



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.

12 November 2006

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

To the Editor:

Adam Smith famously showed how self-interested behavior in markets generally if unintentionally helps others. So when businesses seek greater profits by hiring immigrants, I applaud: the profit-motive prompts greedy capitalists to help poor people.

David Sirota and Lou Dobbs (whose book Sirota reviews) react differently ("Pinstriped Populist," Nov. 12). They're furious that

the profit motive creates jobs for foreigners who are very poor rather than reserves jobs exclusively for Americans who are only modestly poor. Sirota's and Dobbs's questionable ethics (and even more-questionable economics) leads them to demand that some Americans forego gains in order to bestow unearned benefits on other Americans while simultaneously denying much-needed opportunity to persons who need it most desperately.

11 November 2006

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

Dear Editor:

Harold Meyerson repeats the canard that "globalization entails [a] downward leveling" of economic well-being ("Tipping Point for Trade," November 11).

This belief is crushed by mountains of evidence. It's crushed also by its own illogic: if ordinary people are served by being "protected" from globalization, then they can be made even better off by being protected from countryization - and better off still by being protected from townization and neighborhoodization. Protectionist quackery implies that we achieve maximum prosperity when

no one consumes anything produced by anyone else.

10 November 2006

Editor, Business Week

Dear Editor:

In "Can Anyone Steer This Economy?" (Nov. 20), you conclude that it is "worrisome" that "Despite federal outlays of over \$125 billion for medical research over the past five years, the U.S. has a large and growing trade deficit in advanced biotech and medical goods."

You're too quick to worry over this vague statistic. Because most U.S. imports are production goods rather than consumption goods, many of the biotech and medical goods Americans import might well be used to further the research funded by Uncle Sam. That is, it's quite plausible that the source of the trade deficit in biotech and medical goods is nothing other than the federal subsidies themselves.

10 November 2006

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

Dear Editor:

Barbara Roper shares the World Economic Forum's opinion that America's trade deficit signals "decline in U.S. economic competitiveness" (Letters, Nov. 10). Even overlooking the inapt allusion to zero-sum sports games conjured by the phrase "economic competitiveness," Ms. Roper and the WEF simply misunderstand the trade deficit.

The U.S. trade deficit rises when foreigners invest more in America. More investment means more factories, more firms, more and better equipment, more R&D, more worker training, more opportunity for creative but cash-strapped entrepreneurs. This investment strengthens our economy. It also reveals that investors worldwide are optimistic about America's economic future.

9 November 2006

Editor, The New York Post

To the Editor:

Re "W Hears the Voters" (Nov. 9):

Within hours of the GOP's 1994 takeover of the

House and Senate, then-Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX) proclaimed the lesson of that election to have been "about freedom."

Turns out that, especially since 2000, it was more about power and pork.

Those of us who fear concentrated power should look not to a political party to protect our liberties but, rather, to divided government and glorious gridlock.

8 November 2006

Editor, Slate

Dear Editor:

Re "The Lou Dobbs Democrats" (Nov. 8):

Many newly elected Democrats oppose both war and free trade. They should avoid this inconsistency.

Research - especially by Solomon Polachek - finds that trade promotes peace. Commerce unites people economically (it's bad for the bottom line to kill your customers) and culturally (trade with foreigners demands that you better understand them and that they better understand you).

To the extent that Senator-elect Sherrod Brown and other "Lou Dobbs Democrats" manage to isolate Americans from foreign commerce they will not only make us poorer, they also will increase our chances in the future of waging senseless and gruesome wars.

8 November 2006

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

Dear Editor:

General Motors' chief economist complains that an allegedly undervalued yen gives Toyota "a \$3,000 advantage on small cars and \$9,000 on Lexus luxury cars" ("Toyota's Global Profit Surges," Nov. 8). GM's economist is mistaken.

If the yen is undervalued, the advantage goes chiefly to American consumers. An undervalued yen enables these consumers to buy cars for thousands of dollars less they would otherwise have to pay. GM whines, of course, but American consumers should applaud all the way to the bank.

7 November 2006

Editor, The Boston Globe

Dear Editor:

Jeff Robertson's view of the U.S. Constitution is too government-centric ("You the people of the United States...", Nov. 7). The framers' aim "to form a more perfect union" went far beyond substituting popular rule for royal rule in matters of government. Their chief goal was to create a government sufficiently strong to perform well-defined but limited tasks while, at the same time, keeping the powers of that government in check so that ordinary people could go about their daily lives without interference from the state. The vibrant commerce and community that would emerge from this freedom from politics would be a union stronger and more real than anything that politicians and political involvement could create.

6 November 2006

Editor, The Baltimore Sun

Dear Editor:

Your lead editorial today correctly notes that China's "booming economy" has lifted 43 million people in that country out of hunger ("On the table," Nov. 6). This boom, of course, is

driven by China's move toward free markets and its integration into the global economy.

But also in today's edition, Cynthia Tucker calls globalization "a force more insidious" than terrorism ("Lack of economic security is no less a threat than terrorism," Nov. 6). Does she really believe what she

writes? Does she really believe that peaceful commerce with persons in other countries is more insidious than murdering and maiming innocent people? Does she really believe that foreigners who offer to sell televisions and textiles to us are more insidious than those who take our lives and destroy our property?