



Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

Donald J. Boudreaux
Chairman, Department of Economics
George Mason University
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.

21 October 2007

Editor, The Nation

To the Editor:

Alexander Cockburn accuses Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution, of being responsible for "displacement, malnutrition and death across the Third World" ("The Real Gore," November 5). This accusation is crazy strange. For example, when introduced in the late 1960s into India, Borlaug's variety of wheat caused wheat production there to triple by 1974. Indians have since suffered not a single famine.

If Norman Borlaug is, as Mr. Cockburn says, a "killer," then this term has been re-defined so that it applies also to other mass-murderers such as Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, Alexander Fleming, and Drs. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin. The jaw drops and the heart sinks when one ponders the countless physicians, nurses, undertakers, grief counselors, and grave-diggers who were displaced from their jobs by these notorious villains.

Or, the jaw drops and the heart sinks when one encounters Mr. Cockburn redefining "killer" so that it applies to one of

humanity's greatest benefactors.

20 October 2007

Editor, The Washington Times

To the Editor:

Incessantly repeating that "U.S. growth, meanwhile, has been weighed down by soaring deficits with China" does nothing to render true this false bit of conventional wisdom ("China won't adjust currency," October 20). Indeed, it is false on too many levels to list here.

Most fundamentally, the flipside of a rising U.S.

trade deficit is a rising U.S. capital-account surplus - meaning, a hefty inflow of capital into America. More capital means lower real rates of interest. Lower real rates of interest mean more investment. More investment raises worker productivity. Rising worker productivity raises real wages. And rising real wages enable Americans to enjoy higher and higher standards of living.

19 October 2007
 The Editor, New York Times
 229 West 43rd St.
 New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Judith Warner writes that "More and more people are being priced out of a middle class existence" ("The Clinton Surprise," October 19). This statement is true, but only because more and more Americans are getting richer. Consider the percentage of American households in each of these different annual-income categories in 1967 and in 2003 (all reckoned in 2003 dollars):

	1967	2003
\$75K and up	8.2	26.1
\$50K - \$75K	16.7	18.0
\$35K - \$50K	22.3	15.0
\$15K - \$35K	31.1	25.0
under \$15K	21.7	15.9

If the middle class is disappearing, it's doing so by swelling the ranks of the upper classes.

19 October 2007
 Editor, The Wall Street Journal
 200 Liberty Street
 New York, NY 10281

To the Editor:

Steve Moore reports on corporate America's new-found passion - expressed with generous sums of \$\$\$ - for the Democratic Party ("Comfy with K Street," October 19). Mr. Moore sensibly explains this infatuation by quoting former Rep. Dick Arme's observation that "business groups are simply not ideological givers. They give to buy access and to minimize risk."

Put somewhat differently: like men intent on getting some, most corporate executives care nothing about the party affiliations or ideologies of the currently available assortment of whores.

18 October 2007
 Editor, The New York Post

To the Editor:

Robert Novak exposes the venality and hypocrisy of those many members of Congress who earmark - that is, who buy votes with

taxpayers' money ("Pork Payback," October 18).

Will Rogers was too polite when he observed that "A politician is just like a pickpocket; it's almost impossible to get him to reform."

16 October 2007

Editor, The Atlantic

To the Editor:

John Updike makes the startlingly mistaken claim that "the American idea" involves trusting "leaders of government" because leaders who fail "can be voted out" ("The Individual," November).

The Constitution is a monument to the American founders' rejection of the fantasy that democracy alone ensures that

government officials will behave themselves. That document divides government power and has different branches share various pieces of it. Most importantly - and despite the fact that the Constitution is ignored on this point - its language is clear that the only powers the national government may exercise are the small handful of those powers explicitly delegated to it.

No less a founder than James Madison famously wrote that "If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.... A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions."

(James Madison, Federalist #51)

15 October 2007

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

To the Editor:

Paul Krugman wrongly claims that Al Gore "keeps being right" ("The Gore Derangement Syndrome," October 15). Mr. Gore famously predicts that, over the next century, global warming will cause sea levels to rise by 20 feet. Scientists at the agency that shares Mr. Gore's Nobel prize, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, expect a rise of one foot.