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## USA 28<sup>th</sup> In Person Freedom—And Falling

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As Americans we like to think we're free and in control of our own destiny; we look at the rest of the world with an air of superiority. But as I have said, that ship sailed a long time ago, and the people are too uniformed to realize it.

We like to believe we are free; but the question that begs an answer is: free compared to what, or better still, free compared to whom?

The Cato Institute is an American libertarian think tank based in Washington, D.C. It is one of the top think tanks in the world. Ian Vasquez and Tanja Porcnik from Cato released "The Human Freedom Index, a report that presents a broad measure of personal, civil, and economic freedom around the world. It is co-published by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute (Canada) and the Liberales (Germany), and is the most comprehensive index on freedom yet created for a globally meaningful set of countries." ("New Human Freedom Index, U.S. Ranks 20th"; Aug. 18, 2015; Ian Vasquez)

Vasquez and Porcnik "look[ed] at 76 indicators in 152 countries to capture the degree to which people are free to engage in voluntary exchange and enjoy major liberties such as freedom of speech, religion, and association." Their study also included "measures on freedom of movement, women's freedom's, safety and security, and rule of law."

Now Vasquez and Porcnik have released "The Human Freedom Index for 2016," and suffice it to say, that for policy wonks such as myself, the 300-plus pages are the things bedtime reading is all about. The report is fascinating and detailed on every quantifiable level. It is constraints of page space that prevent my in-depth examination of the report findings.

Specific to my opening paragraph, this is what you should be alarmed about. When Obama took office in 2009 the United States was ranked 16th on the Human Freedom Index. In 2015 the United States was ranked 20th on same, and in the report published 2016 the United States was ranked 22nd in the world, based on the exhaustive studies of the Human Freedom Index.

It is a fact that driving America into the economic abyss wasn't the only thing Obama did as president; he also deprived Americans of their basic constitutional personal, civil and economic freedoms at an accelerated pace.

We are the United States of America; we are the land of the free and home of the brave – the brave being those who are willing to risk all to invent, create and build what others fear. And yet as of 2016 we, the once-greatest country on the face of the earth, are now ranked 22nd in the world pursuant to Human Freedoms.

But it gets worse. Appendix J: 2014 Freedom Index Rankings (By Personal Freedom) finds that when the aggregate numbers are compiled the United States ranked 28th in the world pursuant to personal freedom. Denmark was ranked the first in personal freedom, followed by Austria, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Iceland, Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Poland, Czech Republic, Portugal, Malta, Hong Kong, Slovenia, Italy, New Zealand, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and France – all ahead of the U.S.

For the same year ending 2014, The Human Freedom Index found that the United States ranked 16th in economic freedom. (See: Appendix K: 2014 Freedom Index Rankings by Economic Freedom.)

Hong Kong led the way followed by Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada, Mauritius, Georgia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Australia, Qatar, Chile, Jordan, Lithuania and the U.S.

Americans of today have been lulled into a matrix-like dream state where we are led to believe that as long as we can turn on our 50-inch flat-screen televisions to watch whatever intellectually humiliating tripe is on, that as long as we can buy that new automobile we cannot afford and buy that new house we cannot afford and fill it with things we cannot afford, then all is well.

We do these things sacrificing family and health because that's what we have been led to believe is important. Most Americans are only one to three paychecks away from total personal financial collapse.

We blame politicians, but politicians are the reflection of us. We buy their lies and deceit. Then when they are elected we turn a blind eye to all the evil they perpetrate. We are for all intents and purposes oblivious to their deconstruction of the Constitution. And even more egregious, rather than exercise our rights as voters, we chase after white elephants and red herrings such as ending the Electoral College and term limits.

I repeat my oft-stated opinion. I believe we have been extended an opportunity to witness positive change for at least a "season." But, if America allows this opportunity to be stolen and undermined by evil, self-interested, minions controlled by Muslim money and George Soros money, there remains no more future. And the day will quickly be upon us when being 28th in the world in personal freedom will be longed for as the good old days.