

From the Desk of Dr. Ellis Rivkin

November 11, 2008

Friends,

Even I am startled at the pace of events. After these many years of seeking to understand the dynamics of historical processes and change, witnessing the turn of events of the past months has me filled with awe.

The “Crash of 2008,” which we could call the “Crash of Nation-State Capitalism,” appears to be the precursor of a truly Global Age. I urge you to follow the developments of the G20 when they meet in Washington on November 15. Some are calling the meeting “Bretton Woods II.” Bretton Woods, N.H. was the place the victorious nations of World War II met to establish the world monetary system we have lived with these many years hence.

We might also recall this week is the 90th anniversary of end of World War I. The Europeans, in an effort to avert future tragedies, are moving quickly to sure up world financial markets. Now even China and India are parties to bringing about a Global Age. Not war, but a more secure world economic architecture is the goal of the November 15 meeting in Washington, D. C.

As a lead up to the meeting, Prime Minister Gordon Brown has presented these important perspectives in a speech on November 10:

LONDON (Reuters) - The international financial crisis has given world leaders a unique opportunity to create a truly global society, Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown will say in a keynote foreign policy speech on Monday.

In his annual speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, Brown -- who has spearheaded calls for the reform of international financial institutions -- will say Britain, the United States and Europe are key to forging a new world order.

"The alliance between Britain and the U.S. -- and more broadly between Europe and the U.S. -- can and must provide leadership, not in order to make the rules ourselves, but to

lead the global effort to build a stronger and more just international order," an excerpt from the speech says.

Brown and other leaders meet in Washington next weekend to discuss longer term solutions for dealing with economic issues following a series of coordinated moves on interest rates and to recapitalize banks in the wake of the financial crisis.

"Uniquely in this global age, it is now in our power to come together so that 2008 is remembered not just for the failure of a financial crash that engulfed the world but for the resilience and optimism with which we faced the storm, endured it and prevailed," Brown will say in his speech on Monday evening.

"...And if we learn from our experience of turning unity of purpose into unity of action, we can together seize this moment of change in our world to create a truly global society."

According to a summary of the speech released by his office, Brown will set out five great challenges the world faces.

These are: terrorism and extremism and the need to reassert faith in democracy; the global economy; climate change; conflict and mechanisms for rebuilding states after conflict; and meeting goals on tackling poverty and disease.

Brown will also identify five stages for tackling the economy, starting with recapitalizing banks so they can resume lending to families and businesses, and better international co-ordination of fiscal and monetary policy.

He also wants immediate action to stop the spread of the financial crisis to middle-income countries, with a new facility for the International Monetary Fund, and agreement on a global trade deal, as well as reform of the global financial system.

"My message is that we must be: internationalist not protectionist; interventionist not neutral; progressive not reactive; and forward looking not frozen by events. We can seize the moment and in doing so build a truly global society."

You may recall what I wrote thirty seven years ago in the pages of the *The Shaping of Jewish History* (1971):

“The rise and fall of economic systems is thus the core problem that has prevented mankind hitherto from living in concord. Capitalism is a unique economic form. It has, as has no other economic system, shown the capacity to create wealth and to cherish individuation...

But capitalism is liberating only so long as it develops. When this developmental drive is blocked, as it was by nation-state entrapment, it is driven to destroy all the freedoms it generated as it agonizingly destroys itself in totalitarian fascism and in ever more destructive wars for survival... Fortunately, a new stage of developing capitalism has emerged which in its drive for profits promises to spin off sustained economic growth which will make possible the obliteration of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, disease and war.” (p. 247-8)

The new stage of which I spoke then I called “Global Capitalism”. The current economic crisis may resolve itself into an ever freer form of global capitalism that will help developing peoples win ever greater economic security and prosperity. If this comes to pass, will we not have a more perfect future than the past? Is this not the Unity Principle at work?

Best wishes—

Ellis

Rivkin Society for Advanced of Knowledge
www.rivkinsociety.org