

DO WE OPERATE IN FREE MARKETS??????

Larry Fink CEO of BlackRock in a recent interview for the New York Times stated that the coming trends in financial markets would be dictated by the activities and decisions made in Washington DC. He went on further to say "I believe politics, whether it's in China, Japan, France or the United States are going to be much more meaningful on the path and direction of the markets".

What an unnerving revelation – and how little it speaks to capitalism and free markets and its impact to trade and commerce in the so called free world. If this holds true Governments around the world will be further vilified to dictate the economic policies of a country and do the citizens not have a say in the matter????

Let's fast forward to the other side of the coin – the power of the consumer. In the tiny isles of the Caribbean namely Trinidad and Tobago, thirteen Jamaicans were detained by the Trinidadian immigration including a small child (there to be reunited with her family), locked in a jail cell, were verbally abused, had no legal recourse and were disgracefully shipped back to Jamaica. These citizens through their rights of democracy brought it to the attention of the Jamaican media and made the whole world aware of the how Jamaican visitors are treated upon entry into Trinidad.

Not only did it incense Jamaicans but the entire Caribbean and Diaspora, who for decades we have been trying to fine tune the free- movement arrangements in the context of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). Trinidad has been a great beneficiary of this alliance as Jamaica imports up to one third of what they manufacture. This action could derail the purposefulness of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, coupled with the fact that it followed so close after the wake of the Shanique Myrie ruling by the Caribbean Court of Justice. So a political impasse has been created and Trinidad has to be responsive, as it threatens the livelihood of manufacturers in Trinidad.

Now let's connect the dots with Larry Fink's observation of global trends that will impact global economies coupled with what has happened in the Caribbean. Whereby all over the world big businesses take their cues from the political directorate and strategize businesses accordingly, one cannot negate the power of the consumer – they dictate which businesses will survive and which will collapse. This is a lesson that seems to get side tracked along the wayside too often until a nation becomes in crisis. And a pattern that human nature has often fallen into for centuries and will continue to do so in the future, if not rectified.

Some solutions seem so straight forward but become a threat as it rocks the underlying status quo, but I will dare to offer a solution and simply quote – from the famous Chinese warrior Sun Tzu "Live in Harmony with the environment" In other words find solutions to create a win win situation for all to progress.