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## Imperial Success

The world has changed so much that now the U.S. Treasury secretary flies to Asia to beg China to reduce a massive trade surplus and to revalue its currency. Of course he comes back home with promises that the Chinese will soon show “flexibility” in their currency policies. In 2002 China’s trade surplus with the US was \$103 billion. With its abundance of cheap labor and currency value fixed to one tenth of the US dollar, China can undercut American manufacturers of everything from toys to furniture and clothes. In proportion the Chinese have a similar trade surplus with Poland.

When I ran for office in Poland in 1990 my vision for economic revival of the post-communist economy was very similar to the plan used by Chinese. In post-communist China there was no privatization, no overvalued currency to favor post-communists and international speculators or developed nations. Chinese did it their own way in agreement with their pragmatic and patriotic goals of economic growth. Since 1990 China’s economy has been growing at a minimum rate of 8% a year, which is almost 300%. There is no unemployment in China. When I talk to my friends in China they are busy and on the go. It is awesome to imagine 1.3 billion busy people growing at such a fast pace.

Lack of privatization has not stopped foreigners from making substantial investments in China. On the contrary, attracted by a huge potential market, foreign investors see China as a “must invest or die” opportunity. For example the Chinese buy about 2 million cell phones a month. The low value of the Chinese yuan is very attractive to investors as they see it as an opportunity to export their products from China to other markets in Asia and all over the world. There is no doubt that the economic plan of China, which is totally opposite to the Balcerowicz Plan adopted by post-communists in Poland, has been a huge success.

China is living proof that, contrary to what you read in the Polish press, a country can succeed even when the world economy is depressed. For me the greatest success of China is the full employment of its working force. For what good is it to have overvalued currency like in Poland if a few hundred million people are out of work?

But I think that the real reason that the Chinese are so successful with their economy is that they are a proud people with an imperial attitude. When their daughters and sons come to study in America they seem almost arrogant with their statements that everything is better in China. Well, they might be right when you compare some of our cities here to a place like Shanghai. While we live in fear after 9/11 and worry about the shrinking economy, the proud and nationalistic Chinese almost triple their output every 10 years.

In the meantime according to a recent report by the American Society of Civil Engineers the US infrastructure has been assessed at a level of D-plus. This report describes the

poor conditions of American roadways, bridges, drinking water and energy. The report blames the deteriorating infrastructure on a weak economy, limited federal programs, population growth (!) and the threat of terrorism, which diverts money for security.

But there is no doubt that Americans also have an imperial attitude as being the best in the world. This is why in time I see both countries on a collision course fighting over jobs and world markets. China still has a couple decades to go before that happens but the collision is inevitable. While we are raised in the Roman culture and each of us is an individual only for himself, Chinese like Jews are raised in a culture that favors the interest of the group over the interest of one person. Ants and bees use a similar approach with great success.

And now, according to many polls, the George Bush administration is sowing apocalyptic fear in America in order to conceal, disguise and to cover-up their own incompetence, and that takes away from the imperial greatness that has made America so great.

But I will get back to Poland, whose vitality and economic growth have been stunted by predatory economic policies, normally imposed on conquered nations. Does Poland still have a chance to break out of the losing streak and be successful like China? The answer is a cautious yes as the country has been raped by malicious privatization and converted into a colony ruled by ex-communist overlords. According to many economists two basic conditions must exist for Poland to start economic recovery: protection of individual rights and elimination of predatory market practices of any kind. These two conditions are free like air and sunshine and do not require any investment. But what is needed is for the Polish people to demonstrate their imperial attitude and their will to succeed with political change. New leaders need to be elected to make it happen as those that Poland has now are well known for their lies, treachery and sowing of fear. Once the basic conditions of growth exist, the vitality of the Poles will do the rest.

I know it will not be easy for many Poles, who are still in love with America to acknowledge and take notice of Chinese success and a real threat to their standard of living here. Wake up my countrymen, our world has already changed. Only proud people that have no fear of change are great.

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