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The Belfry, Our Bellwether?

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Earlier this week, more than 200 of the top leaders in fund finance met at the first-ever FFA Global Leadership Summit. The two-day mini-conference, in a week where the PGA Tour and Saudi-backed LIV tour shockingly announced a merger, was fittingly held at one of the UK's historic golf venues – the Belfry. Rich in tradition from its four-time Ryder Cup host fame, the Belfry became the inaugural host for what many in fund finance hope will now become a new tradition.

For those who were able to experience it, I know – as a member of the U.S. Advisory Committee – the FFA is eager to get your feedback for future events. Feel free to send us a note to pass along.

For those who were unable to attend, the two days gave ample opportunity for many of the industry's veterans to connect on the most pressing topics of today: rising interest rates, regulatory capital issues, fundraising, the liquidity crunch and lender side supply issues, resulting growth of the NAV market, and the global macro economic environment and what it potentially holds for our industry over the next six months. After all, it seems like a couple of years had passed since the February Global Symposium in Miami. The landscape has shifted significantly and will undoubtedly have a few surprises (good or bad) left for us ahead. Yet, the industry and its participants during this time of extreme volatility have shown incredible resilience in the face of numerous headwinds. Up and to the right at significant speed may no longer be a given, but the pint remains half full as there are good reasons to remain cautiously optimistic.

Lord Mervyn King, the Governor of the Bank of England from 2003-2013, delivered one of the most eloquent talks I have ever heard. Drawing from his experience leading the UK's central bank through the GFC, he gave context for the latest economic crisis and recent bank failures. While economic crises cannot be wholly avoided, the regulatory response can be controlled and prescribed. Instead of employing ad hoc measures on an emergency basis, banks could have contingent liquidity established with central banks in advance of a crisis. Such planning could also potentially eliminate the need for deposit insurance and most certainly would avoid the need for political intervention.

Many thanks to the FFA and all the sponsors for an informative and relationship-rich couple of days with global friends and colleagues! It's a busy time in the UK, as we next look forward to seeing many of you at the seventh annual European Fund Finance Symposium on June 19th.