

# Freedom Matters

## A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

### **Sustainable Development Is Unsustainable. Part 1. Background.**

by Bob Bowman

A lot of home owners in Wisconsin are waking up to find their well-being violated by their own state and local governments, through the enactment of laws that threaten the legal status and market values of their homes or other land. Why, they wonder, is this happening? They had better believe it is happening, because it is, and if they do not protest, and do not resist at the ballot box and in every way they can, they are going to lose homes and rights and freedoms that have been their birthrights.

What is it that is driving politicians to destroy the freedoms we have had in home ownership? in farm ownership? in choice of life styles? in freedom to move and to live where we want?

These acts by politicians are not **merely** malice. They represent powerful political forces acting at the state, national and international levels. Those forces have taken us, in less than 100 years, through two world wars and 50 years of cold war with the Soviet Union, mostly over whether capitalism or collectivism was the wave of the future. The U.S. — and capitalism — came out as victors in all three of those wars, but not unscarred nor even intact. Nor are we home free yet. September 11, 2001 (known as 9-11, for short) plunged us into a holy war launched by an extreme faction of the Muslim religion (Islam).

We are now engaged in that holy war with those Muslim extremists. Yet that is not the only force threatening us. Another is the stubborn political philosophy of state collectivism, that like the proverbial snake, refuses to die. The collapse of the Soviet Union did not wipe it out. That's because the collectivist mode of life had already invaded and insinuated its way into the fabric of our own nation. It is eating at us from within.

Collectivism has bankrupted every nation that embraced it, yet its proponents adamantly, or ignorantly, refuse to recognize this, or to learn from it. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it, and to relive, generation after generation, all of its terrible and tragic mistakes. We could let fools be fools, except that these fools mean to take the rest of us with them.

The basis of capitalism is property — i.e., private ownership of property. *Freedom Matters*, in January of this year, reviewed proof of this in Hernando De Soto's book, *The Mystery of Capital*. As De Soto shows, this nation owes its unparalleled prosperity to its protection of property rights. He showed that those nations which do not protect property rights exist in poverty. Now we see our property rights under attack by the very people whom we elected to protect them — our own government. This is being done through the enactment of collectivist laws.

Yet, collectivism is not the only force behind taking our rights. Environmentalism is behind it, too. These two isms have seduced the hearts and minds of a large segment of American voters. When danger comes from political forces, we must turn to politics to save us.

The environmentalist movement is threatening our property rights by laws which started out as government ownership of navigable waters, and later expanded into floodplains, then wetlands, and now, proposes to take over lake and waterway shores. Those laws seize lands, aided and abetted by the invention of zoning. Starting in 1970, Wisconsin seized land via its "farmland preservation" law. On the horizon now are potential laws aimed at government ownership of slopes, and of "upland corridors."

As an adjunct to zoning laws, note the device of "land use plans," which became widespread in Wisconsin in the 1980s via "farmland preservation" plans. After only 20 years of such advisory land use plans, Wisconsin in 1999 adopted "comprehensive planning" and the concept of "smart growth." Those laws, if taken to their fullest extent of allowable government control, basically will complete the nationalization of land in this state. Once those laws are in place, the land "owners" will have none of their "bundle of rights" left. They will be able to do nothing on the land without permission. We are but a whisker away from not even being able to sell our land without permission.

In the sense of De Soto's *Mystery of Capital*, when private individuals no longer have the rights to the land, the land has been "decapitalized." It has been removed from the economic base of our capitalist system. Comprehensive Planning is nothing new. It is the soviet system. It's exactly the way that Russia organized the collectivist ownership and control of all resources. It only took 70 years for that system to reduce Russia to poverty. As history teaches, it will do the same to us. It's already doing it.

To get out of this mess, we have to understand the politics that got us into it. That's because we have to undo those politics. At the least, that's the safest way out. A major driving force that has gotten us into this mess can be seen to flow from a pivotal book published in 1972, *The Limits to Growth*. The senior authors were a man and wife team of MIT professors, who applied computer modeling to the utilization of resources by the growing human population, in a study commissioned by a group called The Club of Rome.

*The Limits to Growth* predicted that the exponential growth of the human population would soon overtake the availability of resources, resulting in the collapse of civilization. Their model said that would happen within a mere 100 years. Clothed in the mystique of computer modeling, it startled the industrial world.

Was *The Limits to Growth* right? Are we headed for doom? More on this, next issue.

**Readers' Bulletin Board.** e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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