

Lessons that can be drawn from the failed Advisory Board of the Sub-Secretariat of Ports and Waterways.(S.S.P. y V.N.)

Shortly after assuming, the new sub-secretary Mr. Jorge Metz invited 5 people from the "B.A-Port environment" to participate in a "Consultative Council" (CC) that he was forming.

At the first meeting of the CC on January 15, 2016, he explained the difficult situation in which he found the entity and that his intention was to hold meetings every 15 days, beginning with topics of the Port of Buenos Aires. But due to his difficult task in the beginning, he had to suspend the second meeting

twice, which only took place on March 3, 2016.

This time there was a long list of guests, with different knowledges and with the intention to collaborate, I sent them by email my ideas of "how to start". (The details are given elsewhere on this site).

But from the long list, only four of the first 5 guests, some officials of the "S.S.P.y V.N", and two new persons participated, Mr. R. Huici of the Ministry of Transportation and Mr. G. Mórtola, who introduced himself as the "Trustee"/Comptroller of the A.G.P., which he said to be a self-sufficient and autonomous entity within the Ministry of Transportation.

After the "presentations" of the participants, a messy "debate" followed.

Mr. Mórtola gave some global information that could already be read in the press. The most important theme had to do with the bidding documents for the public tender of 2 terminals, which should be prepared during 2016.

I delivered to Mr. Metz, Mr. Huici, Mr. Mortola and Mr. Patrick Campbell one of the first 5 attendants and member of the "Center of Navigation", the written text of the emails that I had sent to all the persons of the previous day.

And I also made a clear observation to the observation of Mr.Mortola about "the autarchy" of A.G.P.": According to an article of the Law of Port Activities, the S.S.P. and V.N is the "National Port Authority".

When "priorities" were discussed, one of the first "guests" observed that a huge loan had been taken for the construction of the "Tunel de Agua Negra", which would be US \$ 1,500 million.

(But this important issue was not seen as part of the work of the C.C., but was discussed later, by mail outside the "Advisory Council").

In the third and only real meeting of the C.C. on April 14, 2016, 3 new and important people attended of the maximum hierarchy of the Planning Secretariat. Mr. Germán Bussi, Secretary of Planning, and 2 Sub-secretaries of Planning participated Mrs. Carmen Polo and Emilio Alzaga.

It is very important to keep in mind that, in the organization chart of the Ministry of Transport, this Secretariat is shown as the agency that makes all the plans of the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr. Bussi began with a very long exposition, where he explained that his first personal objective is the

Plan R.E.R., which has to do with railways stations in the City of B.A., which was his task in the Government of the City of B.A.

Then in a badly organized way, the Modernization Plan of the Port of .B.A. (P.B.A.) was brought to the the attention. The convenience of bidding one or two terminals was the most important point.

3 of the first "guests clearly manifested that it should be a single container-terminal and a terminal fo cruise-vessels. (Later I sent several notes with the advantages of a single terminal).

At this meeting on April 14, Mr. Mortola reported that the decision of 2 terminals would respond to the

need to have enough competition, but many felt that this was assured by competition with the other ports that compete with the P.B.A., which range from Santos in Brazil to Barranqueras in the Chaco. Personally I added something else: A study should be made how the "Intra-port" competition for CARGA works, which is the MAIN CLIENT OF A TERMINAL.

ACCORDING TO UNCTAD STUDIES, IT IS NOT THE VESSEL AS MANY THINK, BUT THE "CARGO". (B.C.O.)

But the "B.C.O." can not choose the terminal he wants to use, it is "the "carrier" who makes the contract with the Terminal.

Also a warning was given that an excess of competition is worse than lack of competition, which can be verified seeing the results of the tender of 1994, when A.G.P.insisted on bidding 6 terminals instead of 3, as many advised. Finally, it was possible to convince the authorities, that, if the offer for T1 and T2 in unified form, would exceed the offer of T 1 and T 2 individually, T1 and T2 would be awarded together as a terminal.

That left 5 terminals in 1994, with the expected result that T5 went bankrupt within a year. The consequences are still being paid.

(I made several written notes to the guest list regarding the subject "DESIRED COMPETITION", that were never answered).

This shows that the verbal suggestions made by the "Guests" during this meeting did not receive any consideration.

Only on June 29 "minutes of meetings" were distributed by S.S.P. and V.N. of that "real" meeting.

This is a clear proof that there was a resistance from the officials outside the S.S.P. and V.N., to allow the intervention of the "guests of the CC" in the debates.