

UMSU BANQUET SPEECH

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN....

STUDENTS

INVESTORS IN TECHNOLOGY STOCKS

I AM HONORED TO SPEAK TO YOU TONIGHT.

YOU MIGHT ASK - WHY DID I ACCEPT THIS INVITATION TO SPEAK....

I THOUGHT - THIS IS LIKELY THE ONLY TIME THAT A UNION IN MANITOBA WILL ASK ME TO SPEAK -

UNIONS REALLY ARE IMPORTANT IN OUR SOCIETY. THEY ARE NEVER COERCIVE AND ALWAYS DEFEND THE LITTLE GUY - LIKE THE AUTOWORKERS AND PROFESSORS...

I HAVE SUCH GOOD MEMORIES OF MY YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY THAT IT SEEMS ONLY RIGHT TO GIVE BACK.

THE PROBLEM MAY BE MY MEMORY – I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING BAD ANYMORE.

ON ONE OCCASION I WAS ASKED TO DRAW MY LIFELINE – ONE OF THOSE INTROSPECTION GROUPS THAT USED TO BE SO POPULAR. YOU WOULD ADMIT JUST ENOUGH TO GET THE OTHER PEOPLE GOING WITH REALLY INTERESTING STUFF.

ANYHOW – THE UNIVERSITY YEARS RATED THE HIGHEST POINT ON THAT LIFELINE EXERCISE – SO THE UNIVERSITY MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT PLACE TO BE – AND STILL IS.

A NUMBER OF OUR FACULTIES ARE ABSOLUTELY WORLD CLASS AND OUR VERY IMPORTANT ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS HAS WON IMPRESSIVE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION IN RECENT YEARS.

I AM SOMETIMES ASKED IF MY EDUCATION MADE A DIFFERENCE TO MY LIFE. HOW DO YOU ANSWER THAT QUESTION? WHICH BOOK, WHICH PROFESSOR, WHICH COURSE MAKES YOU A DIFFERENT PERSON?

MY MOTHER EARNED THREE UNIVERSITY DEGREES IN AMERICA AFTER ESCAPING FROM STALINIST RUSSIA THE HARD WAY – SWIMMING RIVERS AND WALKING THROUGH NORTHERN CHINA AT THE AGE OF 20. SHE GAVE ME SOME MEMORABLE ADVICE.

TAKE GOOD PROFESSORS –NOT COURSES....

AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY UNIVERSITY CAREER WAS THE RESEARCH TO DETERMINE AT WHOSE FEET I SHOULD SIT – THEN TURN MY CREATIVE ENERGIES INTO HOW TO GET INTO THAT CLASS.

MY FAVORITE STORY IS ABOUT PROF ROLAND C CHRISTENSON – THE FAMOUS BUSINESS POLICY PROFESSOR AT HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL. HE WAS ONE OF 6 PROFESSORS TEACHING THE SAME COURSE – AND EVERY STUDENT TRIED TO GET INTO HIS SECTION.

I DEVELOPED A PLAN. SINCE SECTIONS WERE ASSIGNED BY COMPUTER – I SIGNED UP FOR HIS SECTION AND THEN SIGNED UP FOR OBSCURE SINGLE SECTION COURSES THAT BLOCKED EVERY OTHER ALTERNATIVE. AFTER THE COMPUTER PLACED ME IN PROFESSOR CHRISTENSON’S SECTION, I TRANSFERRED OUT OF ALL OF THE OTHER COURSES INTO SOMETHING I REALLY WANTED TO TAKE.

THAT STRATEGY IS CLOSER TO REAL LIFE THAN MOST OF US WOULD CARE TO BELIEVE.

HOW DO STUDENTS GET THAT CRITICAL INTERVIEW AND HOW DO THE REST OF US GET IN FRONT OF A NEW CLIENT?

MY FIRST YEAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA WAS IN THE SCIENCES. I DID LOVE THE MENTAL CHALLENGE BUT A DAY UNDERGROUND IN THE CYCLOTRON CONVINCED ME TO SWITCH TO SOMETHING WITH SUNLIGHT, PEOPLE AND GIRLS.

THAT WAS THE BASIS OF MY ORIGINAL DECISION TO TAKE COMMERCE!

I DO HAVE A FOND MEMORY OF CHEMISTRY – BEYOND FLOATING EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS DOWN THE DRAIN.

COMPUTER EXAMS WERE NOVEL – AND THE ALGORITHMS NOT ALL THAT SOPHISTICATED. A COUPLE OF US MATH/PHYSIC MAJORS DECIDED TO FIGURE OUT THE MATHEMATICS BEHIND THE CHEMISTRY EXAMS AND PROCEEDED TO WRITE FUTURE TESTS IN REVERSE. THE THREE OF US WOULD RECEIVE GRADES CLUSTERED AROUND 117% WHILE THE REST OF THE CLASS WAS ON THE TRADITIONAL BELL CURVE.

MY VINTAGE IS ABOUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COMPUTER BUSINESS GAME. HARVARD CREATED TEAMS AND MADE THE RULES. IT WAS SORT OF OK BUT OUR TEAM FELT A BIT MANIPULATED AND FOUND THE RULES A BIT STUFFY.

WE DECIDED TO TEST A THEORY. THE THEORY WAS THAT THE COMPUTER GAME WAS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE ACTED IN A REASONABLY RATIONAL MANNER. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMEONE ENTERED DECISIONS THAT WERE NOT RATIONAL? WE DID TEST THAT THEORY - AND THE COMPUTER DID CRASH.

THEY EVENTUALLY FIGURED OUT WHERE THE PROBLEM WAS AND QUIETLY ASKED IF WE WOULD PLAY BY THE RULES SO THAT EVERYONE ELSE COULD HAVE THEIR FUN.

THOSE LESSONS STAY WITH YOU. HOW MANY BUSINESSES HAVE THRIVED OR BEEN DESTROYED BECAUSE ANOTHER COMPANY CHANGED THE RULES – ANOTHER TECHNOLOGY OBSOLETE WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

I DID MAKE ONE MISTAKE. I TOOK A COURSE FROM THE WORLD – FAMOUS PROFESSOR WHO HAD WRITTEN THE TEXTBOOK ON FINANCE USED BY STUDENTS ALL ACROSS NORTH AMERICA. HE WAS A GREAT WRITER OF TEXT BOOKS - NEED I SAY MORE.

HE COULD NOT REMEMBER A SINGLE STUDENT'S NAME - AND THIS WAS AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE CLASSES WERE ALL CASE STUDIES AND YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCUSSION WAS THE BASIS OF YOUR MARK. I WAS DOING VERY WELL AT THE TIME - AND AIMING FOR THE TOP OF THE CLASS.

IN THIS SITUATION MY MARK WOULD BE A RANDOM EVENT ON HIS BELL CURVE. TIME FOR A STRATEGY.

ARRANGE TO BE CALLED AWAY ON A BUSINESS TRIP TO CANADA THE DAY OF THE WRITTEN PART OF THE EXAM.

MEET THE PROFESSOR SEVERAL TIMES IN HIS OFFICE TO MAKE THE PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS TO WRITE THE EXAM – ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT – IN HIS OFFICE FOR SECURITY

DO NOT USE THE BLUE EXAM BOOK HE PROVIDED BUT WRITE THE EXAM ON 15 INCH YELLOW LEGAL PAPER

DO NOT USE THE SOLUTION FROM HIS TEXTBOOK BUT WRITE THE ALTERNATIVE THEORY.

THE EASY WAY OUT FOR THE PROFESSOR WAS TO GIVE ME A DISTINCTION AND I PRESERVED MY AVERAGE.

THAT WAS MARKETING 101 – DIFFERENTIATE THE PRODUCT.

THERE WAS ANOTHER SIDE TO MY UNIVERSITY YEARS.

I TOOK A GREAT VARIETY OF COURSES FROM MATHEMATICS TO FINE ARTS TO THEOLOGY. I TRAVELLED A GREAT DEAL AND MET THE GREATEST VARIETY OF PEOPLE THAT I COULD.

IT WAS TRULY A SERIES OF MIND-BLOWING YEARS.

I ALSO BECAME ENMESHED IN THE TEMPER OF THE TIMES – AND REMEMBER - THOSE WERE THE SIXTIES.

WE MARCHED AND DEMONSTRATED AND DEBATED AND WROTE EDITORIALS AND PAINTED GRAFFITI IN SUPPORT OF EVERY CAUSE KNOWN TO MAN - THE FEMALE AGENDA WAS NOT YET A BIG DEAL...

WE TRIED TO KEEP NUCLEAR MISSILES OUT OF CANADA, THE AMERICAN MILITARY OUT OF VIETNAM, DDT OUT OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND GET THE BLACK FOLKS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT.

I MARCHED WITH MARTIN LUTHER KING ON THE WAY TO MONTGOMERY, ATTENDED CONCERTS BY THE ICONS OF OUR TIME, TRIED TO KEEP BARRY GOLDWATER FROM GETTING ELECTED.... AND TRIED TO KEEP THE MARINES AT HOME.

IT WAS EXHILARATING BUT THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES.

BY THAT TIME MY CAREER CHOICE WAS NO LONGER BUSINESS BUT DIPLOMACY AND I HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY CANADA FOR A JOB IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE. I TOOK A ONE YEAR DEFERMENT TO EARN AN ADDITIONAL DEGREE IN AMERICA.

UNEXPECTEDLY, I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM CANADA THAT I NO LONGER QUALIFIED FOR THE POSITION. IT SEEMS THAT THE FBI HAD SENT A REPORT TO CANADA AND THAT KILLED MY APPOINTMENT.

PLAN B WAS THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL AND A BUSINESS CAREER.

BUT THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT STRUGGLE INSIDE...

ON THE ONE HAND - I LIVE A RESPECTABLE LIFE WITH CHURCH, FAMILY, BUSINESS - ON THE OTHER HAND I WOULD STILL LOVE TO BE THE RADICAL FIGHTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS BATTLE OF OUR TIME.

LEONA LOOKED OVER MY SHOULDER AS I PREPARED NOTES FOR THIS SPEECH AND SAID - THAT IS NOT REALLY THE SPEECH YOU WANT TO GIVE. I HAD ACTUALLY PREPARED A VERY DIFFERENT SPEECH WITH THE INTENTION OF DELIVERING IT WEARING THIS BLACK MASK - WITH AN APPROPRIATE MESSAGE. I WILL DISAPPOINT A FEW OF MY FRIENDS THAT EXPECTED THE OTHER SPEECH - BUT THAT REQUIRES A DIFFERENT VENUE WITH A DIFFERENT KIND OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

WHAT WOULD THE OTHER MESSAGE BE?

WE COULD LOOK AT THE GREED THAT PRODUCED THE NASDAQ BUBBLE OF THE LAST FEW YEARS. THAT BUBBLE IS NOW CONTRIBUTING TO A RECESSION WHERE THE MOST VULNERABLE PAY THROUGH THE LOSS OF JOBS AND SECURITY.

WE COULD TALK ABOUT GLOBALIZATION AND THE DEMAND FOR PROTECTION BY INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS – THE PRICE IS PAID BY THE ORDINARY FOLK OF PLACES LIKE INDONESIA WHERE THE SALARY DROPS FROM \$3 PER DAY TO \$1 PER DAY.

DID YOU KNOW THAT MICHAEL JORDAN RECEIVED MORE MONEY IN ENDORSEMENTS THAN ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT ALL NIKE SHOES WERE PAID – IN TOTAL. IF YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE – WOULD THE DEFENSE THAT “THIS IS THE WAY THE MARKET WORKS” CUT ANY ICE WITH YOU?

WE COULD GET CLOSER TO THE EDGE AND ASK IF THE CITIZENS OF ISRAEL WILL EVER UNDERSTAND THAT ONE INJUSTICE DOES NOT JUSTIFY A SECOND INJUSTICE.

WE COULD JOIN IN CONDEMNATION OF THE TALIBAN AS THEY DESTROY OUR GLOBAL HERITAGE – BUT CONVENIENTLY FORGET THAT AMERICAN FUNDS CREATED THEM – NOT TO MENTION THAT THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERERS OF AMERICA DESTROYED NOT ONLY EVERY PART OF PRE-HISPANIC CULTURE THEY COULD LAY THEIR HANDS ON – BUT ALSO 90% OF THE PEOPLE.

SOMEONE MIGHT REMIND US THAT THE FIRST NATIONS IN THE EASTERN HALF OF THE US FARED EVEN WORSE – AND WE HAVE NOT EVEN GOT TO SLAVERY AND THE MYRIAD FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION.

MOST PEOPLE DO NOT GET A CHANCE TO LIVE MOST OF THEIR FANTASIES - I HAVE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ACTUALLY LIVE MANY OF MINE.

MY EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS HAS BEEN EXHILARATING. I HAVE BEEN PART OF A GREAT FAMILY BUSINESS, A SUPER MANAGEMENT GROUP AND ENJOYED THE EXCHANGE WITH BUSINESS COLLEAGUES INSIDE MY INDUSTRY, OUR COMMUNITY AND AROUND THE WORLD.

MANITOBA HAS BEEN AN OUTSTANDING PLACE TO CREATE A COMPANY. ISOLATION MAKES YOU THINK LIKE THE UNDERDOG – AND THAT IS A GREAT WAY TO BUILD A BUSINESS. WITNESS THE HUBRIS OF ALL OF THE TECHNOLOGY STARS CURRENTLY FALLING OUT OF THE SKY.

THE BUSINESS CAREER HAS ALSO AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE MOST CHALLENGING BUSINESS AND INTELLECTUAL SITUATIONS. I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM AT DAVOS FOR THE PAST 9 YEARS AND COULD BE PART OF MANY OF THE DEBATES THAT SHAPE OUR WORLD - AND HOPEFULLY BE PART OF THE CRITIQUE THAT MAKES THE WORLD SOMEWHAT BETTER AND HUMANE.

I HAVE ALSO BEEN PRIVILEGED TO LIVE OUT THE OTHER PART OF MY FANTASY. LEONA HAS BEEN MY PARTNER IN MOST OF THESE VENTURES AND ADVENTURES. THE BUSINESS AND FAMILY CREATED THE FREEDOM IN BOTH TIME AND MONEY THAT ALLOWED ME TO SPEND POSSIBLY 40% OF THE LAST 34 YEARS IN ACTIVITIES OTHER THAN MY ENTERPRISE IN WINNIPEG. WE HAVE MIXED AND MINGLED WITH SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

I WALKED THE RURAL SOUTH WITH MILLARD FULLER YEARS BEFORE HE DREAMED OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY.

YEARS LATER LEONA AND I BUILT HOUSES WITH JIMMY AND ROSALYN CARTER.

TWO YEARS IN BANGLADESH AFTER THE CIVIL WAR WERE TOUGH BUT REWARDING. LEONA WORKED IN A JOINT VENTURE WITH MOTHER TERESA AND WE ADDED TWO LOVELY MEMBERS TO OUR FAMILY.

WE WERE PRIVILEGED TO BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME TO HELP START THE **CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK** RIGHT HERE IN WINNIPEG – NOW A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL FOOD SCENE.

WE BECAME INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN THE PLIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL REFUGEES. THIS INCLUDED GOVERNMENT POLICY ON REFUGEE ADMISSIONS AND VARIOUS INITIATIVES IN THE CAMPS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

IN 1982 I WAS INVITED TO BE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES FOR SOMALIA – AT THAT TIME THE SECOND LARGEST REFUGEE PROGRAM IN THE WORLD. MY COLLEAGUE IN THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT WAS KOFI ANNAN.

THAT WAS THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT OF MY LIFE – BUT OUR FAMILY CLAIM IT WAS THE BEST YEAR IN TERMS OF FAMILY LIFE. WHY? WHEN THINGS ARE REALLY TOUGH, LIMITED AND PRIMITIVE YOU FALL BACK ON THE FEW PEOPLE AROUND YOU - AND THAT IS A REWARDING EXPERIENCE.

THOSE OF US INVOLVED IN SOMALIA DO NOT TAKE MUCH SATISFACTION THAT WE PREDICTED THE DISASTROUS OUTCOME OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY IN THAT UNFORTUNATE COUNTRY.

DISASTERS ARE SELDOM A SURPRISE - THEY ARE TOO OFTEN A FAILURE TO MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS SOON ENOUGH....

MY EXPERIENCE IN ETHIOPIA IS BITTERSWEET. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY WITH INTELLIGENT PEOPLE.

MY ROLE WAS TO PLAN – 6 MONTH IN ADVANCE - FOR THE FAMINE YOU SAW ON TV IN 1984 – THE FAMINE THAT THE INSIDERS COULD PREDICT WITH UNCANNY ACCURACY BECAUSE IT WAS LARGELY A POLITICAL EVENT.

THE LAST 12 YEARS HAVE BEEN FOCUSED ON THE FORMER SOVIET UNION. THIS WAS MY HERITAGE AND WE HOPED TO BE PART OF A TRANSFORMATION.

WE WERE PART OF FOUR CONFERENCES ON BUSINESS AND ETHICS – BEFORE THE FALL OF COMMUNISM – THE RESULT IS A TRIBUTE TO OUR INEFFECTIVENESS.

WHEN COMMUNISM CAME TO AN END IN AUGUST OF 1991 OUR ENTIRE FAMILY WAS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THERE IS THE FAMOUS STORY OF THE CANADIAN PRESIDENT OF MACDONALDS ESCAPING DANGER BY FLYING FROM THE CAUCASUS – ABOUT 2,000 MILES FROM MOSCOW – TO THE SAFETY OF TURKEY.

OUR 17 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER WAS IN LITHUANIA – THE HOTBED OF REBELLION AT THE TIME.

OUR 19 YEAR OLD WAS ON A TRAIN FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW - LEONA AND I WERE IN FAR AWAY KAZAKHSTAN.

WE CAUGHT THE NEXT FLIGHT TO MOSCOW TO BE WITH SHANTI – BUT ALSO TO BE PART OF WHAT PROMISED TO BE A HISTORIC EVENT.

THE NIGHT COMMUNISM FELL - LEONA AND I WERE ACTUALLY INSIDE THE GROUNDS OF THE RUSSIAN WHITE HOUSE – YOU SAW YELTSIN ON THE TANK. THE WORLD WATCHED WHILE ORDINARY CITIZENS BUILT MORE AND MORE BARRICADES WHILE THE TANKS WAITED INDECISIVELY FOR ORDERS TO ATTACK. THE ORDERS NEVER CAME AND COMMUNISM ENDED WITH A WHIMPER.

OUR MAIN PROJECT IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIVATE CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY IN LITHUANIA THAT IS INTENDED TO CREATE A NEW GENERATION THAT WILL TAKE ON THE TASK OF BUILDING A HUMANE SOCIETY OUT OF THE ASHES OF COMMUNISM.

OVER 700 VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN PART OF THIS PROCESS AND IN EARLY MAY WE CELEBRATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF WHAT IS NOW AN ACCREDITED INSITUTION WITH A NEW CAMPUS.

I MISSED ONE VERY IMPORTANT STORY – MY EXPERIENCE ON THE CAMBODIAN BORDER IN 1980.

A SMALL GROUP OF PRIVATE AGENCIES AND IN SOME CASES INDIVIDUALS WAS INVOLVED IN A MOST REMARKABLE OPERATION.

A MILLION REFUGEES WERE TRAPPED IN A NARROW ZONE OF JUNGLE BETWEEN THE THAI AND VIETNAMESE ARMIES AND PREYED UPON BY ANY NUMBER OF WARLORDS INCLUDING THE INFAMOUS POL POT AND HIS KHMER ROUGE.

THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WERE IN A VERY DIFFICULT PREDICAMENT. THAILAND WOULD NOT PERMIT MORE REFUGEES TO ENTER SINCE THEY THEN GAINED INTERNATIONAL STATUS – MEANING THEY COULD NOT BE FORCIBLY RETURNED – BUT THAILAND ALSO KNEW THAT NOBODY IN THE REST OF THE WORLD WANTED AN EXTRA MILLION CAMBODIANS.

THE REFUGEES COULD HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES THROUGH VIETNAMESE LINES BUT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO GO BACK TO. IT WAS PLANTING SEASON BUT THERE WAS NO RICE SEED, NO TOOLS, NO ABILITY TO RECREATE VILLAGE LIFE.

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER – GIVE THEM THE SEED AND THE TOOLS. UNFORTUNATELY IN OUR CONVOLUTED WORLD OF DIPLOMACY LIFE IS NOT SO SIMPLE.

THE GOVERNMENT THAT CONTROLLED CAMBODIA WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED NATIONS – BECAUSE GOVERNMENTS LIKE CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND EVERYBODY ELSE WHO MATTERED STILL CONSIDERED THE KHMER ROUGE THE RIGHTFUL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA.

WHY?? BECAUSE TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD GIVE COMFORT TO THE CONQUERING VIETNAMESE AND THE RECENTLY HUMILIATED AMERICANS WERE NOT ABOUT TO BE THAT GENEROUS.

THE RESULT – THE UNITED NATIONS COULD NOT GIVE THE REFUGEES ANYTHING THAT COULD BE LABELLED DEVELOPMENT – ANYTHING THAT ENABLED THEM TO START THEIR LIFE AGAIN.

THEY RECEIVED RICE, WATER AND MEDICAL CARE IF THEY STAYED AT THE BORDER AND WERE A THORN IN THE EYE OF THE VIETNAMESE.

THE SOLUTION WAS TO DEVELOP A PARALLEL STRUCTURE THAT WAS NOT PART OF THE UN OR ANY GOVERNMENT AND THAT COULD IGNORE THIS POLITICAL SHAM. SEVERAL AGENCIES PUT A PROGRAM TOGETHER THAT IN 90 DAYS DELIVERED ENOUGH SEED AND SUPPLIES THROUGH THE JUNGLE TRAILS TO RESUPPLY THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

ON MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY THE UNITED NATIONS WOULD DELIVER FOOD – AS MUCH AS THEY COULD CARRY AWAY - TO 20,000 PEOPLE. ON TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND SATURDAY THE PRIVATE GROUP WOULD USE THE SAME INFRASTRUCTURE – BUT DIFFERENT UNIFORMS TO DELIVER RICE SEED AND SUPPLIES . THE SCENE WAS INCREDIBLE. ON ONE OCCASION WE ESTIMATED THERE WERE 15,000 OXCARTS IN ONE PATCH OF JUNGLE – CECIL B DEMILLE WOULD HAVE HAD A GREAT MOVIE SET.

THE VIETNAMESE PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THIS INFRINGEMENT OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY BUT PRIVATLEY PERMITTED THE REFUGEES TO PASS UNIMPEDED. THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL CONTACT SO THEY RESORTED TO RATHER PRIMITIVE METHODS OF COMMUNICATION.

PERIODICALLY A FEW SHELLS WOULD LAND IN THE CAMPS AND KILL AND MAIM SOME PEOPLE. WE INTERPRETED THIS TO MEAN THAT THEY WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING.

WE WOULD HOLD A MEETING, ANNOUNCE A CHANGE IN POLICY – AND IF NO SHELLS LANDED THE NEXT DAY WE HAD PRESUMABLY UNDERSTOOD THE MESSAGE.

YOU PROBABLY THINK I’M KIDDING – I AM NOT KIDDING.

ANOTHER PROBLEM DEVELOPED. THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ATTEMPTED TO GET AROUND THEIR POLITICAL STRAITJACKET BY WORKING DIRECTLY WITH VIETNAM TO DISTRIBUTE THESE SUPPLIES IN AN OFFICIAL MANNER.

THEY ACTUALLY HAD 2 DC – 10S, 1,000 TRUCKS AND SOME SHIPS. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT NO SEED WAS GETTING TO THE FARMERS AND OUR JUNGLE PROGRAM BECAME AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE TOP BRASS IN NEW YORK, GENEVA AND ROME. THE LOCAL UNITED NATIONS STAFF DEMONSTRATED THEIR SUPORT FOR OUR EFFORTS BY LEAKING DOCUMENTS OF THEIR INTERNAL DEBATE – WHICH SUPPORTED WHAT WE WERE DOING.

SINCE THEY HELD THE KEYS TO THE BORDER THEY WOULD DELIBERATELY SLOW OUR DISTRIBUTION. ONE OF MY TASKS WAS TO PERIODICALLY LEAK A FEW CHOICE INTERNAL DOCUMENTS TO THE WORLD PRESS AND BLOW THE BORDER OPEN AGAIN.

THIS DEBATE ACTUALLY EXTENDED ALL THE WAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON CAMBODIA HELD IN GENEVA IN MAY OF 1980.

THREE OF US DECIDED TO FLY TO GENEVA TO REPRESENT THE ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE – I HAD IN FACT WRITTEN A DOCUMENT ENTITLED “**ALTERNATIVE TO FAMINE**” – THAT WAS ONE OF THE ONLY PIECES OF INFORMATION THAT MANY WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS HAD READ IN ADVANCE.

OUR GROUP WAS JOINED BY JOAN BAEZ – ONE OF OUR FUND RAISERS . OUR LITTLE RAT PACK ACTUALLY PERSUADED THE CONFERENCE TO CHANGE ITS INTENDED POLICY TO PERMIT BOTH PROGRAMS TO OPERATE SIDE BY SIDE.

THERE IS MUCH, MUCH MORE TO THE CAMBODIAN STORY BUT YOU GET THE DRIFT.

WHEN THE DUST SETTLED AND MANY OF THE REFUGEES HAD SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED TO VILLAGE LIFE A REASSESSMENT TOOK PLACE. WITH THE BENEFIT OF HISTORY EVERYONE TOOK CREDIT FOR THE BORDER PROGRAM AND IF YOU READ THE OFFICIAL HISTORY YOU WOULD HARDLY REALIZE THAT WE WERE THERE.

THE ISSUE IS NOT THAT SOMEONE WAS RIGHT AND OTHERS WERE WRONG. THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND ALL DID THEIR BEST WITHIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WAR AND POLITICS PROVIDE. I DO GET CYNICAL WHEN I LOOK AT THE MOTIVATION OF GOVERNMENTS LIKE OUR OWN WHO CAN RECOGNIZE A POL POT – OR THE HEADQUARTERS OF ORGANIZATIONS WHEN POLITICS OBSCURE THE REALITY OF PEOPLE.

CAMBODIA IS A SPECIAL MEMORY BECAUSE THE ISSUES WERE SO HARSH AND LIFE SHAPING. I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF SUCH AN UNUSUAL EVENT – ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CAN FEEL THAT IT MADE A DIFFERENCE.

PART OF THE PROBLEM WITH AGE IS THAT YOU GRADUATE FROM THE MARCHES AND THE JUNGLE TO THE BOARDROOM AND THE BANQUETS.

I ALSO REALIZE THAT TOO LITTLE OF MY ENERGY HAS BEEN SPENT IN WINNIPEG AND I HAVE BECOME MORE INVOLVED WITH LOCAL AFFAIRS.

EDUCATION HAS BEEN OF SPECIAL INTEREST – SINCE THE GREATEST LEVERAGE IS TO SHAPE THE NEXT GENERATION.

OUR INDUSTRY WAS ABLE TO START A NEW GERMAN STYLE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR WOOD INDUSTRIES AT UBC.

I COULD PLAY A ROLE IN THE FOUNDING OF THE NEW MENNONITE UNIVERSITY HERE IN WINNIPEG AND HAVE HAD A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA.

A NUMBER OF LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE ALSO JOINED TO FORM THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF MANITOBA WITH THE EXPRESS GOAL OF MAKING MANITOBA A BETTER PLACE.

MY PERSONAL ROLE WITH THE COUNCIL HAS BEEN TO HELP DEVELOP THE JUSTIFICATION AND METHODOLOGY FOR GREATER IMMIGRATION INTO MANITOBA.

CANADA HAS AN OFFICIAL TARGET OF 1% OF ITS POPULATION IN TERMS OF ANNUAL IMMIGRATION. IF MANITOBA WOULD RECEIVE ITS FAIR SHARE WE WOULD WELCOME OVER 10,000 NEW RESIDENTS FROM OUTSIDE CANADA EACH YEAR.

THE REALITY IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN CLOSER TO 3,000. THE NEW PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM HAS HELPED BRING THAT NUMBER TO 4,500 IN THE PAST YEAR.

OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE A MORE INDEPENDENT IMMIGRATION PROGRAM FOR MANITOBA SOMEWHAT ALONG THE LINES OF THE QUEBEC PROGRAM WHERE WE CAN PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN SELECTING AND INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS. THE GOAL IS TO ACTUALLY REACH 10,000 IMMIGRANTS PER YEAR.

THE ARGUMENT IS THAT IF WE CAN PICK THEM – WE CAN ALSO RETAIN THEM. THERE ARE MANY IMMIGRANT FLOWS THAT HAVE A HISTORY OF SETTLING PERMANENTLY IN MANITOBA – AND WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THOSE CATEGORIES AND SOURCES.

THINK OF THE IMPACT ON INDUSTRY IF THERE IS EASY ACCESS TO CRITICAL SKILLS.

THINK OF THE IMPACT ON WINNIPEG IF SUDDENLY WE NEED AN EXTRA 2,000 NEW HOMES PER YEAR – PLUS GROWTH IN OTHER CENTERS.

WINKLER HAS BENEFITED FROM THE SUCCESSFUL PROVINCIAL PROGRAM AND IS GROWING AT A RATE 10 TIMES THAT OF WINNIPEG.

IN A COMPETITIVE WORLD AN ISOLATED CENTER LIKE WINNIPEG NEEDS A LARGER POPULATION. WE ALSO NEED PEOPLE TO KEEP OUR CITY DYNAMIC – TO CREATE DEMAND FOR NEW SERVICES.

THE PROPOSAL IS TO STOP TREATING IMMIGRATION LIKE A VERY SPECIALIZED RECRUITMENT SERVICE AND INVITE PEOPLE THAT I WOULD CLASSIFY AS “LIKELY TO SUCCEED”.

SOLID PEOPLE WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED STABILITY IN THEIR LIVES, A USEFUL AND TRANSFERABLE SKILL, A DEMONSTRATED RECORD OF WORK OR STUDY AND PREFERABLY SOME AFFILIATION TO A COMMUNITY OR FAMILY THAT IS ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN OUR PROVINCE.

THAT SEEMS RATHER OBVIOUS BUT THAT IS NOT THE BASIS OF CURRENT IMMIGRATION POLICY. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO GET INFORMED, ENTER THE DEBATE AND HOPEFULLY JOIN THE MAYOR, THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND MANY OTHER LEADERS AND CITIZENS ALREADY SUPPORTING THIS INITIATIVE.

THAT BRINGS ME BACK TO THE STUDENTS IN THE CROWD. THIS EVENING IS VERY MUCH ABOUT YOU – OR AT LEAST THOSE WHO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PICK THE CAREER THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU – BUT ALSO PICK THOSE PROFESSORS WHO INSPIRE YOU.

FEEL FREE TO PAINT OUTSIDE THE LINES ONCE IN A WHILE AND MAYBE CHANGE A BIT OF YOUR CORNER OF THE WORLD.

THANK YOU

ART DEFEHR

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