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1927 Words

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The Future of American Freedom

I am honored by the invitation to be with you tonight and wish that there were more than one piece of good news, but at least the good news far out weighs the bad.

The GOOD news remains that more and more Americans have awakened to the threat to American liberty and standard of living existing in the actions and policies of their Government. No small part of that awakening results from the efforts of the Heartland Institute and like-minded entities across the country.

The principal BAD news comes from the fact that the current White House is NOT incompetent... but knows exactly where it wants to go AND will discard the word and spirit of the Constitution of the United States to get there.

A creeping loss of liberty has been on-going almost since ratification of the Constitution. Effective federal control of ALL levels of education, personal income, agriculture, environmental regulation, investor relations, elections, political speech, and property rights existed even before this Administration took office.

Now, in less than a year, Americans have lost further control of financial institutions, MAJOR parts of industry, most national media, relations between businesses and employees, and now EVEN the national census... Efforts exist to control health care, energy production and use, radio, ALL political speech, elections, and private wage agreements. These efforts accelerate a trend in only one direction...national socialism. The world has seen, but apparently has forgotten, where that can lead.

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Preservation and enhancement of liberty in the United States resides in institutions closest to the people they serve. Among those institutions, our liberty rests, first and foremost, on the Constitution,... but now the record shows that the current President does not believe in the oath he took to protect that remarkable document.

The common sense that the Founders wove into the fabric of our Constitution makes it the greatest civil wonder created by humankind. This remarkable document provides the operating instructions for the American Republic... Grounded in humankind's journey over thousands of years to assimilate into human affairs the meaning of freedom and the "unalienable rights" of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;... supported by a wise political blueprint for a democratic Republic;... and buttressed by the first Ten Amendments, the Constitution remains our beacon for navigating troubled as well as hopeful times.

Nonetheless, the United States verges on the brink of LOSING its Constitutional and cultural heritage, inherited and shared across all peoples in this nation of immigrants for nearly half a millennium. Because of a genetically driven human search for liberty through immigration, Americans inherently are not like other cultural and national groups around the world. Those immigrants took very special risks to be here.

On the other hand, election of leaders who desire power more than they wish to protect the liberty of others, have led to progressive losses of that liberty, with promises of taxing the "rich" to pay for "free" healthcare, "free" education, "guaranteed" incomes, "no" climate change, "carbon and nuclear-free" energy, and who knows what next. In this demagoguery, allegedly in our name, the President and Congress attack the private citizens, institutions, associations and enterprises directly allied with people across the communities of America. These institutions underpinned the Constitution at the time of its creation and must continue as liberty's foundations in the future.

Americans face the fact that the President, his appointees, and those enabling him in the Congress do not want a strong America – an America that can project its power in its own defense and that of liberty... or an America that shines in the world as an economic lighthouse of private initiative,... or an America that can continue to come to the rescue of the oppressed or the endangered.

The President of the United States, and the “czars” and staff around him, do not understand, and apparently never will understand, the special nature of America. Maybe he and they missed that part of growing up as an American.

Maybe the President’s compassion has overwhelmed common sense... Maybe neither his parent’s teachings nor his foreign schools nor his readings included the history of our beginnings, the lessons of our maturation, or America’s essential role as the protector of human liberty... Maybe he does not understand the motivations of Americans in wars over 233 years when they risked all as they fought and died on behalf of freedom as well as the idea of America... Maybe, just maybe, he really believes he and his party should force Americans to give up their uniqueness and be like everyone else -- an elitist-led socialist majority with few, if any, real liberties to enhance their lives and those of their progeny.

If our long-term potential enemies, ... China and Russia, in particular, or any one of the petty totalitarian regimes or terrorist gangs elsewhere, ... had succeeded in having a “sleeper” elected to the Presidency, we might see what is happening today.

The new President has laid the groundwork, in unbelievable “stimulus” and budget war on achievers, and a resulting astronomical and corrosive national debt, for exactly what would eliminate the ability of the United States to provide for its constitutionally mandated “common defence”, much less assist other peoples in theirs. And now he wants to pay for everyone’s health care while destroying the tax base that comes with jobs and achievement... With the range of the Government’s initiatives and proposals now revealed, the full intent of a hypothetical “sleeper” may be close to realization.

Relative to our current situation, the Founders did not anticipate election of both a President and a Congress that did not share their constitutional emphasis on national security and the preservation of liberty. These otherwise extraordinarily clairvoyant men gave us no clear guidance on how to counter a concentration of political power in officials with greater interest in imposing an alien ideology and maintaining power... than in the indefinite and successful protection of American liberty.

Let us examine three of the most current internal threats to that liberty as they relate to education, health care, and climate change.

The Nation's Founders believed, far more than the politically powerful believe today, that instruction in the basic "virtues" instilled in their Judeo-Christian heritage formed an essential foundation for the Republic. The thousands of years of trial and error development of that heritage and the struggles to preserve it represented to them an IRRIFUTABLE basis for insuring the success of the American Republic and the happiness of its citizens.

Immediately following the Revolution, several of the Founder's formulations of the structure of locally managed education systems makes it clear that they felt strongly that the virtue, morals, and benevolence of a broadly educated electorate formed an ESSENTIAL ingredient for a representative democracy... The absence of such a belief within the GOVERNMENT education system of today flies in the face of their wisdom.

Most Americans still recognize both the critical role of education in our Republic AND in their children's future,... the importance of "virtue" in society,... and the dire situation existing overall in education today. They are just NOT allowed to fix it!.. We all must work to correct education's failures, not with more money, but with more commitment to using common sense and individual choices to get it right.

The world envies America's basic health environment. Given a choice, most people would come here for health care. Is our health environment perfect? Obviously it is not and never will be; but surveys indicate that, by 2009, the steadily improving health care Americans receive had reached broadly acceptable levels, particularly during the last 60 years.

A formidable list of problems exists for some individuals and all taxpayers in the run-away costs of Medicaid and Medicare and with private insurance that cannot compete across state lines. These problems, however, are amenable to market solutions and remain sufficiently limited in who is directly affected as to not discourage most Americans... Nonetheless, most wish to address health care inadequacies in a constitutional and historically American way: relying on individual decisions rather than decisions by nameless bureaucrats.

The Constitution of the United States cites no right to "health"... Rather, preservation of health clearly lies within the activities NOT enumerated as functions of the Federal Government. Indeed, the people or the States have control of such activities by virtue of the 10th Amendment, misinterpretation of the so-called "Commerce Clause," notwithstanding. Equally clearly, by word and deed, the current Administration and

Congressional leadership believe in continuing to override the 10th Amendment and eventually imposing national socialist control over the health of every American... In so doing, they would pass massive increases in national debt and future economic distress on to present and future generations.

We also should note that the “unalienable rights” stated in the Declaration of Independence include “life” as well as “liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” “Life,” however, implies something very different than “health.”... The right to life coexists with the “liberty” of individual choice of how life shall be lived in “the pursuit of happiness.” No unit of government can constitutionally or morally place itself between the citizen and individual choices relative to health... In this context, government steps on to an immoral, unconstitutional, extremely slippery slope when it inserts itself into individual decisions on birth and death. Such “authoritarian” use of age to select who lives or dies resembles far to closely selection on the basis of race, ethnicity, or any other arbitrary criterion.

Finally, as the Heartland conferences and publications have made so clear, climate change assumptions rather than facts, and computer modeling rather than real-world observations, underpin additional national socialist efforts to restrict American liberties and confiscate trillions of dollars of American income and other property. All this with a siren’s call to SAVE the planet! The science behind this massive intrusion into American life requires more than a “consensus” of politically like-minded climate analysts. It ALSO needs to be right.

Actual observations show that climate varies in response to natural forces and that human burning of fossil fuels has had negligible if any additional effect over the last 100 years. Lets us hope that the electorate can bring policy makers to an understanding of these facts about climate change before liberty and property suffer further erosion in exchange for political power.

Given what we actually know about global climate, as well as the remaining uncertainties, Americans should think long and hard before giving up liberties and incomes to politicians who just want to “do something”... for a particular special interest. Prudent protection of local environments is one thing – a long-term political agenda to gather power at the expense of liberty is quite another. A very high probability exists that “doing something” will NOT work against natural climate forces we only incompletely understand BUT... WILL destroy our personal and national finances.

When we realize what liberties have been lost, the probability also is very great that we will deeply regret NOT just preparing for global warming or global cooling rather than trying to stop nature. Instead, our focus should be on producing more energy to raise worldwide living standards... Our focus should not be on how to limit energy use and thus prevent improvements in the human condition.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you so much for your help and support of the Heartland Institute. The battle for American liberty can no more be lost in present times as it could have been lost by our Founders. Pledging our “lives, fortunes and sacred honor” is the least we can do. The future lies in our hands.
