



## 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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11 November 2007

Editor, The Washington Times

To the Editor:

Rep. Jim McDermott's need to stir up demands for his and his colleagues' "services" does not justify his misinterpretation of Walter Williams's recent column (Letters, November 11). Mr. McDermott is shocked - shocked! - that Prof. Williams writes that poverty in America has "virtually disappeared." In fact, however, Prof. Williams wrote that "Poverty in the United States, in an absolute

sense, has virtually disappeared." Mr. McDermott conveniently forgot to include, when quoting Prof. Williams, the part about "in an absolute sense."

Poverty in America, in an absolute sense, has indeed virtually disappeared. No American dies of starvation (although some do die from OVER-eating). And nearly every American is housed, clothed, entertained, and cared for medically in ways that nearly all of our pre-industrial ancestors would have thought possible only in Shangri-la.

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10 November 2007

Editor, The New York Post

To the Editor:

Jonah Goldberg wisely advises suspicion whenever corporations parade their green sensibilities ("NBC's green fraud," November 10). Public displays of concern for the environment too often mask corporations' goal of using regulations to fatten their bottom lines by restricting consumer choice.

For example, consider Weyerhaeuser Co.'s vigorous support for regulations protecting

spotted owls. As documented by economist Bruce Yandle, by significantly curbing logging in public forests, these regulations raise the prices that Weyerhaeuser gets for the timber it logs from its own forests. [Bruce Yandle, "Bootleggers and Baptists in Retrospect," Regulation, Vol. 22, Fall 1999.] Green indeed.

9 November 2007

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

Dear Editor:

Sen. Charles Schumer supports Judge Michael Mukasey's bid to become Attorney General because Mr. Mukasey will, in Sen. Schumer's words, "remove the stench of politics from the Justice Department" ("Mukasey Says He'll Be Independent," November 9). Alas, because Mr. Mukasey is a political appointee, this result is highly unlikely.

Either way, though, I applaud Sen. Schumer's recognition of the nature of politics. And so I ask him: if it is desirable to fumigate the Justice Department from the stench of politics, would it not be even more desirable to fumigate our

entire society from this appalling, foul, and enervating stench?

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8 November 2007

Editor, The Washington Times

To the Editor:

Alluding, as you correctly report, "to the possibility of economic retaliation by European states stung by the falling dollar," French president Nicolas Sarkozy yesterday warned of "economic war" ("China signals dollar swap," November 8).

Higher tariffs are indeed hateful and harmful. But do keep in mind an important difference between real shoot'-em-up wars and "economic wars": in "economic wars," each belligerent government aims its weapons only at its own citizens, demanding that they avoid taking advantage of good economic deals offered by foreigners. Put differently, in "economic wars," when the government of A attacks citizens of A, the government of B "retaliates" by attacking citizens of B. Then to further punish B, the government of A increases the scale of its attack on

citizens of A. And so it perversely goes.

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7 November 2007

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

To the Editor:

You unnecessarily weaken your case for the US-Peru free-trade agreement by conceding that Americans' wages are stagnating ("Pass the Peruvian F.T.A.," November 7). They are not.

In his recent study of data on wages and incomes, Minneapolis Fed Senior Economist Terry Fitzgerald finds "that labor income per hour for middle America has not stagnated. Rather, the economic compensation for work for middle Americans has risen significantly over the past 30 years." [Terry J. Fitzgerald, "Has Middle America Stagnated? A Closer Look at Hourly Wages," The Region, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, September 2007. Available on line at: <http://www.minneapolisfed.org/pubs/region/07-09/wages.cfm>]

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6 November 2007

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

To the Editor:

Kelly Kennedy approvingly quotes Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.'s assertion that "Taxes are what we pay for a civilized society" (Letters, November 6). But Holmes was mistaken. Civilization progresses as it reduces resort to centralized direction and force and develops instead institutions, such as private property and markets, that increase the possibilities for productive, creative, and peaceful cooperation among individuals.

As Cato Institute president Ed Crane rightly remarks, "Taxes are actually the price we pay for our failure to create a civil society."

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5 November 2007

Editor, WSJ.com  
200 Liberty Street  
New York, NY 10281

To the Editor:

Were your organization run by friars reincarnated from the dark ages - or by the editors of The Nation - I could understand your "Question of the Day" - which, today, is "How much do home prices in your neighborhood need to fall before they are fair?" But surely you've progressed beyond believing that fair prices are something other than those terms voluntarily agreed to by buyers and sellers.

And surely you also understand that there is nothing at all unfair about the current owner of a home choosing not to sell that home at any price that he, for whatever reason, regards as too low.

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5 November 2007

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

To the Editor:

Paul Krugman correctly notes that former New York Governor Al Smith staunchly criticized F.D.R. and the New Deal ("Wobbled by Wealth?" November 5). Krugman is also correct that H.L. Mencken once said about Smith that "His association with the rich has apparently wobbled him and changed him. He has become a golf player." But your readers should never suppose that Mencken was defending Roosevelt. Soon after F.D.R. took office, Mencken grew to despise the man and his policies. Mencken said about F.D.R. that "If he became convinced tomorrow that coming out for cannibalism would get him the votes he sorely needs, he would begin fattening a missionary in the White House backyard come Wednesday."