



## Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

Donald J. Boudreaux  
Chairman, Department of Economics  
George Mason University  
[dboudrea@gmu.edu](mailto:dboudrea@gmu.edu)  
<http://www.cafehayek.com>

**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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26 May 2007

Editor, Baltimore Sun

Dear Editor:

Two of your readers - both opposed to immigration and at least one opposed also to imports - are unaware of a central fact of international commerce (Letters, May 26). When people in America buy imports or send money to family members abroad, they are not "removing that money from our economy." Dollars are valuable to foreigners only because those dollars can be spent or invested in America. If dollars, upon leaving the U.S., became irredeemable here, no foreign producer would sell products to

Americans and no immigrants to America would bother sending dollars to their home countries.

Foreigners want dollars for the same reason that Americans want dollars: to buy American-made products and to invest in the American economy.

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24 May 2007

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

To the Editor:

Kings of yore occasionally killed messengers bringing bad news. By voting to outlaw so-called "price

gouging," the House of Representatives proves that its members are just as irrational as these ancient monarchs ("Tipping-Point Shock," May 24).

Higher prices merely report an underlying reality such as constrained refining capacity, higher demand, higher taxes, and more regulations. Statutes that prevent prices from rising do nothing to improve the underlying reality. Indeed, by silencing information about reality, restraints on price hikes keep consumers and producers acting in ignorance - thus making matters worse.

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23 May 2007

Mr. Tom Davis, U.S. Rep.  
U.S. House of  
Representatives  
2348 Rayburn House  
Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-  
4611

Dear Rep. Davis:

I am employed by George Mason University. My fellow faculty members and I today were reminded by a University administrator of the requirements of the "Fly America Act." I confess that I'd never before heard of this statute. As explained by the GMU administrator, this Act "requires Federal employees and their dependents, consultants, contractors, grantees, and others performing United States Government financed foreign air travel to travel by U.S. flag air carriers." Because college professors often receive research grants from Uncle Sam, it's good that administrators at my school warned us not to commit a federal offense unwittingly by using, say, NSF grant funds to pay for air travel on the likes of Lufthansa or Taca.

I applaud your brilliant scheme! Even if it costs taxpayers more money, obviously this Act helps to protect American carriers

from the nefarious competition of foreign airlines.

But why stop there? I propose a "Study America Act." The Congressional wisdom and spirit behind the Fly America Act, I submit, requires also that "Federal employees and their dependents, consultants, contractors, grantees, and others performing United States Government financed research to buy books, journals, articles, magazines, data sets, and all other scholarly materials produced only by U.S. scholars" (such as myself).

Why must hard-working, high-wage American researchers compete against foreign researchers - a competition that undoubtedly jeopardizes our nation's defense? Why, for example, should researchers at the Centers for Disease Control use American tax dollars to pay for subscriptions to the British medical journal *The Lancet*? Doing so shrinks the market for American medical research and thereby hurts America's health-care industry and, ultimately, America's children. Or why should federally funded social-science researchers use tax dollars to buy books on

international trade written by foreigners when my own book on globalization will soon be out? My book, I assure you, is as good a product as any rival tome penned by a foreign scholar.

I look forward to your consideration and response.

23 May 2007

Editor, New York Post

To the Editor:

I'm no fan of Jimmy Carter, but conservatives now lathered-up by the former President's criticisms of the current President need a reality check (Letters, May 23).

These conservatives forget that Carter's presidency launched the deregulation of airlines, trucking, and railroads, and that Mr. Carter appointed inflation hawk Paul Volcker as Fed Chairman.

They forget also that Bush II created an obnoxious prescription-drug entitlement program; that he expanded federal control over education; that he shamelessly raises tariffs for blatant political gain; and that he increased discretionary spending faster than did LBJ. And while many conservatives applaud the war in Iraq, not all do. George Will, for example, correctly recognizes that civil society abroad can no more be built by U.S. armed forces than civil society at home can be built by U.S. bureaucrats.

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22 May 2007

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

To the Editor:

Matthew Slaughter compellingly explains why Americans are not hurt by the value of the Chinese yuan ("Yuan Worries," May 22). But will Senators Schumer, Graham, and other protectionists in Washington be persuaded by Mr. Slaughter's logic and evidence to stop imagining that the yuan's value justifies their harmful efforts to hamper trade between Americans and the Chinese? Alas, no.

As Will Durant lamented near the end of his massive survey of human history, "The triumph of imagination over reality is one of the humors of history." [Will & Ariel Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* (1967), p. 64] And the diseased imaginations that power politics are especially indestructible.

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21 May 2007

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

To the Editor:

Construing Milton Friedman's arguments with a Don-Imus-like subtlety, Paul Krugman blames the late Nobel's opposition to government regulation for unsafe food ("Fear of Eating," May 21).

Let's see: Mr. Friedman argued that political institutions too often perform poorly. And Mr. Krugman today documents such poor performance by the FDA. Seems to me that Mr. Friedman was correct that the case for relying upon government bureaucracies to protect consumers is weak.