

Re: OT : so this is what our troops are dying for in Afghanistan !

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- *From:* David Brown <[david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 16 Aug 2006 11:35:13 +0200
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John Larkin wrote:

On 14 Aug 2006 10:21:54 +0200, David Brown  
<[david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:david@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

John Larkin wrote:

On 11 Aug 2006 11:50:32 -0700,  
dagmargoodboat@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Ergo, government is good, and necessary,  
but too much is almost worse  
than none at all.

If you want to fit into this newsgroup, you should curb your  
tendency  
to make sense.

Actually, although I don't agree entirely with his post, I found it refreshing to  
read a sensible post\* for a change!

I understand that companies need to make profits – I simply question the  
need for them to make such huge profits at times of difficulty for others. It's  
the difference between profiting, and profiteering.

There's no difference. Any company makes all the profit it can. If  
somebody offered you \$50 for your old rusty VW, and somebody else  
offered you \$12,000, which offer would you accept?

I wouldn't accept either. If the price offered and what I think the car is worth are significantly different, then  
either he's conning me or I'm conning him (albeit willingly on his part). I'm not keen on either – even if it  
means making more money for myself. The difference, I think, is that I don't believe increased profit for

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myself is the most important factor in a transaction. For some people it may be, but for many it is not – a simple example being shoppers choosing "dolphin free" tuna despite it being more expensive and tasting exactly the same as "ordinary" tuna.

I see no reason for businesses to have any different attitude – money is a necessary evil, not an end in itself. If money were the only important factor, there is no point in a small company trying to produce electronics – they could probably make higher profit margins running a porn site.

If an oil company increases prices during shortages (I don't think there actually \*were\* shortages after the hurricanes – but lets assume there were), then that's one way to control demand and avoid running out. What matters is the company's attitude, and what is done with the money. When you take that money and invest it (such as re-building and improving damaged infrastructure), that's fine – when you gloat over your profits and give bonuses to your shareholders and top company employees, that's profiteering.

I also understand that many of the investors in big companies are institutions or small investors – but the "fat cats" profiting includes not only the individual large investors, but also top people within these massive corporations or their boards, who chose to pay themselves vast bonuses.

They're taking that money at the expense of the shareholders, not the customers. The shareholders own the company and can set executive compensation anywhere they like, if they care to get involved. That can also sell their stock if they don't approve.

And yes, I know and appreciate that the USA has been heavily involved in the defence of the free world – but being a good guy for the most part of last century does not excuse current bad behaviour.

How can you be sure it's still not being good? I'm not.

It's still doing some good, and I'd hate to try a quantitative analysis even if it were possible, but the "bad behaviour" currently far outshines the good in the eyes of the world. You can argue whether Bush is good for the USA or not, and you can even argue that you think he is doing a good job for the rest of the world, but there is no doubt that the majority of the rest of the world think the USA is the world's biggest bully and bad guy.

John

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