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No. 1963 the fleet sheet's final word Fri., Oct. 10, 2008

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Mea culpa



As someone who often criticizes today's leaders for where they're taking us, I should admit my own bit of the blame for the current financial crisis. As a summer intern in 1986 at Trident Financial (a small investment bank in Raleigh, North Carolina), I failed to recognize that the collateralized mortgage obligations we were packaging would mushroom 20 years later into a global crisis. CMOs seemed innocent enough at the time. It was something else that turned me away from high finance. It was an international-finance professor at UNC-Chapel Hill who refused to admit that the Plaza Accord of Sept. 1985 was in effect a devaluation of the dollar. It's this kind of thinking - refusal to admit reality - that has brought us to where we are. The world actually tends to punish people who call a spade a spade. As I recall, that MBA professor gave me a C on my paper about the Plaza devaluation.

Erik Best