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Justice Kennedy's retirement and American exceptionalism

Harvey Rifkin

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On many past occasions, I have written about the hyper-nationalistic ignorant myth of American Exceptionalism. American Exceptionalism no longer exists to an appreciable extent in a positive context. Justice Kennedy has been the moderate conservative centrist vote on the Supreme Court with many decisions favoring the secular government approach to society and siding for general personal freedoms, favoring the rights of LGBTQ women, and other minorities. After all, America was founded on the principle of separation of church and state, and not as a Christian nation — as wrongly understood by some Americans. According to a study commissioned by the Cato and Fraser Institutes in 2017, America was rated 17th as far as personal, civil, and economic freedoms. This study was not put together by some liberal, left-wing organization, but rather under the blessing of the Koch Bros., who are libertarian right-wing billionaires who founded the Cato Institute and provide much of its funding.

Western Europe and Hong Kong eclipse America in terms of all three composite indexes measuring freedom. I really have a difficult time not laughing in the face of ignorant myopic super patriots who tell me that American Exceptionalism is what our country is about. If America is so exceptional, why are we not No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3? Now that would be exceptional.

With the election of Trump and a Supreme Court moving further right, our freedoms are continually being eroded. I venture to speculate that in 2018 our placement on the freedom index would be in the 20s range, dropping down from 17th. For those who refuse to see reality, we are exceptional as a developed nation in our degree of high military spending, incarceration, support of fascist regimes, racism, misogyny, limited healthcare, poor support for worker rights, economic oppression, apathy, obesity, materialism, societal anxiety, and other factors that erode or block our degree of happiness. For those who spuriously say that Christian freedom has been eroded, that is a total myth, as religious freedom in America since 2008 has been 10 on a scale of 10. Whereas the harassment and property damage against some Muslim and Jewish groups has caused this part of the religious freedom index to drop to as low as 7.8/10.

Trump and his minions, and carnival-barking, hyperbolic talk show hosts such as fascist Michael Savage advocate for more suppression and censoring of the fourth and very important arm of government, the “media.” We as the voters need to show up at the polls, call our legislators, protest, and write letters to our representatives to start pushing back on the present fascist authoritarian leanings of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial government. As citizens, we need to turn off our radios and televisions to the extremist media sources such as FOX and MSNBC and put on our critical thinking caps and focus on sources such as BBC, NPR, The Guardian, Christian Science Monitor, The Economist, and sometimes the Wall Street Journal to obtain a more objective slant on reality.