

Plain Talk

We've Swung Too Far

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR

The free enterprise pendulum has swung too far, and it is time for the government to step in to provide some protection for domestic players.



For openers, the government should impose stringent rules to ensure that imported goods are subject to the same mandatory costs as domestically produced products (tariffs).

Have you ever wondered how something could be produced in the same fashion, with the same material, 10,000 miles on the other side of planet Earth, be shipped by boat across oceans, moved to a warehouse, trucked possibly to another warehouse, sent to distribution of some sort, having everyone up and down the circuit taking a percentage for handling, and still be sold cheaper than American manufacturing can usually buy the material to make it?

Whoever dreamed up, signed, and empowered these economic deals was either as dumb as a thru-bolt, intergalactically greedy, or hates America. Maybe all of the above!

There isn't one of you out there who owns and operates a legal enterprise that isn't subject to the following mandates:

- minimum wage;
- matching Social Security;
- state unemployment costs;
- federal unemployment costs;
- Workers' Compensation costs;
- business liability insurance costs;
- clean air compliance;
- garbage disposal;
- chemical and solvent disposal;
- waste water compliance;
- property tax;
- county income tax;
- head tax.

The list goes on and gets much greater depending on what you do and where you're doing it. Bottom line is simply this: It all translates into cost. Cost that the guys we're supposed to trade with have never even heard of, yet we have to pay. Free trade is a

farce. It's not a two-way street and we're being gutted.

Prior to big business and big government ramrodding and energizing globalization (yes, we've done this to ourselves via our captains of industry and government), most everyone had to play by the same rules and were subject to the same costs. Consequently, whether you were large or small you did have the opportunity to play the game and if you worked hard and smart you could win regardless of how large your competitor was.

We have now been excluded from the game. "The deck is stacked, the fix is in." You either jump in bed in Mexico or China. Either way if you're going to play at all you must do it with a foreign "alliance" or be excluded from the game. For those of you who still think we are living in the land of the free and home of the brave—you have no choice!

Mark Hoogterp, general manager of Dubois Marketing, Allendale, Mich., wrote an article in his January *Starternator News* called "Are You Supporting Your Competition?" I've written many similar articles over the years from a manufacturing perspective. Hoogterp's slant is different. I think he's mad because he's become a victim of globalization and the next phase of undermining America's economic structure and sovereignty.

Let me quote the third paragraph of his article and see what ticked him off: "Try as I might, I cannot think of a more blatant circumvention of the lines of distribution in the United States, and there are many. We have purchased 'components' from Unipoint for almost 20 years. We have distributed those components to you, our rebuilder customers. For that loyalty, we are rewarded with their brand new units being sold into our marketplace, directly bypassing our distribution segment (supplier and rebuilder)."

I think Hoogterp makes it pretty clear why he's mad. If you supported a business for two decades with millions of dollars in orders and then had that company go direct and cut you out of the deal, you'd be mad.

You and I were brought up with a different definition of business and eco-

nomics. One similar to a football game where the objective was to win but not to destroy your opponent. That way you could play another day. This variety of economics ensures that both teams grow and become better. End result being the recipients (customers) benefit from a higher level of play.

Sadly, the tragic game being played today is called adversarial economics. The objective is to eliminate the opponent, leaving only one player. It ought to be pretty obvious if you're paying attention.

The best of the worst is yet to come. Picture yourself in a prize fight with an incredible opponent and you've been legally bound not to defend yourself. Prepare to have your brains beat out, i.e., eliminated. That's what's happening on a domestic level. The big guys have relocated out of the U.S. or have become islands of offshore distribution. America's industrial infrastructure is being sacrificed for the benefit of a few. Think I'm crazy? What do we have to sell anyone any longer? You know as well as I do what's in the stores and warehouses now being shut down. Soon we won't even control our own food production.

I pray the day isn't far off when all of us quit taking our life, liberty, and happiness for granted. I don't suggest isolation, that policy never served us well when it was implemented before. Yet each of you know that you have to concern yourself with your own family and business first, before you try to win the hearts and minds of your neighbors. If we save the whole world yet lose our own country, what have we gained?

God help the small American businessman and heal us from our indifference. God bless America.

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