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If Britain sees fit to intervene in Libya, why not in Bahrain?

The argument to justify our presence in Libya should also be applied elsewhere

The Observer, Saturday 3 September 2011

You employ the "where we can, we must" argument to justify intervention in Libya ("An honourable intervention. A hopeful future", Comment). So why not intervene in Bahrain, a former British protectorate whose king and crown prince's son are Sandhurst-trained? For too long, Bahrain has treated its majority Shia Muslims as second-class citizens. Worse, rather than hire local Shia policemen, Bahrain's authorities seek Sunnis from elsewhere and grant these mercenaries citizenship to redress the demographic balance.

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Intervention need not involve our armed forces, but we should apply sanctions, as we do to Iran and Syria.

Yugo Kovach

Dorset

The battle for arts and minds

As we strive to secure our economic recovery it is essential that we recognise and build on our strengths. One of the UK's greatest cultural and economic assets is its range and depth of creativity, original intellectual property creation and innovative thought in all walks of life. It is essential that we continue to nurture the creative talent and skills of the next generation to ensure that creativity continues to create jobs and drive economic growth, as well as enrich individual and community life.

Britain's unique and long-standing creative tradition is exemplified by its achievements. From the RSC and the National Theatre to many of the world's leading orchestras, bands and solo performers. From Dyson's cutting edge engineering and design to the now global mobile phone microchip from ARM Holdings. From the engineering dominance of Formula One to iconic fashion designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Sarah Burton. From Harry Potter to Adele to video games such as Tomb Raider and Little Big Planet. British creative achievement, and Britain's creative, arts and design education, have always been held in high international regard.

In many sectors our creative industries are world leaders, but with increasing global competition and active interventionist policies being pursued by many emerging economies, businesses across a wide range of industries will need to place an ever greater premium on creative talent. Harnessing and stimulating UK creativity and innovation are also crucial for enabling government to develop smarter, more cost-effective and more environmentally sustainable solutions to the delivery of public services.

It is for these reasons that we urge the government to recognise that a 21st century education system should have creativity at its heart as an

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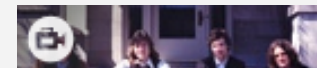
Hollywood actor Molly Ringwald performs for the Moth, the US-based not-for-profit storytelling organisation



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Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me

entitlement for all, through the national curriculum, as well as through specific courses in further and higher education where the arts, art, design, technology and computing should be nurtured and developed. We know that for many young people their confidence and passion for learning are ignited when the education system provides them with the opportunity to express their creative ability. Arts, humanities and creative and technical learning can offer the opportunity to re-engage disaffected students but also, as highlighted in the recent US Reinvesting in Arts Education report, there is a clear link between good arts education and standards in literacy and numeracy.

We are concerned that recent developments, including the 100% cut to teaching grants for arts and humanities degrees, the exclusion of creative and technical subjects from the English Baccalaureate, the government's questioning of whether they have a place in the national curriculum, and severe cuts in teacher training allocations for these subjects, all send out the wrong message. We urge ministers across government to come together and adopt coherent and integrated policies which will ensure that creativity and innovation are at the heart of what our future education system offers. This is in the best interests of our society, our economy, and the young people who will determine our country's destiny.

Feargal Sharkey Chief executive, UK Music

Lord Puttnam

Patrick Stewart

Sir John Sorrell co-chair, the Sorrell Foundation

Ben Evans Director, London Design festival

Clive Jones Chairman, London Metropolitan University; Skillset patron

John Steers General secretary, National Society for Education in Art & Design

Joan McVittie Headteacher, Woodside Hill high school and president of



Watch a clip from the documentary about cult band Big Star

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The one film to watch this week

Peter Bradshaw recommends Norte, the End of History

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the Association of School and College Leaders

Pete Hall Jones Chief executive, the Curriculum Foundation

Richard Gerver Education speaker and author

Paul Thompson Rector, Royal College of Art

Billy Ivory Playwright

Andy Payne Chairman, UKIE

Patrick McKenna Chief executive, Ingenious Media

Paul Collard Chief executive, Creativity, Culture and Education

Martin Bright Chief executive, New Deal of the Mind

Marc Jaffrey OBE Former Champion Music Manifesto

Sir Ken Robinson Chair of the 1998 "All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture, and Education" national commission

Professor Robin Alexander Director, Cambridge Primary Review

That really was a cheap shot

I'm writing in response to your report that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic shooting events would be excluded from the Get Set Ticketshare scheme ("[Wary mayor's office shoots itself in the foot](#)", Sport).

I am happy to clarify that this story was based on inaccurate reporting of my position. I do not support a ban on tickets for shooting or any other Olympic or Paralympic sports. This decision was taken by the London 2012 Organising Committee (Locog) following consultation with teachers.

It's my view that if a pupil can watch a sport on television they should also be able to do so in our fantastic Olympic venues and I have made this view clear to Locog.

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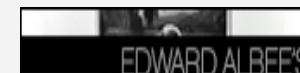
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Enter to win 2 tickets to see A Delicate Balance

With more than 100,000 tickets available for the shooting events, which sold out very quickly, I have no doubt that the London 2012 Games will raise the profiles of these demanding and tense sports in the UK and beyond.

Boris Johnson

Mayor of London , London SE1

Shun middle-class meddlers

Alex Clark's otherwise excellent article ("[Be careful how you preach the benefits of the work ethic](#)", Comment) about the proposed Working Families Everywhere scheme omitted to mention one essential issue – how are these modern-day "Lady Bountifuls" going to get into the homes of the "troubled families" who are to be targeted by the "family champions"?

I am a (retired) qualified and experienced social worker with extensive experience of working with such families. I managed to be welcomed by them because I am working class, have personal experience of teenage parenthood, homelessness etc. It was made very clear to me that I would not have got past the front door had I been "an interfering, nosy, snobby, middle-class cow" (as their previous social workers had, allegedly, been).

Josette Morgan

Bedfordshire

The truth about housing policy

Your editorial ("[Further urban sprawl solves nothing](#)"), which states that councils will be required to draw up plans for 20% more houses under the draft national planning policy framework, is not correct.

The draft framework does not set national housing targets or require councils to provide more houses than are needed; it simply asks councils to identify and plan to meet the needs of their local communities.

Councils already identify a long-term supply of land for possible housing



on Broadway!

development but it is often the case that some of that land initially earmarked turns out not to be suited for development.

Greg Clark MP

Decentralisation minister, London SW1

Posh Spice is a class act

While I agree with most of Carol Sarler's article ("[The true sin of Sally Bercow](#)", Comment), I am surprised that she believes Victoria Beckham owes her fame to her husband.

The Spice Girls were phenomenally successful before Victoria even met David. More recently, her fashion line has been well reviewed and has acquired an impressive clientele.

Rich and famous, yes, a celebrity, certainly, but not simply because of her husband.

Judith Carnwell

Stamford

Lincs



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