

LETTER FROM SOTOGRANDE

Lansing Collins

Dear Bob:

Your September 1994 letter asked for a contribution to '33s Summer Newsletter, suggesting that I bring my 1989 effort up to date.

Every time a start has been attempted, something rather upsetting, generally unpredicted, had interfered with my updating; so a few random thoughts on the last six years will have to do, bearing in mind that with the fervor of today's media, words that once had rather definite meaning have acquired new interpretations, often bewitching the unwary. One might begin with two major happenings in the Western World: "progress" in the development of the European Community (European Union), and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As previously noted, the Treaty of Rome, negotiated, with full American support, by the Western European nations some forty year ago, aimed at the establishment of a common market. True a few visionaries dreamed of a United States of Europe, but what was sought by all was free trade and prosperity. The last six years, however, saw M. Delors reawaken the vision of a sovereign union, and a steady growth of the bureaucratic "organization" in Brussels has continued. Little by little sovereign powers seem to trickle from member states to the EC. Often there is no objection from the more "socialist" states; some protest, but only the British refuse to accept everything. The so-called Maastricht "Treaty" several years ago was designed to move the Community further towards sovereign power but the British "opted out" on two major points: monetary union and all that that implies, and the social contract. The former would have subjugated the pound and its world-wide followers to the mark and its group, while the latter would have "socialized" wages, pensions, hours of labor, some prices, and other controls.

A planning meeting is coming up this month to prepare for a new "Maastricht" type major updating, and it is unclear whether Britain will hold to its present position or not. The Labour Party in England has won nearly all the recent by-elections and seems likely to take over the government in 1997 when national elections must take place. It favors all the "socialist" ambitions of the EC and only a small faction of the Tory Party openly opposes. What the people of Britain really want, however, is not clear. There has never been a

plebecite on that particular issue; the British system of government does not favor plebecites. It is significant that when plebecites were held in several European countries, the more people were informed and educated on the EC's function (the Dutch did a



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very good summary for every voter) the less fervent was their approval; the margin being less than 1% in Holland and in the 1% to 3% range in other countries. So, the EC is either not clearly understood or openly opposed by 47% to 49% of the voters. What it might be in England is not known and probably never will be as both parties oppose a plebecite on that particular matter.

Another question is how much longer will the bureaucracy (President, Council and Commissioners of this and that) in Brussels remain in the hands of "socialists" after the governments that send them have become essentially right of center? The European Parliament in Strassburg so far has no truly parliamentary powers but is avidly seeking them. It too is now dominated by "socialists".

The EC is very expensive to run and some Europeans are wondering what they have really gotten out of the EC these past forty years that they couldn't have done better themselves. But if all goes according to plan, and the conservative government in Britain gives way to Labour, one might expect even higher EC costs, decreased unemployment only at the cost of increased deficits, no increase in trade with the "outside" world and a southern slice of states continuing to benefit from large EC subsidies to keep agriculture and unprofitable state-owned industries afloat so that unemployment will not cause more social violence. It has all been organized and run from the center and imposed on the public with little or no "democracy" (much like the old Soviet Empire system). The public does not really understand what it is all about until some new edict arrives to complicate daily life. So, it is not unreasonable to predict that EC problems will continue to dominate short and long term European economic planning, and that Europe will avoid

going very deeply into matters of EC defense and other military matters, and this century will not see any final solution.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, as might have been expected since the West had apparently made no plans, has had tremendous political and economic results. A slow guided slide from the centrally dominated system to market economics might have been better than merely throwing money about and trying to talk a new system into being amongst people with none of the necessary institutions. The split-up was generally not only along ethnic lines but also along the Soviet "constitutional" borders, the Soviet Union having been divided into independent states, one group of states being more "independent" and equal than the other, all however controlled by Moscow through the Party apparatus. In the south, Muslim areas for the first time achieved some freedom. However, Chechnya, of which we have seen so much on television, was in the lower scale, not big enough to achieve independence when the USSR dissolved. Neither did any of its ethnically weird tribal neighbors in the Caucasus Mountains. They had all given the Czar trouble and had to be ruled tightly by the Soviets. One has but to read of last century's 40 year resistance of the Emir Shamil in Lesly Blanch's Sabres of Paradise to realize that the Caucasus Mountains had never been really conquered by the Czar. Stalin did not make Chechnya any more loyal by deporting a large proportion of its people to Siberia in World War II for fear they were helping the Germans. No one should be surprised when something out of the ordinary happens in the Caucasus. The Russians will be fighting the Chechnyan resistance for a long time.

At the very moment, in the preparation of this letter, something "rather upsetting" but not entirely unpredicted has taken place in Bosnia. Bosnia's problem is related in a way to the problems arising from the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. It has also proven that sensible planning in the West for something that had become quite obvious never existed.

Recently, the Bosnian Serbs, really in revolt against a government "democratically" established and recognized by many, including the UN, has effectively called the UN and the United States' bluff, and the ball which the US had hoped to put in the Serb court by air attacks for Serb failure to comply with a UN ultimatum has been apparently put back in the UN court, but, really, in the US lap. What the Bosnian Serbs have done does not need to be listed here; it becomes more evident every day that they are not going to be stopped by mere threats.

It seems clear that the Security Council of the UN and its Secretary General cannot successfully command military forces especially after the political objective has been confused or ill-defined. The classic sequence of political definition of the objective or mission, strategic planning of the military role by the military, and tactical carrying out of the military side of things with the proper men and equipment cannot be interfered with as it was in Somalia, and is being done in Bosnia. The bad dream of Vietnam and the TV sight of American casualties being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu have prevented US ground forces, the basic punch of NATO, from being used in any way in Bosnia, though we seem to have committed ourselves to providing half the ground troops (25,000 men or so) needed to evacuate the UN peace-keeping force. What happens if the Bosnian Serbs attack British and French reinforcements going into Bosnia before any US Marines arrive to evacuate the UN forces? What happens if Bosnian Serbs attack the US ground troops if and when they arrive in Bosnia as NATO forces? We may be reduced to doing something with difficulty, using many men with casualties, that might have been done much more easily several years ago. Or we may surrender any credence we still have to world leadership, in which case why spend billions on a volunteer professional military structure rendered impotent by political inability to decide how to use it? At least we could balance the budget painlessly. Western Europe would, it is submitted, prefer our resumption of world leadership.

It is easier to say what should have been done. Too many different bodies have tried to solve the Yugoslav dissolution problem. Early on, NATO was ruled out because Bosnia-Herzegovina was said not to be in NATO's defense area, Eastern Europe. That was a handy reason for the US to step back from the problem, saying it was an European matter. But Bosnia is squarely between Western Europe and Greece and Turkey, both NATO members. They are both under threat of one kind or another, and NATO might have been the principal political and military force used from the very beginning, when it became evident that violence was rising and large numbers of civilians were being killed and displaced. Bosnia, at the time of the plebiscite (or election) was said to be 50-60% Muslim; all but the Serbian minority of, say, 25% voted. Now the Bosnian Serbs hold 65-70% of the country. Where is the former majority? In Europe as refugees? Another problem remains to be solved. Solutions to all of this in 1995 or 1996 seem doubtful.

It is time to close this letter before something horrible happens while we are still pondering. My best regards to all my classmates. I would be glad to exchange views.

Editor: In a phone conversation with Lansing after receiving this, he suggested that we should be aware that the year 1997 will be a very significant one, world-wide. Elections in Britain; elections in Russia; EC developments; Chinese take-over of Hongkong; all coming at the time when the US may have a new, relatively inexperienced administration in power. Something to plan a seminar around at our 65th?



Class dinner '95 reunion at the Nassau Club - Barbara Hewson, Bob Clifford, Rita and Dave Ludlum.

THOMAS CREIGH, JR. Entrepreneur

Editor: Bob Clifford put us on to Tom Creigh (pronounced Cree) at the recent mini-reunion at the Tides Inn when we were looking for candidates for this Summer Newsletter. Tom agreed to try to produce something when he returned to Nebraska. Several weeks later we received the following letter: "Dear Bob, There are so many things to get done in the next few months, that I just can't write the story of my post college career as you asked. Bob Clifford suggests that maybe if I sent you a couple of articles about it, you might want to cut and paste parts that you thought of interest...". Well, that's what we've done, trying not to omit anything of interest and importance in the story of a very full and productive life.

Tom hitched his life to a star early on, stuck with it, emulated his mentor, and became a star in his own right. The following is excerpted from a 1978 article in the Omaha, NE World-Herald on the occasion of Tom's retirement as CEO of the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company.

It all started in 1936, when a man named Louis E. Fischer came out of retirement to sink "everything he owned - and all he could borrow - into a scruffy little gas company with fewer than 5000 customers and no transmission line." Well, that scruffy little company by 1978 had grown to 1600 employees, 15,000 miles of pipeline, 180,000 retail customers

in portions of four states, almost \$300 million in assets, and annual revenues of almost \$200 million, and one of only a handful of Nebraska firms listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

As a former president of Kansas Power and Light, and executive vice-president of its parent, North American Light & Power before he retired, Louis Fischer knew the energy business in the mid-west. When Kansas City Power lost its lease of a Standard Oil Co. pipeline, which it had been using to distribute gas to a few rural customers, it was faced with building a new transmission line to serve these customers or abandon them and face a series of lawsuits from those who had put gas appliances into their homes relying on that company for their gas. A real dilemma. Nobody built transmission lines to serve just a rural area and they were not about to do it. Mr. Fischer agreed to take the mess off their hands and they practically gave him everything there was.

He went to work in earnest. He used all his personal capital, borrowed all that he could, even hocked his life insurance - and he previously, in 1933 before he retired from North American, had had the vision to hire Tom Creigh, right out of college, to help him. And Tom went with him all the way.



Frank Dean, Ernie Chamberlin, Tom Creigh (seated) and others enjoying a lovely day on the Rappanock, Tides Inn