



Chamberlain’s Opportunity

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),
“The world had been divided into two parts that sought to annihilate each other because they desired the same thing, namely the liberations of the oppressed, the elimination of violence, and the establishment of permanent peace.” — Hermann Hesse from The Fairy Tales of Hermann Hesse.

The headline reads, “Chamberlain school board rejects honor song request for Native students.” This headline was taken from the May 15 issue of *Lakota Country Times*. The request was simple and appropriate enough to have an Honor Song sung in Lakota for this year’s graduates. I think that if Chamberlain had a healthy race relations environment that embraced cultural diversity as an asset rather than a source of conflict, we would not be having this discussion. But, we are having this discussion and unfortunately Chamberlain’s school board had indicted itself.

To quote in part the school board’s president, Rebecca Reimer: “... an honor song during graduation doesn’t seem necessary.” “Doesn’t seem necessary”? How necessary does it have to be?

And to add insult to injury school board member, Casey Hutmacher is quoted as saying, “I can’t see how it honors everybody when it’s not in our language, and when I say our language, I mean English.” What? I thought frontier thinking had begun its timely demise with the current discourse of reconciliation here in South Dakota. I was hoping we were beginning to get past all of this racist nonsense. I really think that most of us South Dakotans, Indian and non-Indian are able to see past our racist attitudes and racist decision making.

So, Chamberlain school board, what’s your problem? How does it benefit your school’s community and students by excluding Native people’s inherent right to express in celebration their children’s accomplishments — in ways that make sense to them and furthers their identity? What do you fear? Is it fear itself? Do you fear the Native community will rise up with riotous ambition and begin to act out violently if they are allowed to sing a song?

Most assuredly the young people and the Native community along with the non-native community members, who know better, will rise up better edu-



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cated and better equipped to tackle the challenges of a culturally diverse community and pull the community of Chamberlain out of its darkness and into the 21st century. Young people like senior Chris Rodriguez, who helped circulate the petition requesting that the honor song be included in the commencement exercise, are the real heroes of this ongoing struggle to be recognized and respected as human beings — human beings who have feelings and who look ahead with aspirations for the future like everyone else in the community.

I hope Chamberlain’s school board members are better than that. I hope that they can and will rise above this temporary setback and be clear about their responsibility to include all students in the school’s future commencement exercises and put this dark chapter behind them. The opportunity is there, waiting for Chamberlain to finally take advantage of it. And I hope a sincere apology for having wronged the Native and non-Native students and their parents will be forthcoming.

Ignorance is not an excuse to be irresponsible or to bully minorities. Racially or cultural centrlicity motivated exclusivity must be put in the past as soon as possible. It helps no one to push other people around (bully) just because they speak a different language or because you are afraid of their culture for your own made-up reasons. You shoot yourselves in the foot. Chamberlain school board members, you fail to appreciate the hard work your Native students put in to even reach graduation.

And what of the next generation? Is this what we want to teach them? Instead of solving a problem, the kind of short-sightedness demonstrated by what is supposed to be community leadership only creates more misunderstanding and conflict. Do we need more conflict? Are you, as school board members, there to further your own agenda or are you there as keepers of the public trust — a public trust that holds you accountable if you fail to keep it for everyone in the community.

Our cultures have had a long history of conflict, misrepresentations and sheer antagonism. When will we get enough of the fallout from this ongoing struggle to exist side by side? As Mr. Hesse has reminded us, we all want peace so why continue on with the war?

And now you know the rez of the story.
Doksha (later) ...

Global Corporations Exert Power

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Media Services

A Senate report criticizes Apple for shifting billions of dollars in profits into Irish affiliates where its tax rate is less than 2 percent, yet a growing chorus of politicians call for lower corporate taxes in order to make the U.S. more competitive.

The seeming contradiction is explained by the simple fact that global capital is gaining enormous bargaining power over nation states.

Global companies are not interested in raising living standards. Their only goal is to maximize returns to their investors. “We don’t have an obligation to solve America’s problems,” said an Apple executive last year. “Our only obligation is making the best product possible.” (He might have added “in order to make as much money as possible.”)

Such single-mindedness is abetted by a new wave of advanced software applications combined with enormous computing power, all available on the Internet in such a way as to enable companies to shift resources almost anywhere on earth at the speed of an electronic impulse.

Not only does money move immediately to wherever it can summon the highest return and be subject to the least tax, but jobs can be dispatched almost as quickly to wherever workers get the lowest wages for the most output.

Nations are ever more dependent on global capital, as “brick and mortar” investments in plant and equipment (requiring commitment to a particular geographic location) are replaced by intellectual capital and portfolio investments that are essentially rootless.

National dependence has increased as workers are displaced from assembly-line and routine service jobs (bank tellers, telephone operators, petrol station attendants); skilled jobs are replaced by software (brokers, accountants, insurance claims adjusters); and even higher-level professionals are threatened. (How long before doctors are replaced by diagnostic software and professors by online lectures?)

All this, in turn, is putting greater pressure on politicians to attract global capital, creating a fierce race to the bottom.

Effective tax rates on global companies and wealthy individuals are declining almost everywhere; regulations are being dismantled (not even the worst financial disaster since the 1930s has produced much by way of new financial rules); government subsidies to corporations are growing; and real wages are dropping. In the U.S. and other rich nations, the percentage of



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gross domestic product going to wages continues to decline while the percentage going to profits steadily increases. Almost all the economic gains in the U.S. since the Great Recession have gone to the wealthiest 1 percent, who own the lion’s share of financial assets, while the bottom 90 percent has become poorer.

Individual states have embarked on their own races to the bottom, seeking to lure investments and jobs — often from neighboring states — with lower taxes, higher subsidies, reduced regulation and lower real wages.

But these trends are not inevitable. One way for nations (as well as individual states) to regain some bargaining leverage over global capital would be to stop racing against each other and join together to set terms for access to their markets.

After all, global capital depends on consumers, and access to large consumer markets such as the United States and the European Union is essential if global capital is to earn a healthy return.

Why should Apple have access to U.S. consumers, for example, if Apple refuses to pay its fair share of taxes to finance the infrastructure and education that Americans need to improve their living standards? Americans could buy from one of Apple’s competitors instead.

Likewise, it makes no sense for states or provinces within any nation to compete against one other for jobs and investment; such races only further strengthen the hand of global capital and reduce the bargaining power of the nation. These contests don’t produce net new jobs or investment but only move the jobs and investments from one locale to another and should be prohibited by federal law.

Similarly, the EU could be a bargaining agent for its citizens if it were to condition access to its hugely valuable market on paying taxes in proportion to a global corporation’s EU earnings, as well as making investments (including research and development, and jobs) in similar proportion.

Any move toward enhancing the power of nations or groups of nations relative to global corporations will surely provoke fierce resistance. But this doesn’t make the goal less important; it just makes it difficult to achieve.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of “Beyond Outrage,” now available in paperback. He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

211 System Is A Sound Investment

From most every standpoint, it would make a great deal of sense for Yankton County to join in implementing a 211 program for the three-county area.

The 211 service, through which residents can access information about basic services that are available to them, is currently under consideration by the Yankton County Commission. During a meeting last week, it was noted that a service could be set up here to encompass Yankton, Bon Homme and Hutchinson at a cost of about 60 cents per resident annually. Thus, the cost for Yankton County would be \$13,462; for all three counties, the annual cost would be \$22,091.

Beyond the cost, there are numerous benefits to the service that make the program a great value for the area.

The 211 program would allow residents to dial that phone number to gain access to information such as child care, volunteer services, health care, employment and numerous other offerings. It can provide information and assistance with everything from flu shots and suicide prevention to evacuations and preventing scams targeting the elderly. According to the website 211.org, the service “makes the entire human services sector at every level of government work more efficiently.”

The 211 service can also reduce the pressure on the 911 service because many calls that are really non-emergency in nature could be routed to 211.

During last week’s county meeting, Yankton County Emergency Management Director Paul Scherschligt also pointed out the benefits the 211 service could provide in emergencies such as major storms. According to the *Press & Dakotan* story on last week’s meeting, 211 operators can receive information directly from county emergency operations center during emergency situations and ensure that residents have easier access to vital information. As Scherschligt noted, Sioux Falls officials said the service proved invaluable during the April ice storm that heavily damaged that city.

Testifying in favor of the 211 plan last week were Scherschligt, Yankton Mayor Nancy Wenande and Yankton Area United Way Executive Director Lauren Hansen.

Nationally, the United Way is one of the major sponsors of the program, which has seen tremendous growth in the last decade. According to the program’s website, the service answered more than 15.8 millions calls in 2012.

“By making these services easier to access, we believe that 211 encourages prevention and self-sufficiency for our citizens so they can be more productive,” Hansen told the commissioners. “We believe that is important.”

County commissioners were concerned with the costs of the program, particularly any hidden expenses that may come with implementing a 211 system. Assurances were given that such hidden costs would not be a problem with the program.

A concern was also expressed about whether Yankton County would be paying too much for the service. Commissioner Garry Moore noted: “Most of the support services that go along with this come out of this county. We’re the ones who are going to be providing the support for a lot of the basic human needs ... I’m not sure we should pay a larger portion. We should probably be looking at 30-40 cents and maybe the others should be paying 70 cents per citizen.”

However, most of the those services that “come out of this county” are state programs supported by state taxpayers, not just Yankton County. Therefore, all things being equal, Yankton County should pay its fair share on 211, just as it does to fund those services.

The 211 system could open up invaluable lines of communication and information for the residents of Bon Homme, Hutchinson and Yankton counties. It can also pay major dividends in emergency situations. Thus, it is an investment well worth pursuing.

kmh

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, May 29, the 149th day of 2013. There are 216 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlights in History: On May 29, 1913, the ballet “Le Sacre du printemps” (The Rite of Spring), with music by Igor Stravinsky and choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky, had its chaotic world premiere in Paris. The D.H. Lawrence novel “Sons and Lovers” was first published by Duckworth & Co. of London, albeit in an expurgated version.

On this date: In 1765, Patrick Henry denounced the Stamp Act before Virginia’s House of Burgesses.

In 1790, Rhode Island became the 13th original colony to ratify the United States Constitution.

In 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state of the union.

In 1912, the ballet “L’Après-midi d’un Faune” (The Afternoon of a Faun), with music by Claude Debussy, premiered in Paris with Vaslav Nijinsky dancing the title role.

In 1917, the 35th president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, was born in Brookline, Mass.

In 1932, World War I veterans began arriving in Washington to demand cash bonuses they weren’t scheduled to receive until 1945.

In 1943, Norman Rockwell’s portrait of “Rosie the Riveter” appeared on the cover of The Saturday Evening Post.

In 1953, Mount Everest was conquered as Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tensing Norgay of Nepal became the first climbers to reach the summit.

In 1961, a couple in Paynesville, W.Va., became the first recipients of food stamps under a pilot program created by President John F. Kennedy.

In 1973, Tom Bradley was elected the first black mayor of Los Angeles, defeating incumbent Sam Yorty.

In 1985, 39 people were killed at the European Cup Final in Brussels, Belgium, when rioting broke out and a wall separating British and Italian soccer fans collapsed.

In 1987, a jury in Los Angeles acquitted “Twilight Zone” movie director John Landis and four associates of involuntary manslaughter in the movie-set deaths of actor Vic Morrow and two child actors, 7-year-old Myca Dinh Le and 6-year-old Renee Shin-Yi Chen, who were killed by a falling helicopter.

FROM THE BIBLE

His name shall be called ... Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

A Baboon Nation?

Bill Kerr, Yankton

I guess everyone know that a group of cows or elephants is called a herd, and that a group of chickens a flock, a group of geese a gaggle, and a group of lions a pride, but did you know that a group of owls is called a parliament and a

group of baboons is called a congress? I kid you not! Is that appropriate, or not?

Before you laugh too hard — if you do laugh — remember that we voters as a national group elected them to office. Does that make us look like a nation of baboons?

P.S.: My thanks to Fernando Bit-sos for this information.

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