

## Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

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**Disclaimer: The following "Letters to the Editor" were sent to the respective publications on the dates indicated. Some were printed but many were not. The original articles that are being commented on may or may not be available on the internet and may require registration or subscription to access if they are. Some of the original articles are syndicated and therefore may have appeared in other publications also.**

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16 October 2005

The Editor, New York Times  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Jerry Nathanson alleges that the long-term cause of starvation of the kind now suffered in Niger is over-population (Letters, Oct. 16).

Let's see. Mr. Nathanson lives in Long Valley, NJ, whose population density (persons per square kilometer) is 149. His home state of New Jersey's population density is 372. His country's - the U.S.'s - population density is 31.

Niger's population density is 9.

15 October 2005

The Editor, New York Times  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Contrary to your opinion (Oct. 15), the Clean Water Act is no unambiguous boon to pollution abatement. Evidence shows that water quality likely began to improve decades before the Act was passed, and that this improvement was achieved through mechanisms that the Act discouraged.

Researchers Roger Meiners and Bruce Yandle found that "Before the passage of the CWA, parties could sue pollution sources when such pollution harmed property or public welfare. But the CWA deters such suits when it provides permits for

effluent discharges - essentially preempting cases even when such sources cause harm to individuals and the environment."\*

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14 October 2005

Editor, USA Today

To the Editor:

The tiresome struggle over whether or not intelligent design should be taught in K-12 schools (Letters, Oct. 14) reflects the incompatibility between government schooling and the First Amendment.

As long as Americans differ in their religious beliefs, choices of curricula will inevitably interfere with these beliefs. Choose any curriculum you like: it will offend either secularist parents who reject explanations based on faith or religious parents who regard secularism as offensive to their faith.

Only by separating school and state will all people be able to choose curricula that do not offend their faith or lack of faith. Only then will evangelical protestants and radical Darwinians become more tolerant of each other.

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13 October 2005

Editor, The Washington Times

To the Editor:

Donald Lambro understandably worries that remarks by a single Federal Reserve official can cause panic in markets ("Engine of Market Turbulence," Oct. 13). The solution, though, isn't to hope that Fed officials

never mis-speak or mis-read economic facts. Being human, they'll inevitably err.

The solution is to get government out of the business of supplying money. Abolish regulations that hinder private banks from issuing money. Competition among private money issuers will be as vigorous as competition among suppliers of other goods and services, and just as economically beneficial. And importantly, the supply of money will be determined by market forces rather than by a handful of pooh-bahs capable of misleading markets with unguarded comments.

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12 October 2005

News Editor, WTOP Radio  
Washington, DC

Dear Editor:

"Zero tolerance" - such as DC's practice jailing drivers who have as little as one drink - sounds good. But beware of unintended consequences. Someone who knows that he or she will be penalized with draconian severity if caught driving on a single drink will, after taking that drink, have less incentive to avoid having a second, third, or fourth drink before getting behind the wheel.

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11 October 2005

Editor, The Wall Street Journal  
200 Liberty Street  
New York, NY 10281

Dear Editor:

You correctly argue that the toll of natural disasters is "largely a function of wealth and poverty" ("Twenty Katrinas," Oct. 11). More wealth means fewer fatalities.

United States history provides further evidence of this relationship. Of the ten strongest hurricanes to hit the U.S. since 1900, six struck during the past 45 years. But only one of these - Katrina - ranks among the ten deadliest hurricanes. Hurricanes much weaker than Katrina, Andrew, and Hugo killed more people in the early 20th century for the simple reason that Americans then had fewer automobiles, lived in weaker houses, had worse medical care, and, generally, lacked the life-saving prosperity that we enjoy today.

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10 October 2005

The Editor, New York Times  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Paul Krugman fumes that George Bush hasn't begun to develop "a plan" to rebuild New Orleans ("Will Bush Deliver?" Oct. 10): "No reconstruction czar has been appointed; no commission has been named. There have been no public hearings. And as far as we can tell, nobody is in charge."

How naive. Our greatest scholar of cities, Jane Jacobs, points out that vibrant cities emerge and change unplanned - in ways unpredictable, unexpected, and exquisite - as individuals adjust their activities to each other's production and consumption patterns. The life of any great city is organic, bubbling up from individual initiative. It cannot be created by planners, public hearings, or (heaven help us) czars.

