



## 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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1 February 2007

The Editor, The Boston  
Globe

To the Editor:

Re "Reseller argues ticket  
markups comply with law"  
(Feb. 1): Rather than waste  
resources enforcing  
legislated prohibitions on  
ticket "scalping," why not  
simply repeal these nutty  
statutes?

If Smith offers to pay \$500  
for a ticket to a Red Sox or  
a Bruins game, why should  
Jones - who legitimately  
owns such a ticket - be  
barred from selling it at that  
price? Put differently, the  
prices that people pay for  
entertainment is none of  
the legislatures' business.

31 January 2007

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

To the Editor:

You write about "the  
invasion of retail clothing  
stores" on the Champs-  
Élysées, and of how the  
French government  
decided "to ban the  
Swedish clothing giant  
H&M from opening a  
megastore on the avenue"  
("Megastores March Up  
Avenue, and Paris Takes  
to Barricades," Jan. 31).

Invasions are done by  
armies who kill and coerce  
innocent people. Retailers  
neither invade nor coerce;

they are invited by - and peacefully serve - consumers. A more accurate description of the government's new policy is that it "decided to ban consumers from enjoying the convenience and low prices offered by H&M."

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30 January 2007

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

To the Editor:

Unlike another economist (David Ricardo) whose Jewish ancestors fled Spanish Inquisitors, Dani Rodrik misunderstands comparative advantage ("Economist Wants Business and Social Aims to Be in Sync," Jan. 30.) He argues that China's government, by granting special privileges to manufacturers, has enriched the Chinese people.

If China's comparative advantage truly is in labor-intensive production - And why expect otherwise given China's population and current level of development? - the Chinese people would today be wealthier had they specialized in labor-intensive production rather

than suffering the taxes, regulations, and restrictions that forcibly transferred their resources to the manufacturing sector.

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29 January 2007

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

To the Editor:

Jeff Dircksen correctly notes that when government subsidizes biofuels R&D (or, for that matter, anything else) it pursues politically appealing goals by spending other people's

money. This arrangement is inherently dangerous. Thomas Babington Macaulay's account of the motives of King James II describes also those of politicians such as Sen.

Richard Lugar and each corn farmer seeking biofuels subsidies: "What he had not the generosity to do at his own expense he determined to do at the expense of others." [Lord

Macaulay, *The History of England*, Hugh Trevor-Roper's one-volume abridgment (Penguin, 1968), p. 187]