

The Washington Post
12/6/91

...and that they would have a strong voice concerning political reform in Japan.

...the Japanese people were sick of war and welcomed the commitment to peace and political reform embodied in their

are renounced.

THEODORE MCNELLY
College Park

Test Scores Still Count

I take exception to one point in Iris Rotberg's otherwise useful analysis of international test-score comparisons ["What Test Scores Don't Measure," op-ed, Nov. 21]. It illustrates how easy it is to fall prey to the type of confusion she decried.

Twice she referred to the quality and productivity of U.S. science and engineering, implying that this is evidence that our low international ranking in science and math scores is misleading. Yet a significant percentage of "the quality of our scientific output and the skills of our science and engineering majors" is due to the large number of top-ranking foreign graduates who come to the United States for higher education in these fields.

The U.S. educational system is not good enough to maintain on its own the high level of scientific and technological achievement upon which our nation depends.

I agree that simplistic comparisons of international test scores do nothing to "provide a better education for low-income students who attend schools with inadequate resources." As Jonathan Kozol so powerfully demonstrated in his book "Savage Inequalities," this is the difficult challenge the educational establishment must address.

ELISA GRIFFIN WYNN
Falls Church

Help for Kids With Learning Disabilities

I was surprised to read Marguerite Kelly's column responding to a letter from the mother of a child with learning disabilities, Tourette's syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder [Style Plus, Nov. 14]. She stated that allergies are often the cause of these problems and recommended a special diet for the child as a means for these problems to "go away."

Learning disabilities and related disorders are neurologically based. There is no "cure" for these problems, and certainly a change in diet will not make them go away. These problems are not thought to have a physical base, as the columnist suggests; they are known to have one. Marguerite Kelly failed to recommend the most accepted methods of dealing with such children.

The child had been in special education, but the mother stated that such schools were expensive. Marguerite Kelly never mentioned that under federal law, the school system is required to either place children with special needs in a suitable public school program or pay their tuition in a private school. With the right education, learning-disabled students can reach their potential in school and, ultimately, in life.

In addition, the columnist plays down the importance of treating learn-

ing-disabled children with drugs. While a child with Tourette's syndrome is not a good candidate for Ritalin, the drug does offer much help to a vast number of children with attention-deficit disorders and hyperactivity. Moreover there is no indication that Ritalin is addictive, as the Marguerite Kelly suggests.

Finally, the mother states that her son gets along well with adults but has poor peer relationships. The mother describes a common situation for learning-disabled children; she should have been informed this is to be expected and is not a strange situation.

Raising a learning-disabled child is a difficult task for any parent. It is essential that parents learn all they can about coping with the problem. Marguerite Kelly does these parents a disservice by stating that the problem can go away by following a special diet and discrediting the enormous benefits of proper drug treatment. Most important, these children need special education if they are to succeed in life. It is unfortunate that she neglected these critical issues.

SUZAN FRIEDMAN
President
Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County
Bethesda

Hunting a Communist Drug Connection