

# NEWS ANALYSIS

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## Croatia: hot salaries, cool penguins

Life is not easy in many of the countries of former Yugoslavia, even those whose devastation by war is now several years in the past. Croatia, for example, is a country of around 4.5 million people, of whom some 318 000 are officially unemployed, and 160 000 continue to work without pay for former state owned companies in order to preserve their social security benefits. The tobacco industry, thanks to selling an addictive product, can shrug off the hardest of times, however. In June the highest salary, according to government statistics, was paid to an executive of the independent Rovinj Tobacco Company, Croatia's largest tobacco manufacturer.

While the average salaried employee gets by on around 3000 kunas (approximately \$408) a month, the tobacco chief got 556 000 kunas (\$75 600) in June. An experienced doctor (the experience might include dealing with the devastating results of war) gets around 5500 kunas (\$750), and that's when the money actually comes through—five salary payments in seven months was par for the course by August 1999. A doctor's work typically involves night shifts and emergencies, which will include an increasing number of cases of tobacco induced disease. During the doctor's night shifts, one imagines, the tobacco executive sleeps peacefully, possibly between silk sheets.

But perhaps not all the tobacco boss's sleep is sound. He might, for example, be dreaming of the long way he still has to go to match the earnings of, say, Geoffrey C Bible, CEO of Philip Morris. According to the US financial news organisation Forbes, Bible's total earnings are more than 25 times that of the Croatian boss, at \$24 424 000 per annum, or more than two million dollars each month.

The Rovinj boss might also be worrying about how the local market will develop. Despite having tried to fight

off the entry of British American Tobacco (BAT) into the Croatian market (which resulted in his unusually large June salary, according to his company), the fight was ultimately lost. BAT now has a stake in the Zadar Tobacco Factory, the country's third largest tobacco manufacturer.

The government has recently announced plans for new tobacco control legislation, tightening up existing restrictions, including those on smoking in schools and public places, but stopping well short of an advertising ban. With BAT through the door, and Rovinj clearly keen to defend its patch, Croatia is likely to see a period of increased tobacco promotion. As if in anticipation, Rovinj tried its hand at some topical advertising during the summer, when Croatians were sweltering in some of Europe's highest temperatures and humidity. A brand called COOL, billed as "Refreshment from Rovinj", was promoted on billboards featuring some undeniably cool looking penguins, as well as on postcards distributed free with the Split daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija*, which has the third highest circulation in Croatia.

Ultimately, however, there is a new source of hope for protecting future generations of Croatians, and other Europeans, from tobacco. Like other countries in the region whose goal is to become full members of the European Union (EU), Croatia will eventually have to put in place EU style legislation, including a ban on almost all forms of tobacco promotion. Then the ads will come down, the penguins will melt away, and tobacco bosses will have less of a future to dream about.



Advertising for a brand called COOL, billed as "Refreshment from Rovinj", Croatia's largest tobacco manufacturers, and promoted at the height of the Croatian summer.

## The ugly Australian from Rothmans, in Germany . . .

Rothmans in Australia has never had much time for those quavering ninnies who are sensitive to politically correct concerns like racism and sexism.



Advertisement in Germany for Rothman's brand Winfield, showing an Australian Aborigine playing a didgeridoo with the text "Australia's answer to the peace pipe".

Since 1995, the pack for Rothmans brand *Freedom* has used a quote from Abraham Lincoln on emancipation: "Those who deny others freedom do not deserve it for themselves" (see *Tobacco Control* 1995;4:289–90). When the brand was launched in Australia, Rothmans ignored criticism from African-Americans and Australian Aborigines about the appropriation of a message about slavery to sell cigarettes, and the packaging still defiantly carries the message.

Rothmans' leading brand Winfield, now being sold throughout Europe, appears to have been infected with the same attitudes. The ad above, that ran in Germany, shows an Australian Aborigine playing the didgeridoo. The text ("Australia's answer to the peace pipe") proposes that the didgeridoo is some sort of smoking implement. Never mind that the didgeridoo is actually a ceremonial wind instrument made from a hollow branch and played using circular breathing. And who cares that Aborigines have the highest smoking rates in Australia with premature mortality rates worse than many of the world's most impoverished nations? Let's just use them to cause a bit of a chuckle and try and sell more cigarettes, thought Winfield's European creative team. Another Winfield ad in the same campaign shows a woman standing in a laundry with the slogan "Australian for domestic appliance". Do my cooking, iron my shirts, get yer gear off, get my smokes! Back to your cave, boys.

SIMON CHAPMAN  
Editor

## ...and in France

Meanwhile, Winfield's European forays have spread to France, with a summer advertising launch that included Winfield folding chairs appearing in typical summer holiday locations, such as cafés. In an apparent attempt to teach the French the new brand name, the word Winfield appeared with some of its letters missing. But maybe Rothmans made a rather elementary mistake, ignoring industry research findings and pitching the challenge too high for the abilities of its target audience? It may have forgotten work in the USA by Brown and Williamson cigarette advertisers Ted Bates, which employed 18 focus group interviews on the subject of smoking in 1975. A report prepared for Bates by market research firm Marketing and Research Counsellors Inc of New York commented on the rationalisation which many smokers practice to justify continued smoking when they know how dangerous it is. Smokers, said the report, "have to face the fact that they are illogical, irrational and stupid". Stupid? Win . . .d? Maybe French smokers just won't get it.

## France: packaging is kids stuff

Tobacco control advocates awaiting implementation of the EU tobacco control directive are wondering which ways the tobacco industry will most frequently try to cheat on the advertising ban. One method may be to use the cigarette pack more creatively. Advertisers have said that the pack can be a highly potent advertisement, so it would hardly be surprising if the creative geniuses of



Winfield folding chairs appearing in holiday locations in France, such as cafés. In an apparent attempt to teach the French the new brand name, the word Winfield appeared with some of its letters missing.

Europe's advertising and design agencies were hard at work in their studios experimenting with pack designs. If the pack is all that is left, then why not give it everything they have got? As they themselves might say, the pack alone will be left to "communicate the essential brand characteristics" to potential customers, especially "young adult smokers"—including the all important "starters", as children were called in those halcyon days when the advertisers thought only their colleagues would see their internal memos.

French health advocates recently got a taste of what may become more commonplace with the appearance of a special pack of *Légères*, a brand made by Gauloises, employing images not only young, but very far from adult. As can be seen on the next page, the pack featured a computer game control and the sort of innocent seductive young female figure who tends to appear in dungeons and castles during computer games, together with gothic looking joker chess pieces. The legend "Cyber Cosmic" was present on front and back, too, presumably to reassure young smokers that no wrinkly old adults (20s and above) are likely to be seen with them.

## South Africa: chopper axed

Good news from South Africa. The John Rolfe surf rescue helicopter, which aggressively promoted cigarettes around the pleasant coastal resorts of South Africa, has flown its last mission (see *Tobacco Control* 1998;7:9). Exploiting the fascination of helicopters, and the cast iron good guy image of seaside lifesaving, the chopper bearing the name of a popu-





Special pack design for Légères, a brand made by Gauloises, employing images not only young, but very far from adult. There is no mistaking the target audience for this brand.

lar local cigarette brand was often centre stage to crowds of children and adults at events in special John Rolfe “encampments”. As many as 40 company vehicles could be present, including the type of highly expensive, four wheel drive machines that every boy dreams about driving one day, as well as trailers, beer stalls, a landing pad vehicle for the helicopter, and other glossy attractions.

And of course there was the allure of the chopper itself, especially irresistible to children. The whole circus was one of the most provocative tobacco promotions ever seen in South Africa, a thorn deep in the side of the country’s efforts to protect public health. Now at last the campaigners can celebrate a particu-

larly tangible form of victory following the passing of the country’s landmark tobacco control legislation. While details were awaited of the schedule for implementing the law, which includes a tobacco advertising ban, the cigarette makers must have seen the writing on the wall. Legislation works. For the South African tobacco industry, it is now a case of quitting while they are behind.

### Denmark: tobacco premier hits bass note

How very inconvenient it must be for tobacco companies if they invest in arts

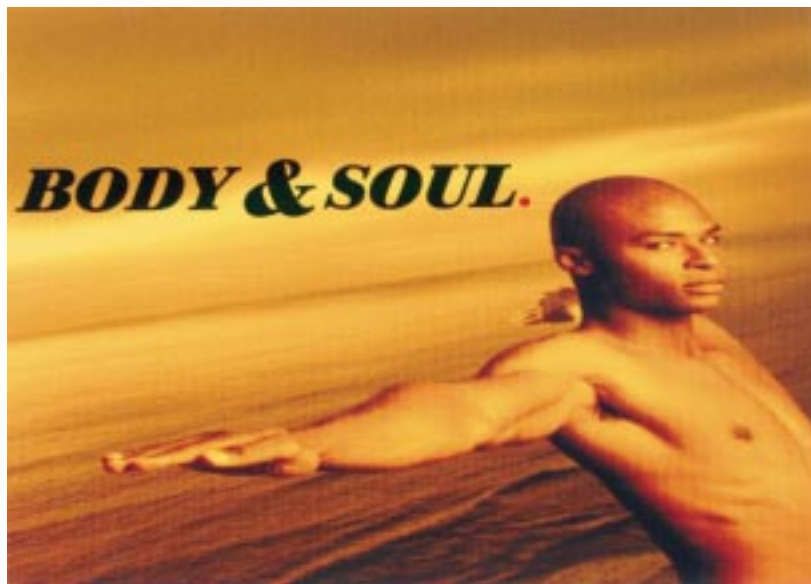
sponsorship to circumvent an advertising ban, only to find that ministers of culture, who should be grateful for the funds, implement the law as parliament intended.

This can be seen in Denmark which, despite valiant efforts by the health community, lingers second only to Germany at the bottom of the tobacco control league in northern Europe, in terms of public and political awareness about tobacco.

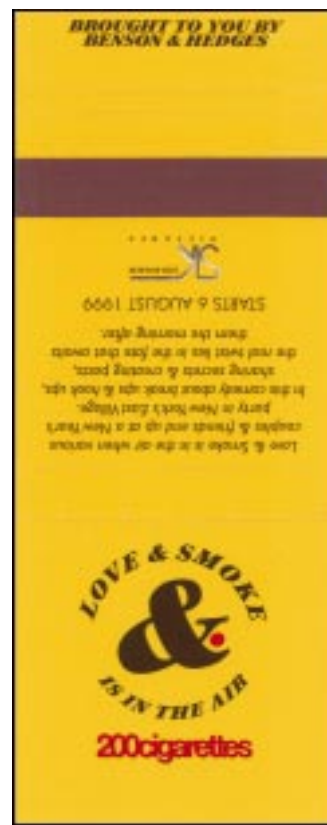
Early in 1999, Tobaksbladfet, a publication for employees of the Scandinavian Tobacco Company (STC), carried a photograph of the Danish prime minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, handing over the \$30 000 1998 Jazzpar jazz music prize to French jazz pianist Martial Solal. The prize, as the publication proudly reminds its readers, is exclusively sponsored by STC.

Commenting on the premier’s apparent contentment as he clutched a large scale version of STC’s leading Prince cigarette pack (with the Prince name replaced by ST), the journal said: “Judging from the remarkable joy of the arrangement, he clearly does not share the negative attitude to tobacco industry sponsorship of his minister of culture”.

The minister of culture, Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, had already implemented the EU’s directive on tobacco promotion that bans most forms of advertising and sponsorship of



South Africa: recent promotions include this Body & Soul postcard for BAT’s Benson & Hedges (B&H) brand, given away free at fashionable cafés, bars, cinemas, restaurants, and tobacco “points of sale”, sometimes handed unsolicited to customers with their change or purchases. The B&H Love & Smoke matches are promoting a movie of reportedly questionable quality, called 200 Cigarettes. B&H publicity also appeared on billboards for the movie.





Denmark's prime minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, clutching a large scale version of the Scandinavian Tobacco Company's leading Prince cigarette pack (with the Prince name replaced by ST). Photo credit: Jan Persson

tobacco products, which should be implemented by Danish legislation before the end of 2001. In April 1999, she stated: "The EU directive is a reasonable directive. Therefore we will start to implement the directive as the Ministry of Culture negotiates with its supported institutions and when the Ministry of Culture sponsors cultural projects and cultural institutions".

Denmark has more reasons than most countries to take tobacco control seriously, with 12 000 deaths a year from tobacco and one of the world's highest female lung cancer rates. Nevertheless, while the current 1000 cases per year are predicted to double within 10 years, the Danish Council on Smoking and Health has a budget of only \$2.5 million a year. A recent decision to offer nationwide breast screening to prevent just 150 of the current 1300 breast cancer deaths per year, however, will cost between \$7–15 million dollars.

One of the cultural institutions sponsored by STC is the Danish Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Appropriately, among its core repertoire is the modern ballet "Triumph of Death", with music by the rock group Savage Rose.

## The Smokey Planet guide to the Framework Convention

The International Framework Convention on Tobacco Control has already become a familiar phrase, and everyone knows it is the lynchpin of

the World Health Organization's long term strategy for tobacco control. But what exactly is it, and how is it likely to feature in the work of tobacco control advocates over the next few years? We offer here a basic guide to this most important development in international tobacco control, with thanks to the Advocacy Institute, USA, on whose work it is based.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, often abbreviated to FCTC, is an international treaty like the one on climate control, which is aimed at controlling tobacco use world wide because of the epidemic of disease and premature death which it causes. It is not only the first time such an approach has been used in tobacco control, but also the first international treaty on health—evidence of the top priority status WHO now gives to the tobacco problem. It will address such issues as tobacco advertising and promotion, agricultural diversification, smuggling, and taxation. It will be especially important in guiding developing countries, which are due to bear the worst of the projected 10 million premature deaths each year from smoking by the year 2025. Few developing countries have strong tobacco prevention programmes, and the FCTC will offer them the opportunity to strengthen tobacco control legislation, and to synchronise tobacco control policies with other countries.

Speaking in October 1998 only months after assuming office, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO's director general, said: "Tobacco control cannot succeed solely through the efforts of individual governments, national NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and media advocates. We need an international response to an international problem. I believe the response will be well encapsulated in the development of an international framework convention . . .". In May 1999, WHO's "parliament", the World Health Assembly (WHA), unanimously backed a resolution asking Dr Brundtland to move forward with the development of the FCTC.

The importance of the FCTC can be judged by that fact that it has already received that most reliable of all evaluations, the strong condemnation of the international tobacco industry. At the annual shareholders meeting of BAT, the company's chairman, Martin Broughton, attacked WHO, which, he said, "seems to have been hijacked by zealots in its desire to set itself up as some sort of super nanny". There is evidence that individual companies have already

started asking to meet governments to discuss their "views" about it.

So what exactly is a "framework convention"? In general, a convention is a type of legally binding treaty that establishes a system of international governance for an issue. Framework conventions determine the general guidelines and principles for governance. Protocols, which are separate, more specific agreements, are established to supplement and support the framework. This approach is designed to proceed incrementally. Thus the FCTC will be a legally binding international treaty to establish a general system of governance for global tobacco control. It will be developed by WHO's 191 member states, and serve as an instrument to complement and strengthen national tobacco control programmes. This is the first time that the member states of WHO have exercised their constitutional authority to develop such a convention.

The process of development of the FCTC is already in hand. An informal working group, open to all member states, began drafting the framework and possible protocols in October. It was established by the WHA, together with a formal intergovernmental negotiating body, also open to all member states, which will negotiate the proposed FCTC and related protocols. This body will meet after the WHA meeting in May 2000 and begin the formal negotiation phase.

The FCTC provides a general set of guidelines and principles for the member states. The related protocols will be separate, more specific, agreements that address transnational issues. Protocols addressing taxation, smuggling, and tobacco advertising may be considered. The framework/protocol process is designed to proceed slowly and incrementally. In the USA, for example, the framework and each protocol will need to be ratified individually by the senate, like any treaty. This sort of approach allows member states to support the general framework, but still have the ability to make decisions on individual protocols. The WHA is likely to adopt the FCTC and its related protocols formally at its meeting in May 2003.

To tobacco control advocates, the importance of the FCTC cannot be overstated. Support for the FCTC should be seen as an integral part of supporting national and international tobacco control. When adopted, the FCTC will raise the profile of tobacco control, and could result in increased financial resources both within countries and at the international level for tobacco control efforts. Advocates

should stay abreast of the latest developments surrounding the FCTC and look for any opportunities to support its efforts. They can contact WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative for more information, or visit its website at <http://www.who.int/toh/> They can begin lobbying their own governments to take a leading role in the development of the FCTC and related protocols, and to support parliamentary ratification of the resulting convention and protocols. They can also plug into NGOs coordinating international NGO support for the FCTC, whose activities are already becoming evident on tobacco control electronic information networks such as GLOBALink and SCARNet.

NGOs will play a vital part in ensuring the FCTC plan is ultimately successful. Their most important tasks, all interrelated roles, will be in the areas of political motivation, the flow of information and intelligence, lobbying, and, perhaps most important of all, counteracting what is sure to be a massive offensive of tobacco industry propaganda. They can help shape the detail of the FCTC and oil the wheels of diplomacy to ensure that it is embraced by governments. As governments respond to the concerns of their voters, the first job of the NGO community is to raise awareness of the FCTC and promote it up the domestic political agenda by generating news coverage, campaigning events, and political pressure.

NGOs will be among those who best understand the FCTC, and so will be essential in disseminating information about it. This could involve everything from providing a government official with evidence that tobacco advertising raises tobacco consumption, to alerting colleagues that wrecking amendments have been proposed by a national delegation sympathetic to, or innocently influenced by, the tobacco industry. Inside and around meetings about the FCTC, the NGO presence can influence the proceedings, either by making interventions when permitted, or by lobbying and applying pressure directly to delegates. Often the NGOs have the best collective view of where the delegations all stand and can be well placed to apply pressure where it is most effective. If a particular delegation is trying to sabotage a progressive measure, for example, the NGO community can often expose it in a way that diplomats are unwilling to do. In short, NGOs will be the standards inspectors and the conscience of the process, ensuring that the best terms are struck, and calling out when inappropriate compromises

are made, or when money is talking louder than health.

Dr Brundtland herself has said that the primary role of NGOs "is to establish networks, formulate expectations from member states (as well as from the WHO), provide technical expertise on issues, and monitor and expose abuses". For tobacco control advocates everywhere, there has never been a more important call to arms. In future editions of *Tobacco Control* we shall revisit this story as it unfolds, hoping to play our own part in maximising the unprecedented opportunity being offered to public health.

## Australia: industry flies the surrender flag

A recent commentary in *Tobacco Control* outlined the nature of the relation between universities and research institutions, and research funding from tobacco companies.<sup>1</sup> The article also addressed ways of countering this relationship. Revelations from the tobacco industry's internal documents from Australia show how effective pressure can be brought to bear by those who fund and participate in research by denying funding to organisations and individuals that take tainted tobacco dollars.

Australian tobacco companies established the Australian Tobacco Research Foundation in the 1970s and distributed grants through a scientific advisory committee. Its name was later given a public relations facelift and changed to the Smoking and Health Research Foundation. Its funding came from WD and HO Wills, Rothmans, and Philip Morris, each contributing around \$500 000 per year.<sup>2,3</sup> Between 1970 and 1994 the foundation disbursed over \$A9 million in grants.<sup>4</sup> Its mission was "to conduct research into the relationship in Australia between smoking and health and disease in its widest context. Support may be given to projects which aim to elucidate the mechanisms by which tobacco smoking is thought to be linked to human disease".<sup>3</sup>

In 1988, all members of the scientific advisory committee wrote a letter to the editor of the *Medical Journal of Australia* after suggestions that the foundation was supportive of the tobacco industry, or smoking, or both. They stated: "The members of the scientific advisory committee are unanimous in believing that smoking is an important causative factor in several major diseases . . . It is not our

task to advise the tobacco industry on any matters other than those that relate directly to the funding of research projects, or to discuss other matters that are related to industry and society. In particular, we do not, in any sense, act as spokesmen for the tobacco industry, nor do we have any financial relationships with the tobacco industry except to advise on the disbursement of research funds."<sup>2</sup>

None of the standard publicity material distributed by the Smoking and Health Research Foundation of Australia appears to make any mention of their source of funding; the name change from Australian Tobacco Research Foundation only contributes to obscuring an obvious connection.<sup>5</sup>

By the early 1990s the Australian Medical Association, the Thoracic Society of Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia, and some state cancer councils such as the New South Wales Cancer Council expressed their strong opposition to the acceptance of funds from tobacco industry sources.<sup>6</sup> The National Heart Foundation and some state cancer councils went further and adopted policies which prohibited recipients of tobacco funding receiving their grants.<sup>6</sup> A survey of 45 universities in 1991-92 found that only two had institution wide policies, however, and that seven out of 10 medical schools had faculty specific policies not to accept tobacco funds. Nevertheless, the authors concluded that "the nexus between the tobacco industry and centres of higher education remains strong".<sup>6</sup>

In 1993 a national current affairs television programme, *Sunday*, explored the relation between the tobacco industry and its funding of medical research. As a result a motion was brought by senator John Herron in the Australian parliament congratulating the programme makers for their "exposure of the fraudulent behaviour of the tobacco industry and the spurious activities of the Australian Tobacco Research Foundation". Professor Mike Rand of the scientific advisory committee wrote to another senator, Kerry Sibraa, expressing his profound disquiet about senator Herron's statement.<sup>4</sup> In 1994, shortly after Rand had left the foundation, it awarded him \$A281 900.<sup>7</sup>

In May 1996, the Australian Cancer Council sent a letter to all Australian universities advising that they had "adopted, in principle, the policy that it and its member bodies (the state cancer councils) would not provide research funds to institutions

that receive, or allow any of its departments or staff to receive, research funds from the tobacco industry, either its institution (the Tobacco Institute of Australia) or individuals”.

The letter stemmed from concerns over evidence that the tobacco industry had consistently repressed its own in-house research showing the harmful effects of tobacco on health and ignored independent research showing such effects. There was also concern that individuals and institutions receiving grants from the tobacco industry would be inhibited in speaking against it in public debate, despite the evidence.<sup>5</sup> The letter was also forwarded to all the members of the foundation in order for them to respond.

The policy was to be enforced progressively, recognising that research grants were usually for a period of three years. It was expected that by the 1998 round of grant applications, all institutions not abiding by the policy would be excluded from cancer society funding.

By the beginning of 1997 these actions were beginning to bite. Henry Goldberg from Philip Morris Australia outlined his concerns and possible alternative strategies in a memo to Marc Firestone of Philip Morris's New York headquarters: “It is quite clear that pressure has been exerted on both potential applicants and existing and potential members of the advisory committee. Two former members have been forced to resign by their employers (Professor McKenzie and Professor Vadas). The effect on the organisation is quite dramatic. Firstly there are few, if any, projects related to tobacco. When I

was supported by this body in 1971-73, only projects which in some way related to tobacco were considered—now these are more of an exception. Furthermore, as several universities have banned the acceptance of these funds, the overall standard of applications has dropped. Quite obviously, many applicants treat us as a last resort.”

The memo then outlines four alternative strategies in dealing with the future of the foundation:

- (1) Continue as is, the downside being that existing members of the advisory committee are getting fragile, and new recruits would be difficult, if not impossible, to find.
- (2) Close, phasing out funding over three years, the downside being it concedes the area is not suitable for tobacco company involvement.
- (3) Merge; fold the programme into some US or other effort. This was not seen to provide Philip Morris with any benefit, however.
- (4) Replace with specific targeted support. Goldberg lists some examples of where he has moved in that direction, mostly in Victoria, funding the Mental Health Research Institute, multiple sclerosis research, juvenile diabetes research, and education programmes for gifted children and disadvantaged communities.<sup>9</sup>

In May 1997, at a meeting in the USA of the scientific research and review committee of Philip Morris, it was agreed to follow the second strategy option, phasing the funding out over three years. The reasons for this stemmed from the terms of the recent

US settlement disbanding the Tobacco Institute and Council for Tobacco Research. The merger option was not seen to be viable. Based on the current situation both in Australia and the USA, the second option was seen to be most consistent with current trends and tactics both within and outside the industry.<sup>9</sup> The foundation died a quiet death, slipping unnoticed from the landscape of Australian medical and scientific research funding.

Breaking the connection between the tobacco industry and sponsored research in Australia took many years of constant pressure at a number of levels involving healthcare institutions, universities, the media, and debate in medical journals. This example highlights how, when the investment in research does not provide tobacco companies with the respectability and image of social responsibility they are trying to buy, they reassess their strategy.

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