

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

Hot, Flat and Crowded, Why We Need a Green Revolution – And How It Can Renew America

Thomas L. Friedman, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.

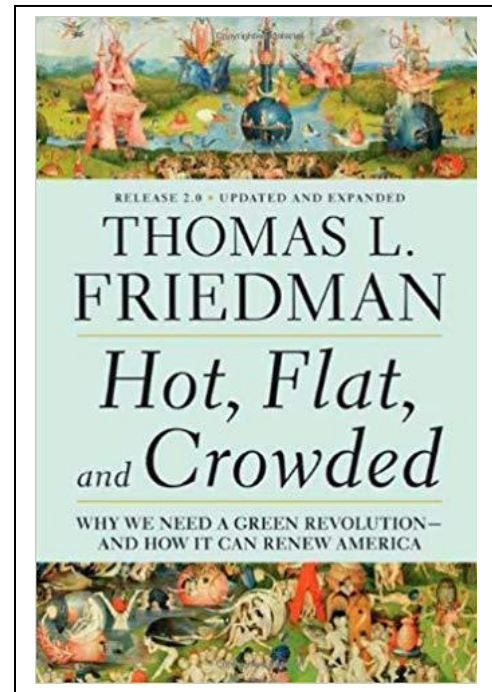
A Picture of a Coherent Future.

Thomas Friedman quotes from the movie *The Leopard*... "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change". A great summary of our situation; a challenge to the things we value and want to preserve. What confronts us is a void. We have yet to re-state our fundamental values as a people in the post-Cold War period. We have yet to find our next destination and the path towards it...and the world is not waiting for us. These 2008 observations continue to be valid.

Thomas Friedman.

Thomas Friedman has expanded his thoughts of a "flat world" and now views the world ***Hot, Flat, and Crowded***. He previews his conclusion with his sub-title "***Why We Need a Green Revolution – and How It Can Save America***".

In addition to his unique analysis, he gives us a mission, a program and a path. Prescience understates Mr. Friedman's 2008 insights that still resonate in expanded form in the world of 2019.



Mr. Friedman starts off with three broad trends he saw in 2008:

1. Since 9/11 we are building more walls than ever and disconnecting ourselves from the world,
2. In America, "dumb as ya' wanna be" is an attitude of growing popularity. "We will get to it when we feel like getting to it [crumbling infrastructure, Social Security, etc.]and it will never catch up to us because we're America."
3. We are "nation-building" at home. This book was written prior to the economic melt-down in the Fall of 2008, however, the thought still resonates as infrastructure and re-building domestic systems are moving, slowly, to the fore of the American political agenda. [Editor's Note: This may not be as true in 2019 as it was in 2008.]

Friedman goes on: We do not fully comprehend the advancement of technology, civic infrastructure and education occurring in the rest of the world. We believe what we have is ok; only 20% of Americans have passports so less than one in five Americans actually experience our relative decline [Editor's Note: 42% of Americans had passports in January 2018; but the point is still valid, the world is moving on]. A visit to Berlin or Singapore will provide overwhelming visual evidence of global progress that exceeds United States status.

The American multinational corporations get it; they are moving off shore, sometimes for cost-savings, other times to get better infrastructure. The rest of us may be content to slowly, and unknowingly, decline into global mediocrity, and hence a more precarious state of prosperity.

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

"The convergence of global warming, global flattening and global crowding is driving those five big problems – energy supply and demand, petrodicatorship, climate change, energy poverty, and biodiversity loss..." "All five of these key problems have been building for years." "How we handle these five problems will determine whether we have peace and security, economic growth and human rights in the coming years."

"So what emerged after World War II was a consensus that the world had to come together and provide a framework for three big things if it was going to survive and prosper: peace and security, economic development and human rights." "And if they could just get those three big things right for most people, the world would be OK." "Each of these goals, noted [John] Dernbach, was eventually enshrined in one or more global institutions or treaties – peace and security in the United Nations charter, economic development and integration in the General Treaty on Tariffs and Trade (as well as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization), and the promotion of human rights through the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Accords." The world created world systems to address specifically identified world problems.

The environment was an issue, but it was generally ignored until the 1980's. Mr. Friedman recites the history of environmental global discussions: the Brundtland Commission in 1987, then the Montreal Protocol, then the Rio Conference in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.

The Paris Agreement: At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal.

"Europe has managed to rein in oil consumption through a [strategic] combination of high gasoline taxes, small cars and efficient public transportation." The point is not to follow the European strategy; the point is that they have a strategy. A vocal segment of America recently chanted a strategy – "Drill, baby, drill". Not an enlightened call for long-term survival and prosperity. We can do better.

Mr. Friedman again,

- "...the First Law of Petropolitics: As the price of oil goes up, the pace of freedom goes down..."
- "...the Second Law of Petropolitics -Today, you cannot be either an effective foreign policy realist or an effective democracy-promoting idealist without also being an effective energy-saving environmentalist."
- "...going green is no longer simply a hobby for the high-minded environmentalist or some 'personal virtue'...it is now a national imperative."

"...the total cost of ownership..." includes the 'free services' such as those offered by streams and lakes that absorb pollutants and air that absorbs greenhouse gases. "The two parties in the transaction are the manufacturer and the consumer. But there is an externality being paid for by third parties – global society and planet earth." "...it is the government's job to step in and shape the market to correct that failure [the failure to include the price of externalities in the cost of goods and services]"

"We want government setting the right tax policies, regulatory policies, education policies, and funding the basic research that pushes out the boundaries of materials science, chemistry, physics, biology and nanotechnology – preparing all the soil, so the market and the venture capitalists can pick off whichever sprouts look most likely to make the difficult transition from drawing board to marketplace."

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

Conclusion.

"This is a systems problem." "The first rule of systems is that everything is connected." "If you take only one thing away from this book, please take this: We are not going to regulate our way out of the problems of the Energy-Climate Era. We can only innovate our way out, and the only way to do that is to mobilize the most effective and prolific system of transformational innovation and commercialization of new products ever created on the face of the earth – the U.S. marketplace."

Published Reviews.

Hot, Flat and Crowded, Why We Need a Green Revolution – And How It Can Renew America; Thomas L. Friedman; Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2008.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/05/books/review/Freedland-t.html?pagewanted=all>

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/27/politics.climatechange>

<http://www.nationalstrategy.com/NSFReview/StrategicOutlook2008NationalSecurityIssues/BookReviewHotFlatandCrowded.aspx>

Books That Relate.

1. ***Citistates, How Urban America Can Prosper in a Competitive World***, Neal R. Peirce with Curtis W. Johnson and John Stuart Hall, Seven Locks Press, Washington D.C., 359 pages, 1993.
2. ***Customer Service.Gov: Technology Tools and Customer Service Principles for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Government***, [Bruce McClendon](#) (Author), [Mac Birch](#) (Contributor), [Ray Quay](#) (Contributor), CityGate Press, Folsom CA, 490 pages, 2013.
3. ***Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth***, Fuller, R. Buckminster [1885-1983], Southern Illinois University Press, 1969. Pocket Book edition published November, 1970; 7th printing, October, 1974.
4. ***State-Building, Governance and the New World Order in the 21st Century***, Francis Fukuyama, Cornell University Press, 2004.
5. ***The Art of the Long View, Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World***, Peter Schwartz, Currency Doubleday; 2001.
6. ***The Big Nine, How the Tech Titans & Their Thinking Machines Could Warp Humanity***; Amy Webb, Public Affairs, The Hatchett Book Group, NY, 2019.
7. ***The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time***, Jeffrey D. Sachs, Penguin Books; 2005.
8. ***The Future of Freedom, Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad***, Fareed Zakaria, W.W. Norton & Company; 2003.
9. ***The Great Reset, How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity***; Richard Florida, HarperCollins Publishers, ISBN 978-0-06-193719-4; 2010.
10. ***The Soros Lectures at the Central European University***, George Soros, Perseus Book Group; 2010.
11. ***The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability--Designing for Abundance***, William McDonough, Michael Braungart, North Point Press, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013.
12. ***The World is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century***; Thomas L. Friedman, Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2005.
13. ***Thinking in Systems, A Primer***, Donella H. Meadows, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction VT, 2008.

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

14. *Triumph of the City, How our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*, Edward Glaeser, The Penguin Press [USA], London, 2011.