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TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC" AN ARGUMENT RUINED BY ATTENTION TO THE FACTS!



By Stephen L. Bakke  April 4, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

A very brief letter was published that was making such an absurd analytical mistake I wonder how it could have gotten by the editorial staff. Do they sometimes print things just to make a writer look bad? Maybe so!

Here's my response:

An Argument Ruined by Attention to the Facts!

On April 3, a writer offered a brief but pointed piece of advice about the U.S. making interventions around the world. This was offered in opposition to Fred Hiatt's commentary on March 29, "Like it or not, the U.S. must lead the world." The April 3rd letter-writer's points were very simple in comparing 1945 to today:

- The median American family income was \$27,000 in 1945 compared with \$62,000 today.
- Inflation has far exceeded that increase evidenced by the fact that "an item that cost \$27,000 in 1945 would cost a whopping \$355,666 today."
- Our history of interventions has therefore been terribly expensive.

The obvious message was: What a consumer's family income could buy in 1945 would require almost 6 family incomes to pay for it today. Therefore, given the mess we are in, "maybe we should consider carefully the value and costs of our world interventions."

I'm sorry Mr. Letter-writer, you really missed the boat on this one! You used data from Hiatt's commentary but conveniently ignored Hiatt's explanation that the median family incomes were "in dollars adjusted for inflation." The actual median household income in 1945 was approximately \$2,380.

Now back-up and find a legitimate reason for the U.S. to no longer provide world-wide leadership. Maybe you can, but maybe you can't.