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## 5 Best Tuesday Columns

By *RAY GUSTINI AND ERIK HAYDEN* | November 23, 2010 8:21am



Presented By

- **Nina Martyris on 'India's Affluent Affliction'** Unlike in the United States where obesity is "joined at the hip" with poverty, in India quite the opposite is true, notes [The Guardian](#) contributor. The Indian Diabetes foundation has produced a study finding that nearly one in three children in New Delhi private schools are obese, and in Mumbai the kids are only "marginally less plump." The reason for this is that, ironically, "junk is affordable only to the well off" while the poor constantly battle malnutrition. In the U.S., nutritionists believe that buckets of fried chicken are priced "cynically" low to subsidize bad eating habits--"if the poor had access to healthy food, runs the argument, they would consume it." But "would they?" asks Martyris. The increasingly obese Indian middle class, which "has access to reasonably priced fruits and vegetables," appears to suggest otherwise. While India still needs to devote most of its resources on nourishing chronically under-fed children, it should begin to focus on education efforts to fight a "big, fat lifestyle problem" among the middle class.
- **Richard Lariviere on a Plan to Save Public Universities** The University of Oregon is in the midst of a budget crunch. In this way, writes the school's president in [The Wall Street Journal](#), U.O. is like pretty much every other state school in America. For Lariviere and Oregon, the solution to this problem is an "endowment funded by a partnership of private and public monies." While state funding accounts for just 8 percent of Oregon's annual operating budget, 40 percent of revenue comes from tuition. Without that money from tuition, the school would be hard-pressed to function. The problem, according to Lariviere, is that while tuition has risen an average of 7.5 percent each year since 1962, the rise has been "erratic, due largely to fluctuations in state appropriations, with annual tuition increases ranging from 2% to 25% in a single year." These inconsistent increases have the potential to put middle class families in a tough place, crippling U.O.'s enrollment, and in the process, its entire operating budget. Hence, Lariviere's proposal to take the uncertainty out of the school's funding, in which he asks "lawmakers to lock public appropriations for the university at \$63 million over 30 years--enough to make debt payments, at a 7% taxable bond rate, on \$800 million in general obligation bonds." The university will then match that \$800 million in private donations, thus creating a "\$1.6 billion public-private endowment will create a solid base for the university's financial operation, replacing the erratic seesaw of annual state appropriations." Based on returns from the University of Oregon Foundation, Lariviere expects the private-public endowment to generate \$64 million annually, more than the school's current annual operating

budget.

- **David Francis on South America Escaping Poverty** "America's poor are far better off than South America's poor. And the U.S. still has a much lower poverty rate" than South America. Still, there are lessons to be learned from 38 million people who escaped poverty in the region, writes [The Christian Science Monitor](#) columnist. Ten years of growing prosperity has shrunk the poverty gap due as democratic leftist governments--namely Brazil--have "vastly boosted social spending to help the poor," raised the minimum wage, and offered small cash grants to families that sent their children to school. Yet the economy did not suffer--unemployment has actually fallen. Francis suggests looking to South American examples when wanting to deal with income inequality.
- **Anne Applebaum on a Modern NATO** With NATO agreeing to pull the International Assistance Security Force from Afghanistan by 2014, the time has come to examine what the organization's role in future conflicts should be. [The Washington Post](#) columnist argues that after the Afghan mission--in which NATO "didn't fail...but neither did it succeed"--the next mission for its soldiers should be "the defense of democracy in Europe." Indeed, notes Applebaum, this was the original purpose of NATO when it was created in 1949. While there is no enemy with the size and capabilities of the former Soviet Union, the organization would be well-served by projecting strength in the war against cyber-terror. More than anything, NATO must continue to represent Western strength. "The very existence of a credible Western military alliance," writes Applebaum, "remains--yes, really--an encouragement to others on Europe's borders ... We in the West might have gone sour on ourselves, but Europeans on our borders still find us magnetically attractive. But we will only remain so if we try."
- **Paul Ingrassia on Detroit 'Skeptics'** Even with GM's big IPO this week, not everyone in Detroit is optimistic about the future of the American car, writes the Pulitzer Prize winning automotive industry author in [The Wall Street Journal](#). "Everyone here has lost much of the value of their home because of the plunge in local property values," says Ingrassia. "These people hesitate to put their confidence in the institution that failed them so badly." Ingrassia believes next year's negotiation with the United Auto Workers union "will indicate how much Detroit has, or hasn't, changed." Similarly, when it comes to the Chevy Volt and hot new models, management must resist "believing their own hyperbole." Only time will tell whether the "arrogance and complacency" that doomed earlier Motor City comebacks can be avoided this time around.

## Sources

- [India's Affluent Affliction](#) *Nina Martyris*, The Guardian
- [Want to Slash Poverty? Look to Latin America](#) *David R. Francis*, The Christian Science Monitor
- [Saving Public Universities](#) *Richard Lariviere*, The Wall Street Journal
- [A NATO For the 21st Century](#) *Anne Applebaum*, The Washington Post
- [Motor City Skeptics](#) *Paul Ingrassia*, The Wall Street Journal