



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.

15 October 2006

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

To the Editor:

David Brooks correctly notes that morality is a social phenomenon ("A Moral Philosophy for Middle-Class America," October 15). But when he writes that government cannot "be neutral on values issues" and that "[i]t's a chimera to believe individuals come up with solutions to moral questions alone" he reveals his mistaken belief that morality must be

crafted consciously and centrally.

The same Adam Smith who Brooks praises later in his column famously explained how, while individuals don't come up with solutions to economic questions alone, they nevertheless together do find such solutions as they interact in commercial society. And, Smith showed, not only is government not needed to answer economic questions, its attempts to do so too often misfire. The same is true of morality. The fact that it is social does not mean that it must be created by government.

14 October 2006

Editor, The Washington Post
1150 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

Margo Wootan, of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, demands legislation requiring "fast-food and other chains to list calories and other nutrition information on menus" (Letters, October 14).

If diners at fast-food restaurants want such information, restaurants will supply it - just as these restaurants supply countless other things that

customers demand such as napkins, tables, and early opening hours. The fact that such information isn't now supplied means that customers probably don't want it badly enough.

Must ordinary men and women continually be molested by the obnoxious, officious, overbearing presumptions of Ms. Wootan and her ilk? Why won't these people simply leave the rest of us alone to live as we choose even if our choices conflict with their notion of what is "scientifically" the best way to live?

13 October 2006

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

Dear Editor:

Re the current political campaigns: Every day I'm bombarded with e-mails, supposedly from Africa, written by strangers promising to make me rich while at the same time enabling me to serve a worthy cause. These notes drip with mock-sincerity and faux familiarity, each writer assuring me that I can trust him or her fully. All I need

do is to give these correspondents ready access to my wealth by sending them my bank-account number.

Of course, I wouldn't dream of trusting such people. And for the same reason I wouldn't dream of trusting a similar gaggle of glib strangers who, at this time of year especially, assure me that if they have access to my wallet (and my liberties) they will make me richer while they also make the world a better place. Unfortunately, unlike with the first set of scoundrels, I can't easily hit a 'delete' button to rid my life of politicians.

11 October 2006

Editor, CNN.com

Dear Editor:

Lou Dobbs alleges that free trade hurts America's middle class ("Middle class needs to fight back now," Oct. 11).

Craziness. By implying that protectionism help ordinary Americans, Dobbs insinuates that the key to widespread prosperity is monopoly - producers shielded from competition. So for consistency's sake, Dobbs should demand not only an end to competition

from abroad, he should demand also an end to competition at home. He should howl and growl disapprovingly - in his trademark bloviating manner - whenever any customer of one American firm seeks out and finds a better deal from another American firm.

He should express satisfaction with economic policy only when government forces each and every one of us never to change the way we spend our money. Only then would monopoly masquerading as economic security be complete.

11 October 2006

Editor, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Dear Editor:

Jerome Jernigan is correct: tax "cuts" without cuts in government spending are fake tax cuts (Letters, October 11). To believe otherwise would be also to believe that, say, a retailer who sells a \$1,000 television in exchange for \$100 down today and the remaining \$900 charged to the buyer's credit card has cut the price of this television to \$100.