



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.

3 February 2012

Program Director, WTOP
Radio
Washington, DC

Dear Sir or Madam:

During today's 11am hour you interviewed a Nevada GOP official who listed "strong enforcement of drug laws" as a "family value."

His claim is questionable. Consider this observation by Pepperdine University Professor James Q. Wilson, a noted conservative and explicit proponent of the 'war on drugs': "Prohibiting the sale of certain commodities provides economic opportunities in which

young males have a comparative advantage, and this in turn leads to the emergence of a warrior culture that underinvests in family life. Economic activity is separated from family maintenance and organized around capital that can be seized by predation." [James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense* (New York: Free Press, 1993), p. 175]

Regardless of any other demerits or merits of the 'war on drugs,' the case that waging that war promotes family values is more flimsy than drug warriors suppose.

30 January 2012

Editor, The New York Times
620 Eighth Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Dear Editor:

Paul Krugman blames Britain's economic slump on the British government's alleged policy of "austerity" ("The Austerity Debacle," Jan. 30). He gives no evidence, however, that Her Majesty's government is actually pursuing such a policy.

Fortunately, economist Scott Sumner checked some relevant facts. Of the 44 major world economies for which data are listed in The Economist's "Economic and Financial indicators"

section, only two governments had 2011 budget deficits larger (as a percentage of GDP) than Britain's: Egypt and Greece.

[\[http://www.themoneyillusion.com/?p=12891&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Themoneyillusion+%28TheMoneyIllusion%29\]](http://www.themoneyillusion.com/?p=12891&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Themoneyillusion+%28TheMoneyIllusion%29)

As for actual spending amounts, I logged a few minutes on the Internet to discover that British-government spending - adjusted for inflation - has risen every year since the start of the financial crisis. This spending in 2011 was 16 percent higher than it was in 2007, and is projected to be even higher in 2012.

Mr. Krugman might argue that the U.K.'s budget deficit and government spending should be higher still. But he's wrong to write as if it's beyond doubt that the policy pursued today by the British government is indeed one of austerity.