being Fox News’s most popular [commentator](#), and, sure enough, they were.

One of the last guest’s Carlson had on his show was **Matt Taibbi**, the journalist to whom **Elon Musk** gave a bundle of internal emails he discovered consequent to his purchase of Twitter. Based on these, Taibbi used Musk’s platform to [publicize](#) what the emails revealed; namely, that operatives of US government agencies, including the FBI, had colluded with Twitter executives to thwart Donald Trump’s reelection bid in 2020.^[4] Not surprisingly, Taibbi became a marked man, suddenly becoming subject of an IRS audit and being threatened with jail time, as he revealed on Carlson’s [show](#). In feigned bewilderment, Tucker asked why no self-declared defenders of press freedom had come to Taibbi’s defense.

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Notes

[1] The event was hosted by the Carnegie Institute for International Peace, which, for an organization with a name like that, provides a platform for an unseemly number of apparatchiks working for “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today” ([MLK](#)).

[2] Fearful of suffering the same fate as RT, the Chinese government channel, CGTN, has been as patriotic as CNN in cheering on the US side in the Ukraine conflict, its correspondents parading a constant stream of Ukrainian refugees before their cameras and often quoting the rabidly warmongering Institute for the Study of War on claimed Russian atrocities. If it weren't so sad and disappointing, it would be comical.

[3] Thanks to DVR technology, I would tape Carlson's show, then fast-forward over the segments that didn't interest me (Biden-bashing, chaos at the border, LBGTQXYZ-phobia, etc.) and restrict my viewing to foreign policy-related pieces, on which I thought he did as good a job as most antiwar sites—or better, while reaching an audience the size of which alt sites could only dream.

[4] One of the government mucky-mucks pressuring [Twitter](#) was Antony Blinken, then a top advisor to the Biden campaign, now Secretary of State. You won't want to miss the Reporters Without Borders' release of their annual *World Press Freedom Index* on May 3rd, an event hosted by *The Washington Post*—that irrepressible darkener of any light shining on our democracy—which features Secretary Blinken (look forward to Blinken confessing about his checkered past... NOT).

Featured image: A US government propaganda poster from the 1940s (Source: Multipolarista)

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