



## **Doom and gloom by the national press**

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There is a doom and gloom message coming from the national media, with few exceptions. However, an article in the Dec. 17 Wall Street Journal by Johan Norberg, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, debunked much of the negativism coming from the purveyors of distorted commentary. Norberg says things aren't that bad. In his article, entitled "The 2010s Have Been Amazing", he says that the 2010s have been the best decade ever, and he gives examples to prove his statement. As a matter of fact, he says the evidence is overwhelming. The United Nations Development report warns about inequality being negative, but in the same report states, "The gap in basic living standards is narrowing, with an unprecedented number of people in the world escaping poverty, hunger, and disease." a contradiction in terms.

The World Bank reports that the world-wide rate of extreme poverty fell more than half, from 18.2 percent to 8.6 percent between 2008 and 2018. Last year the World Data Lab calculated that for the first time, more than half the world's population can be considered "middle class." Life expectancy has increased by 3 years in the past 10 years thanks to the prevention of childhood deaths. Just think how much more life expectancy would have increased if the drug and murder rate in the United States had been under control. Chad, an African nation, has reduced its child mortality rate by 56 percent, and it is the worst performing country in the world while South Korea reduced its child mortality rate by 98 percent.

Global warming and pollution remain a challenge, but Norberg said in spite of all the negative chatter, death rates due to air pollution declined almost a fifth world wide and a quarter in China between 2007 and 2017. Norberg further states that wealthy societies are well positioned to develop clean technologies and to deal with the problems of a changing climate. Annual deaths from climate related disasters declined by one-third between 2000-09 and 2010-15 to 0.35 per 100,000 people according to the International database of Disasters, a 95 percent reduction since the 1960s.

Some people think because the United States pulled out of the Paris Global Warming Treaty the U.S. has stopped efforts to prevent global warming. Not so. Just look at the efforts of the automotive industry in their determination to create a market for electric automobiles. The change to electric will be a monumental reduction in green house emissions. Power companies are de-commissioning coal fired electrical generating plants. The United States has probably, at

this stage of the game, done more for world emissions reduction than the rest of the world combined.

There has also been significant progress made in the healthcare field. The incidence of malaria in Africa has declined around 60 percent from 2007 to 2017, and anti-viral therapy has reduced deaths from HIV/AIDS by more than half. The Rotary International organization has almost eradicated polio through concentrated efforts from their members.

Norberg states “the advancements made by the world’s societies is his case for optimism. Tin-pot strongmen, looting politicians, and punctilious bureaucrats make mischief with societies and economies. But mankind creates faster than they can squander, and repairs more than they can destroy.” Sounds familiar!

We have a lot to be thankful for and sometimes, as in Norberg’s case, somebody needs to tell us. The United States is still a wonderful place to live.

Merry Christmas and a Safe and Wonderful 2020!!!!