



Amsterdam, 2nd April 2018

Dear Faysal and May,

As you are aware it is spring! Easter has been too cold and wet. We pity the 700.000 tourists who planned a break-away holidays in the Netherlands at Easter. When you plan a visit to Holland you take a risk on foul weather. At Easter the believers celebrate the resurrection of Jesus three days after his death on the cross. We ordinary mortals have to wait for the day of judgement to make a chance to be resurrected after our death. The assertion of the resurrection is the principle axiom of the Christian religion. It extends ~~for~~ hope that there is life after death. However, "hope" is an irrational emotion. So often you are disappointed by sheer hoping. So far my thoughts on Easter.

Every year we like to attend the Mathias Passion of Bach-performance. Sublime music. Yesterday we had lunch in Noordwijk (40 km south west of Amsterdam) with the family of ^{our} ~~my~~ youngest son. We picked up 2 granddaughters (9 & 11 years) of ~~the~~ our son Nr 1. to relieve them because Elso Marie suffered from a high fever. They slept at our ^{today} and were picked up by Floris around 13.00 hours. Never a dull moment. To morrow I will continue this letter on the Computer

Van: A.D. Dirkzwager <djatirot@me.com>

Onderwerp: Love from Amsterdam

Datum: 5 april 2018 om 15:54:31 CEST

Aan: "El Khalil Faysal M." <faysal@sevenup.org>

Van: A.D. Dirkzwager <djatirot@me.com>

Datum: 3 april 2018 om 14:49:46 CEST

As promised yesterday in handwriting, dear Faysal and May, I will continue to share my thoughts on the computer.

Aside, before I became 55 year of age I was not able to typ, because so-far I did have the luxury of having a secretary at my disposal.

At the very beginning of my career I was told by my superiors that I was too expensive to sit behind a typewriter. In 1981 I switched from the Bank of America NT&SA to Lloyds Bank plc in that I was offered the job of manager Rotterdam branch.

As a matter of fact I did not consider Rotterdam to be a full fledged branch, but just a section of Amsterdam i.e. head office Lloyds Bank in the Netherlands.

It is mandatory to have an office in Rotterdam if you want to be involved in the Rotterdam business community. We acknowledged that there is a difference in mentality (and rivalry) between Amsterdam and Rotterdam, only 100 km from each other. To illustrate this difference: When you buy a new shirt in Rotterdam the sleeves are already rolled up in the shop.

The headcount of our Rotterdam-branch was a mere 15 employees and primarily our business was to facilitate the international trade i.e. crude oil, soybeans -and grain shipments.

We confirmed, with the blessing of HO London, USD 300 million p.a. on country exposure on Iran during its war with Iraq.

Head Office in London wished to be informed about the Rotterdam contribution to the bottomline. When London noticed that Rotterdam was far more profitable than Amsterdam (62 employees), the latter did allocate so much ridiculous costs to Rotterdam with the consequence that Rotterdam's operation was a non viable operation. Rotterdam had to absorb 1/3 of the cost of the Amsterdam foreign exchange section and 1/3 of the Amsterdam maintenance costs etc.

A restructuring of the Dutch organization took place. Rotterdam was closed and I got a job, for the first time, with the Dutch ING Bank. On the first day in the office I asked for the whereabouts of the secretary to avail off? 'Only board members do have secretaries' I got as an answer, 'and the computerscreen at the far end of my empty desk was at my disposal.' That was a shock. I had no other choice then to become well versed on the keyboard. Until so far the introduction

After a good night sleep we woke up to a new dawn. The weather has been improved since yesterday. We are in the Netherlands subjected to a sea climate and the weather is capricious and it determines the mood of the day.

Let me address the topics in your last mail. Firstly my medical bulletin: I'm getting better. I have reduced my 8 pills at breakfast to 5 pills . That is a reduction of 37,5 %. Coming Monday I have another appointment with the cardiologist and will attempt to negotiate a further reduction in swallowing pills. At my age it is not abnormal that your health derails caused by

one or another malfunctioning of a part of the body. Last Friday Vera and I attended a funeral service of a good friend of us, who switched his earthly life for a life in the memories of his friends. He died at the age of 78. The average age for males in the Netherlands is 81. Coming August I will be 78 years of age. Unconsciously my attention is drawn to the obituaries in the papers:

I get up each morning dust off my wits.

Pick up the paper and read the "orbits."

If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead.

So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed.

The job description of a manager is managing. The verb to manage implies changing. The world around us is not a static one. When you change for the worse you are the wrong man on the board. When you make excellent decisions, you will be praised as someone with vision. Time will tell. As I recall that you wished to get rid of all sort of petty and costly government rulings imposed on public companies, I can imagine that it is a sensible decision to make a public offer for the shares of the company.

Just having arrived at this stage in formulating my thoughts, what then? Believe it or not: A power cut of lasting five hours. The power cut didn't stop the progress of time.

Now it is the **4th April** and today I am the playmate of our three year old granddaughter. She is the boss. We have to stand to attention the whole day. Around six o'clock the father Reinoud (our nr 2 son) arrives for dinner. After dinner Father

and daughter are leaving for home and we are worn out.

Responding to the contents of your 2018 Harvard course I share with you the uncertain consequences of the **digital revolution**.

Will it be a threat or a blessing ? The banking industry is a precursor in automation. It closed branches and it has shed a vast amount of employees.

When I joined the bank all the devices, such as typewriters, adding machines, calculators etc., were mechanical. Gradually were the old devices replaced by computers. ATM's replaced all the employees at the bank's counters. To facilitate ordinary buying and selling transactions between citizens, banks in the EU did introduce the guaranteed Euro check up to a maximum of € 300,-. When you deposited a Euro to your bank, the latter has yet to credit your account. A Euro check was an instrument to instruct your bank to credit your account with the amount of the Euro check. I can recall a huge hall with rows of girls behind computers with piles euro checks on their desks. All day long these girls were busy crediting the accounts of the depositors. The girls have vanished by electronic banking. The Euro check is history. The bank customer has access straightly to his account into the bank's computer system, i.e. electronic banking.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/01/technology/retailer-stores-automation-amazon.html>

The outlook is worrisome for the mass of the weakly gifted middle class, when its jobs are being replaced by automation/robotization. In this scenario industries are at risk as

well because these rely for surviving on the purchasing power of the middle class. Que sera, sera. The future allows us not to see: Que sera, sera !

5th of april 2018.

The other worrisome aspect of the digital revolution is the application of algorithms to disclose our behaviour to Big Data I share with you two, in my opinion, very interesting TED talks.

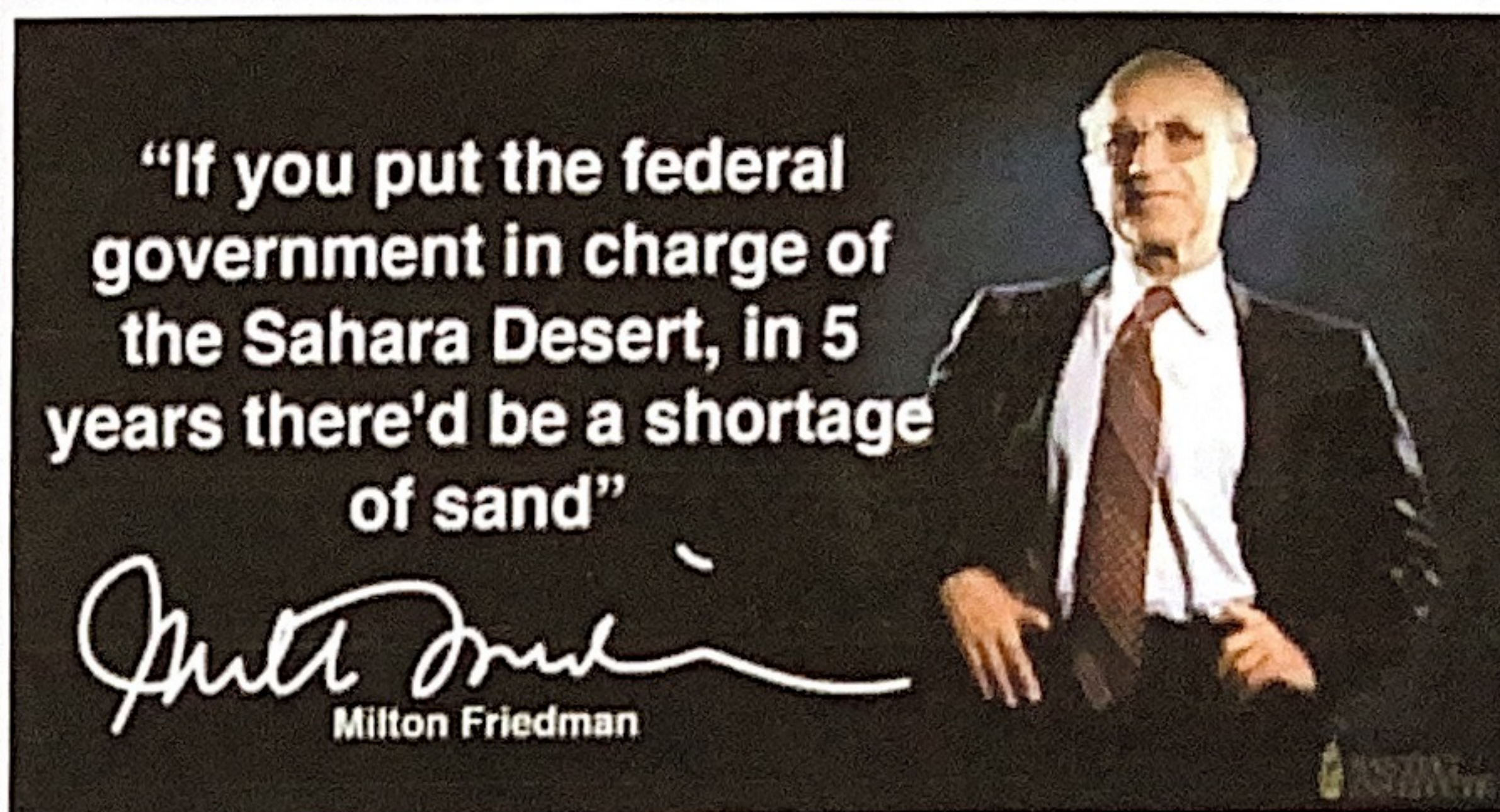
Ad 1) Kevin Slain speaks about the general ideas of algorithms.

1. https://www.ted.com/talks/kevin_slavin_how_algorithms_shape_our_world?referrer=playlist-the_influence_of_algorithms
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fawD7Nj74NA>

Ad 2) Is about financial trading with the speed of light. It flabbergasted my mind. It reminds me of the ballad of Goethe about the sorcerer's **apprentice** who in the absence of the sorcerer borrowed **the Magician's** wand and ill advisedly setting loose forces that he couldn't control. Floris, our eldest son invested all his savings to develop his own computer programs to engage in online trading. The status: the programs are being tried out. Again: Que sera, sera.

Permit me not to expand on the many different political points of view in the world creating a worldwide instability. Who to blame? Of course: 'Bugger the bankers and politicians !!'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSIUf2hD6Io>



Sport unites ! The Beirut-marathon underscores the efforts of May in bringing together people from different walks of life. Sport has also brought North Korea and South Korea closer to each other.

Oysters are hermaphrodites animals living in shells. They begin their lives as a male and provided the circumstances are agreeable they turn after four/five years into females. July and August is the mating season of oysters. The oyster needs other oysters for the fertilization. From April until September oysters are not for sale, because, metaphorically speaking, then they have not enough flesh on the bones.

Well, this will be the end of my written inner-dialogue with you for today, but not before we have expressed our wish to reciprocate your hospitality in the Netherlands.

Don't let us wait another 39 years to meet each other. Love to you both, Vera & Aadjje