



Land of the free? Under Obama, America is now below 20 other countries in Personal Freedom Rankings

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Since Barack Obama became president, Americans' perception of their level of personal freedom has declined rather significantly.

According a recent study conducted by the London-based Legatum Institute, the United States scored below 20 other nations in this regard, including New Zealand (which ranks the highest), France and Uruguay.

The Legatum Institute has published the sixth edition of its Prosperity Index, which measures indicators of prosperity not covered by typical assessments, such as gross domestic product statistics.

The Prosperity Index includes such factors as Education, Health, Safety & Security, Governance, Social Capital and Personal Freedom.

The report's assessment of personal freedom is derived from 2013 polling data from the Gallup World Poll Service, which queried citizens about their perceptions of how free they feel.

In the 2010 report, the U.S. ranked 9th but has since dropped to 21st place, with countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany now scoring higher. The 2010 Prosperity Index was based on polls conducted in 2009, the year Obama took the oath of office for his first term as president.

The *Washington Examiner* notes:

The nation's overall personal freedom score has declined by 17 percent since 2009, with a 22 percent drop in combined civil liberty and free choice contributing to that decline.

Although perceptions of what constitutes personal freedom are likely to vary considerably from country to country, the bottom line is that Americans feel less free since Obama became president.

It can be presumed that these perceptions on the part of American citizens include factors such as the increase in surveillance on the public by the NSA and other entities as well as the use of military-style tactics by local police forces.

Other studies have also indicated that the United States can no longer consider itself to be the “Land of the Free.” Another recent report, this one released by the Cato Institute, found that America has dropped from the number two ranking worldwide in the year 2000, in terms of economic freedom, to that of 12th place in 2014.

The Cato Institute’s *Economic Freedom of the World: 2014 Annual Report* also concluded that, in terms of overall freedom, the status of the U.S. is in steep decline.

Michael Tanner, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote:

[T]he United States’ growing surveillance state, the ongoing wars on drugs and terror, police militarization, and the increasingly intrusive regulatory bureaucracy raise important questions about civil liberties and civil rights as well.

Tanner also noted:

Overall, the report concludes that the United States “experienced a significant move away from rule of law and toward a highly regulated, politicized, and heavily policed state.”

The rise of “killer cops,” the spying by the government on its own citizens and the continued erosion of civil liberties that has been a hallmark of the current administration have all contributed to the perception that Americans no longer live in a free country.

Until we stand together and reclaim our liberty, we can expect the situation to only worsen. We have the responsibility as American citizens to restore the principles on which this nation was founded upon, so that future generations can enjoy the freedoms that we once took for granted.