

"WE ARE IN BEAR TERRITORY"  
A Response to the Banking Fiasco of 2007-09

*"Bears attack other bears, other animals, and people due to survival defense and predatory aggression. Bears are very protective of their "space." A mother bear will fiercely defend her cubs, if she feels they are threatened."*

## **INTRODUCTION-**

I think we should be as mad as hell at the economic mess for it not only effects outdoor businessmen but business people from all walks of life.

It is clear that the bailout, TARP, or economic stimulus is not working and I can tell you why. You don't reward bad behavior but instead you punish bad behavior. All of the bankers and "investment professionals" who received government money will spend it recklessly as they did before. They should be in jail.

In a broader context, I think we should look at how our leaders have eliminated any concept of the "rugged individualism" that our country was founded on.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness....."

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our Sacred Honor<sup>1</sup>."

Historian Max Lerner explains<sup>2</sup>, "This was the image of a classless American Society. No man was to get a better or worse start than another, each was to have the same chance to show the stuff he was made of-to begin and end as a man; none was to bare his head or bend his knee to another by reason of birth, rank, or vested power; each was to be judged by what he could do. In the phrase that Thomas Jefferson picked up and adapted from an English rebel," the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God." This is what he meant in the Declaration of Independence, by this assertion that "all men are created equal."

And so, each of us has the right to succeed or to fail- relying chiefly on our ingenuity, tenacity, and our God-given skills. Accepting this responsibility strengthens you; rejecting it weakens you.

Over the years, we've seen an erosion of America's rights and responsibilities. On the international scene, the United States has all but given up its Superpower status primarily due to the lack of vision and knowledge of its leaders in conducting foreign affairs, according to Paul Starobin.<sup>3</sup> The result of this vacuum of world leadership, as

Dr. Starobin notes elsewhere, “social and economic contracts break apart, and chaos will reign<sup>4</sup>.”

On the national scene, individual rights and responsibilities have been diminished. The threat of terrorism and the rise of technology have allowed the federal government to spy on its citizens; organized labor, special interest groups, corporations, & the wealthy heavily influence local, state, and national politics. Regrettably, the average American is ill-equipped to discuss the issues of the day; either he is too preoccupied or bored to exercise his right to express ideas freely and openly. And, instead of accepting their rights and responsibilities to raise healthy families, adults choose to indulge themselves in mindless entertainment and other forms of pleasure. Hedonism is in; modesty and discipline are out.

This all plays into the hands of multi-national corporations, spanning countries and cultures, having no boundaries or rules. The relentless pursuit of cheap labor, cheap materials, and the production of cheap products feed a gluttonous consumer appetite. Crass commercialism and materialism replaces culture, traditions, and individuality. As Dr. Keegan points out in Global Marketing Management, “In many ways, consumers around the world are becoming more alike. Almost everywhere in the world, one is never far from a McDonalds, Coca Cola, and MTV. Several market segments, like the very wealthy, teenagers, and technocrats, even transcend national borders<sup>5</sup>.”

The consequences of this can be disastrous. As Dr. Lauren Langman states, “ a carnival culture of the grotesque has emerged in this global age.” Langman illustrates this through an examination of “rituals of cultural consumption of sporting events, and extreme forms of bodily adornment: tattoos, piercing”. According to Dr. Langman, “The spread of this ludic culture, through the mass media, has led to a waning of critical reason<sup>6</sup>.” Separately, Dr. Lee argues that globalism, “ a universal, mass-mediated, consumer culture,” has created an identity crisis within the art world<sup>7</sup>.

Under the circumstances, it is no surprise that the CEOs of transnational corporations “break the law,” because there are no effective laws<sup>8</sup>. Today’s global economic system is “managed” by a loosely knit group of agencies and institutions having overlapping, ambiguous, and unclear responsibilities. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization etc, have been unable to keep up with the demands of today’s international commerce.

But most profoundly, and this should scare us, is the ruination of world order. As the United States has neglected its responsibilities, Russia and China have re-emerged as global threats; third world countries have become more nationalistic and radical. Sixty years ago, the United Nations and about 20 regional and hemispheric organizations provided a strong framework for International Law. By 1980, the number of related agencies had grown to almost 400; and pandemonium has ensued<sup>9</sup>. Compounding this, celebrities and wealthy businessmen attempted to become “statesmen” flying hither and thither espousing their own version of international diplomacy.

**The world’ leaders need to set boundaries**, for the globe is not a big pot of stew- one can stir it up and dip the spoon in for a taste wherever and when ever you want. Boundaries imply rights and responsibilities; boundaries give substance to world order and from that a framework of enforceable laws is built.

In view of the deepening economic crisis, and the panic that engulfs the world, the importance of boundaries becomes greater. We need to go back to the principle that every man (or woman) has the right and the responsibility to succeed or fail on their own. If every country faced up to that reality; then their leaders will make the hard decisions rather than beg for more “bailout” money.

The prevailing view that all of the economies of the world are inextricably intermeshed and dependent, and the entire global economic system will soon collapse, is not a healthy view. Each nation and group of nations should strive to be “mutually interdependent,” that is to say; each nation must fix its own problems internally, heal its local economy, and provide for the basics of life independently. Once this is assured, then they can help their neighbors. Simply put, each nation must be able to feed, house, clothe, and employ its citizens. Certainly some countries are in dire straits, but a sick doctor does not heal his patients. However, essential international shipments of raw materials & goods to meet basic needs must continue.

It is of paramount importance to point out that the world’s economic crisis occurred when banks, corporations, and irresponsible people borrowed and lent too much money, engaged in risky and speculative investments and were not held accountable. It is not about the average worker who pays his bills on time; pays his monthly mortgage regularly. Let’s put responsibility where responsibility is due!

**The United States has been a world power for over 75 years.** We have a moral imperative to act with the highest standard of responsibility. As Dr. Chris Brown writes, “the power of the United States brings with it great moral responsibility, ...the United States should act in the world as the agent of something other than simply U.S. national interests<sup>10</sup>.” He further states, “the characteristic American values- individualism, the rule of law, a free economy, representative and responsible government-apply universally and are universally desired, and that it would be morally irresponsible for the United States to fail to do what it can, consistent with its own interests, to promote these values in the world.”

Quoting from Emeric Vattel in 1758, Dr Brown argues “the sovereignty of nations rests on the principle that ‘A dwarf is as much a man as a giant is; a small republic is no less a sovereign state than the most powerful kingdom.’ The great powers of that day acted on the belief that they had special responsibilities for the smooth functioning of international society- that great power brought great responsibilities<sup>11</sup>.”

The basis or foundation for this was the “informed public’s desire that the International Community ought to act in response to particular disasters, man-made or otherwise, and is held frequently accountable for not doing so. It is noteworthy, that the Great Powers are held responsible to act in such circumstances. Simply by virtue of their capacity to act- they are commonly and understandably held to a higher standard of responsibility.”

From the Holy Alliance to the Concert of Europe, to the League of Nations, and finally to the United Nations, “Great Powers were dedicated to the principles of legitimacy, and opposing ‘extreme nationalism.’ The Great Powers then were committed to ends that transcended their national interests.”

As a final word on values and our moral responsibility, Dr Plesch<sup>12</sup> notes that the two main framers of the Atlantic Charter of 1941, Winston Churchill and President Franklin

Roosevelt, reaffirmed their faith in the dignity of each human being and in the principles of democracy. Shortly after, twenty-six nations declared their support of democracy by signing the "Declaration by United Nations," on New Year's Day 1942 at the White House.

As a result, the United States and other Great Powers who formed the United Nations, gave clear legal expression to the values of an "individual freedom, the equality of all races and cultures," national self-determination, and non-intervention<sup>13</sup>.

## CONCLUSION-

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth<sup>14</sup>".

Just as the signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged their lives in fighting against the tyranny of the British Crown, we should pledge ourselves to right wrongs and to demand justice for all those who have violated our trust.

## ENDNOTES-

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<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of Independence.

<sup>2</sup> Lerner, Max, "Class and Status in America," America as a Civilization, 1957, pg 467

<sup>3</sup> Starobin, Paul, "Beyond Hegemony", National Journal, Dec 2, 2006

<sup>4</sup> Starobin, Paul, "Turbulent World is a Jungle without a King," National Journal, Nov 13, 2008

<sup>5</sup> Keegan, Warren, "Global Customers," Global Marketing Management, 2002, pg. 143.

<sup>6</sup> Langman, Lauren, "Culture, Identity, and Hegemony; The Body in a Global Age," Current Sociology, May-June 2003, Vol. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Lee, Pamela, "Boundary Issues: The Art World Under the Sign of Globalism," Nov 2003, Vol. 42, pp. 164-167.

<sup>8</sup> Op cite, #4,

<sup>9</sup> A Diplomatic Analogy: International Functionaries And Their Privileges, Ddrrs. Linda & Marsha Frey, [Hhttp://www.diplomacy.edu/books/mdiplomacy\\_book/frey\\_frey/frey\\_frey.htm](http://www.diplomacy.edu/books/mdiplomacy_book/frey_frey/frey_frey.htm)H

<sup>10</sup> Brown, Chris, "Do Great Powers have Great Responsibilities? Great Powers and Moral Agency," Global Society, Jan 2004, Vol 18, pg 11.

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<sup>11</sup> Op cite, #10, pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Plesch, Dan, "How the United Nations Beat Hitler & Prepared the Peace," Global Society," Jan. 2008, Vol. 22, pg.140.

<sup>13</sup> Op cite #10, pg. 8.

<sup>14</sup> The Gettysburg Address.