

Project to deal with the water problem. That means a huge effort, over years, bringing together the most able scientists in this field, and providing them with all the means necessary. This time, it would not be a program to develop the atomic bomb in order to win the war, but a program to—once the violence is brought to an end—contribute to winning of peace.”

‘Our Philadelphia’?

To Kohnstamm, it is a crucial question, whether the ongoing European Convention, under the overall chairmanship of former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, will be capable of elaborating concrete proposals, needed to enable the European Union to face up to its present formidable challenges: doubling the number of its actual 15 Member States, and dealing adequately with the internal and external security issues of our present post-Cold War world.

In 1787, the American Founding Fathers, in Philadelphia, produced a Constitution that has formed the basis on which the then-loosely connected 13 states, could begin to build what has become the United States of America. However, Kohnstamm emphasized, there are huge differences between the European Convention and the American one in Philadelphia. The European Union has to deal with, in all probability, 10 new Member States joining at the same time. These nations have been separated from the actual Union Member States, under Nazi and Communist dictatorships, for about 60 years. They have different traditions, languages, and income levels!

There is a tendency, he continued, to underestimate the difficulties the Philadelphia Convention encountered. However, the 13 states had together fought and won their war against England, and had a whole continent waiting behind them, for the gradual creation of new states that would join them. Even so, the problem of slavery, for example, could not be settled.

Will the European Union Member States have the foresight and generosity needed to arrive at enlargement, and, even more so, to make a success of it? Because, without foresight and courage, there is no chance for a positive outcome of enlargement. Necessity may provide a helping hand, because a failed enlargement would deeply wound the Union, and might even involve its unravelling.

The most fundamental decision taken at Philadelphia was the abolishing of the veto, even for the ratification of its result. Will the 15 current Member States and the 10 or more newcomers realize that, wherever the unanimity rule reigns, no decisions that may be needed on the level of the Union, will ever be taken?

Max Kohnstamm insisted that the process that, in the 1950s, began with the Schuman Plan, has given Europe 50 years of unprecedented peace and prosperity. “Let us hope,” he said, “that our present governments will not let our Founding Fathers down, and will act with the wisdom and courage present circumstances require.”

‘Free Trade’ Farming Wipes Out Wheat Crop

by Marcia Merry Baker

The U.S. wheat crop for 2002 is now predicted to be the smallest in a quarter century; the Canadian crop will likewise be markedly down. The immediate reason is shown on the map: extreme and persistent drought extending throughout much of the North American grain belt. The area harvested this year for Winter wheat (the predominant wheat variety in U.S. latitudes) is estimated to be only 29.8 million acres (12.06 million hectares)—the same as in 1917! (The harvested Winter wheat area in recent years has been between 35 to over 40 million acres). Estimates now put the total U.S. wheat harvest this year at around 1.79 billion bushels (48.9 million metric tons), about the same as in 1974, and way down from the 64 million ton levels of recent yearly harvests.

However, the implications go far beyond merely a “bad year.” Because family farmers have been financially marginalized in recent years, they are strapped for cash, and face the threat of shutting down their operations. In terms of world trade in basic foodstuffs, the United States and Canada are a major source of world wheat supplies—now severely contracted. Australia’s wheat output next season is expected to drop. Argentina is in turmoil. Only Europe (principally France) expects a good harvest. Thus, any “North American” shortage problem automatically becomes a world problem in the era of “world markets.” World wheat stocks have been severely drawn down.

Thus, the terrible harvest of 2002 dramatizes the urgency to reject the tenets of the entire past 20-year era of “free trade,” namely, that nations should depend on “world markets” for their food security, and should not even be permitted, under World Trade Organization rules, the right to keep national food reserve stocks. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round of so-called agriculture reform (1986-94), the WTO (starting 1995), and regional pacts such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), all forbid attempts at national food self-sufficiency. The wheat situation alone—although there are other emergencies—makes the point that “markets” policies must be dumped.

Already, the speculation in wheat futures is exploding. On the Kansas City Board of Trade, on July 10, the most actively traded wheat futures contract hit \$3.475 a bushel, up 3.75¢ during the day; the same contract at the end of June, was at \$3.15. This is most dramatic, because July should be, in a typical year, the period of the *lowest futures prices* for

wheat, because most of the U.S. wheat crop is Winter wheat (planted in the Fall, and harvested in early Summer).

Extensive Crop Damage

In Kansas, the world's top wheat-growing state, the 2002 crop is estimated to be 268 million bushels (7.32 million metric tons), down 18% from 328 million bushels last year, according to Kansas State University agriculture economist William Tierney. This is the third straight year for drought in northwestern Kansas—the major wheat region of the state. Huge areas of seeded wheat were abandoned in Kansas, Colorado, and the other regions of extreme drought shown on the map. Many wheat fields were never sown last Fall, because of arid conditions.

The Canadian Wheat Board released a briefing on June 12, saying that significant amounts of their crop would be not worth harvesting for human use. Western Canada could potentially harvest 19.7 million metric tons of wheat, down from the five-year average of 23.3 million tons, which itself has been declining.

A series of weather extremes has wreaked havoc on the crop. Western Canada began its third year of drought in 2002. There was markedly little snow over the Winter, and last Fall

saw less than half the normal rainfall. Then Spring was very cool, with snowstorms as late as June. Seeding was delayed, and crop development retarded.

Even before now, Canadian wheat growers have been selling down their stockpiles, for cash flow, after two years of drought. *Statistics Canada* reported in May, that as of the end of 2001, farmer wheat stockpiles were at their lowest level since 1989. On June 12, Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert was in the Canadian capital, Ottawa, to plead for more federal farm aid to Canadian farmers. Overall, Canadian farm crop receipts fell to an eight-year low over the first half of 2002.

On July 11, a letter requesting emergency assistance was sent by 12 U.S. farm organizations to Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. The letter stressed the scope of the crisis, making the policy point that “even the new farm bill and its more stable level of funding is incapable of predicting and adequately dealing with natural disasters in advance.” The letter appealed, “We urge the administration to work with Congress in funding an emergency program to reduce the tragic weather- and disease-caused economic impacts being experienced by farmers, ranchers, and their communities throughout much of rural America.”

