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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 3, 1997

Mr. President: THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11-4-97

Erskine wanted you to see this.

Phil Caplan

ED
I think he's right
on this and I think we
shouldn't have any more of
Summit to look at this
JS

copied
Bowles

PHOTOCOPY
WJC HANDWRITING

Daniel Patrick Moynihan
New York

United States Senate
Washington, D. C.
October 27, 1997

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

11-4-97

CofR
POURS

'97 NOV 3 AM9:19

Dear Erskine:

You may recall that at the meeting on fast track last Wednesday the President asked me to touch on the provisions in the Senate bill concerning the ILO. I don't know that I did our cause much good, for I quite failed to mention that the ILO is a tripartite organization in which business and labor participate independently of government. The American business community was much involved from the earliest years. As Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover arranged for the AF of L and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to begin sending representatives to the annual labor conference in Geneva.

At first the ILO was simply concerned with what we would call labor legislation. But in response to the 1930s depression, it turned to general economic policy, with proposals that much influenced the New Deal. Frances Perkins would so attest. Roosevelt was involved from the earliest days. Much of the energy has gone out of the organization, but it could be revived. And in the interest of trade policy it ought to be, or so I think. I tend to hold with Jagdish Bhagwati up at Columbia:

The efforts at using trade sanctions to eradicate child labor -- which the ILO estimates involved nearly 250 million children last year -- clearly illustrate the intellectual bankruptcy of quick fixes devised in a context like international trade, which is dominated by special interests. Linking liberalized international trade to a host of other goals is the lazy man's answer, unworthy of a great nation known for leadership on both trade and moral issues.

He has proposed a Rio-like summit to get the ILO going again, and quite agrees that inspection is the key.

Best,



The Honorable Erskine B. Bowles
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

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