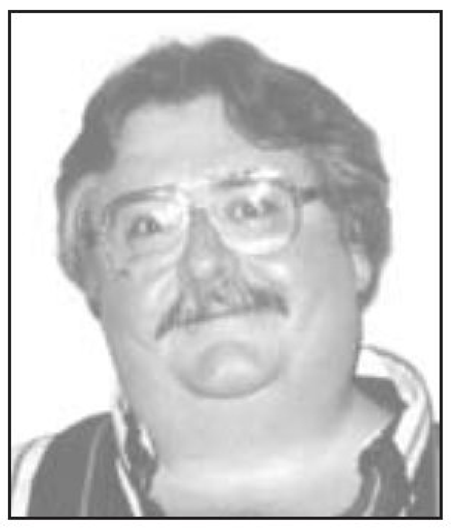
Plain Talk
Nine Days of Bad News

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR



I'm going to take you back to the week of July 24. The events I'm going to bring to your attention are easy to verify. Just get on the Net and go to CNN's Web site, check out the stories from July 24 to August 1, and hold on to your hat. You may find yourself in shock and awe and wonder at the same time if God is trying to tell us something and we're just not listening.

Sunday, July 24, CNN's Lou Dobbs had a piece on the unprecedented Chinese military build up. Why would China be spending such a large percentage of their GNP on their military if they didn't have intentions to use it in the near future? CNN also carried a quote from Chinese General Zhu Chenghu, stating that if China decided to invade Taiwan and the U.S. interfered, China would use nuclear weapons: "If the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition on to the target zone on China's territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons."

Keep in mind that China is our favored nation trading partner. We run somewhere in the neighborhood of a $70 billion monthly trade deficit with them. Our dollars pay for China's incredible present global expansion. Many suggest the very nuclear weapons they now aim and threaten us with are being built with our money and technology.

Now let me ask you a personal question: How eager would you be to do business with, send boat loads of cash to, subsidize and give your entire play book to a force who was pointing nuclear weapons at you? I think it's fair to say that most of you would not empower your rival, especially if your rival was committed to your destruction.

The economic beat goes on and America continues to get whooped. Monday, July 25, Hewlett Packard (HP) announced they are eliminating 25,000 American jobs.

Tuesday, July 26, Kodak announced they are eliminating 25,000 American jobs.

Wednesday, July 27, it was announced that Lucent Technologies was eliminating an additional 14,000 American jobs.

Thursday, July 28, not much went on.

Friday, July 29, Ford Motor Co. announced the elimination of 36,000 domestic white-collar jobs.

Saturday, July 30 is another slow news day.

Sunday, July 31, again on the Lou Dobbs Show, CNN's political analyst stated that Americans are going to have to get used to the idea of sharing both economic and military superpower status with China. (I'll bet you haven't heard that before on TV.)

Big-time corporate greed, government collusion and real short-term thinking has now super-accelerated the growth of a rival military and economic monster with no soul. Isn't that what Shelly's "Frankenstein" monster was about—a created entity with a criminal brain and no soul? The Chinese are still Communist aren't they? When did they become our pals?

Last but not least was Monday, August 1. The American labor movement fell apart. The key players bailed on the AFL-CIO, including the Teamsters. Most businessmen small and large (to include myself) have never been big fans of organized labor. I'm not asking you to send flowers or a card. Just view this breakup as a signpost. No factories, no shops, no organized labor. This could be similar to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Not bad for nine days!

The things I'm reporting are not my opinion. They are the facts. They are not good news, nor is there any good news that offsets them.

The nation is clearly being divided into two segments, very rich and very poor. The middle was occupied by industrial jobs and small business. That area is not growing. Rebuilding occupies a spot on the middle ground and it's shrinking, retreating, downsizing, outsourcing and going bust. Buying American in far too many cases is no longer an option. The choice is gone.

The world is not an equal opportunity employer. Without domestic regulation there can never be a level playing field. The primary component of a free market is the opportunity to engage in competition. Can any of you, small or large, compete with what's going on in China, Southeast Asia, India or Mexico? No. So by definition if we can't compete in our own market, is our market really free?

We will have to take a pro-active stand before the storm hits or we could end up looking like New Orleans. Everyone on the planet with a TV set was watching the apocalyptic storm move closer every day. All the signs were there, yet in many cases were ignored. If we continue to ignore the signs on our horizon, namely bad fiscal policy and ill-fated trade agreements, we will soon be facing Category 5 economic problems.

Are we all being warned and just not paying attention?

May God bless the small American businessman and awake the deluded American public.

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