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**The “Big Three” Become THE BIG ONE:
DaimlerChrysler, Ford, General Motors Forge
Agreement To Merge**

By TOM BROWN

In what is without doubt the largest business merger ever, the “Big Three” automakers agreed to form one gigantic company with operational headquarters relocated to Ireland.

While a new corporate name and chief executive officer have not yet been announced, Sergio di Mercantino spoke on behalf of the soon-to-be- formed company with the permission of all three Boards of Directors, which refused any additional comment.

“Obviously,” said di Mercantino, “we are moving into uncharted territory here. No three companies of such size and scope have ever been merged. The revenues of the new company will be astronomical, and all three Boards are determined to make this merger happen.”

Stock of all the three companies soared on worldwide stock markets at word of the merger. Said one Wall Street analyst: “There’s really no good reason to have more than one car company. I would hope some of the Asian companies can be acquired imminently.

“The efficiencies which can be derived from having one source of vehicles with one way of doing business means that wasteful competition can be minimized, if not removed entirely. This is a move that is both logical and inevitable, and it is the shape of mergers to come in many industries.

“I, personally,” said the market analyst, “would like to see the Fortune 500 subsumed into a new and more powerful Fortune 50 — with one giant company dominating each industry sector.”

Di Mercantino acknowledged that the decision to move the corporate headquarters of the new three-way company to Ireland could be controversial. However, he denied vigorously that the decision hinged only on tax incentives offered by the Irish government and the recent suspension of anti-trust regulations which would have made such a mega-merger impossible in the United States and other European countries. “If you spin the globe, and spot Ireland, it’s right in the middle of every major market. This is geo-strategic!”

While the White House has not issued any formal statement, this move does seem to fit the vigorous global free trade policies of the current U.S. government. However, many members of the United States House and Senate seemed furious about the prospect of GM and Ford moving offshore, especially if the companies pull more than their headquarters from the U.S.

“This is more than an economic decision, no matter how good this merger looks on a spreadsheet,” said a high legislative aide who would only speak off the record. “Let’s remember that the Big Three got their start in the United States. Have they no loyalty?”

“There are going to be consequences to this move. Bank on it! We are not going to sit back and have some jumbo company determine the future.”

There was an unconfirmed report that, on news of this merger, an extended teleconference was held with elected officials in 19 countries trying to find some legal way to stifle this proposed action. Ireland will see an enormous economic boon by having such capital and clout flowing through its island economy; however, no country (including the United States) dismayed by its probable economic loss seems to be able to block what the three companies plan to do.

Di Mercantino said that a new name, corporate structure, and management hierarchy would be announced over the summer. He declined to comment on rumors that massive layoffs would occur in light of the obvious overlaps in people and technology in the three companies.

“This is all about economic efficiencies and not about cutting costs,” Di Mercantino said. “What the Boards decided was that there were too many transportation problems of a similar nature which were not getting solved simply because no single automotive company had the free capital to address them.

“Now, at last,” di Mercantino said, “this new company can figure out how to make the best vehicles in the best way—and then market and service them worldwide with minimal competitive complications. As soon as we can streamline all policies, procedures, and personnel from a three-way overlap to a one-way juggernaut, we will!”

For the merger to work, numerous unions will have to give assent; however, di Mercantino indicated that top union officials have already backed a plan to have a fixed number of “core workers” from the original three companies given lifetime security and substantial additions to their individual pension funds. He also said current union chiefs would be counted as “core workers” under the plan.

“Everyone who matters and whose handshake is needed for this merger has been consulted and is with us. DaimlerChrysler, Ford, and GM will soon be history. An unbelievably-powerful new company will grow from the union of the three. This is going to happen. This is unstoppable!” he said. |<

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