

Thomas Friedman

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Thomas L. Friedman (born July 20, 1953) is an American journalist, columnist and author, currently working as an Op-Ed columnist for the *New York Times*. His columns, concentrating mainly on foreign affairs, appear in the Op-Ed page on Wednesdays and Fridays. Friedman is known for advocating a compromise peace between Israel and the Palestinians, modernization of the Arab world and globalization, while sometimes remarking on their potential pitfalls. His books address various aspects of international politics, from a centrist, neoliberal perspective on the political spectrum. Because of his writings, he has been called "technology-obsessed".



Thomas L. Friedman

Contents

- 1 Early life
- 2 Journalism in the Middle East
- 3 Return to the United States, New York Times column
- 4 Friedman on globalization
- 5 Friedman after 9/11
- 6 Documentaries
- 7 Bibliography
 - 7.1 See also
 - 7.2 Trivia
- 8 External links

Early life

Friedman was born in the Minneapolis, Minnesota suburb St. Louis Park. As a child, he attended a Jewish summer camp where a young Abe Foxman was a counselor. In high school, Friedman wrote for his school's paper *The Echo* (<http://www.slpschools.org/sh/Echo/First%20One/Frame%20Set/Front%20Page1.html>), including one article in which he interviewed then Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

He received a B.A. degree in Mediterranean studies from Brandeis University in 1975. After college, Friedman attended St Antony's College at Oxford University on a Marshall scholarship, receiving an MA in Middle Eastern studies. Friedman lists Professor Albert Hourani among his important academic influences.

Journalism in the Middle East

After graduating he joined the London bureau of United Press International, staying there for a year before being dispatched to Beirut, where he stayed from 1979 to 1981. He was then hired by the *New York Times*, which re-dispatched him to Beirut in 1982, where he soon witnessed the first phase of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Friedman's coverage of the war, and in particular the Sabra and Shatila massacre, won him the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting.

He was assigned to Jerusalem from 1984 to 1988, where he won another Pulitzer for his coverage of the first Palestinian Intifada, following this posting with a book, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, describing his experiences in

the Middle East.

Return to the United States, New York Times column

During the administration of George H.W. Bush, he covered Secretary of State James Baker; following the election of Bill Clinton, he became the *Times'* White House correspondent. After covering the White House until 1994, he covered the intersection of foreign policy and economics. He then moved to the op-ed page of the *Times* as a foreign affairs columnist in 1995.

As a columnist, Friedman initially focused on his previous beat, looking at the intersection of global politics and finance. This look at globalization was summarized in his 1999 book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. The two objects in the title symbolized the interaction between globalization and local tradition: the Lexus represented a desire for material wealth and a higher standard of living, while the Olive Tree represented a desire for heritage, community, and uniqueness in a global world. The book also discussed the role of new technology in reshaping global politics, especially the rise of the Internet and telecommunications.

Friedman on globalization

Friedman's main thesis is that individual nations must sacrifice a degree of economic sovereignty to global institutions (such as capital markets, multinational corporations, and NGOs like the International Monetary Fund), in order to achieve Western-style economic prosperity. Friedman termed these restrictions the "Golden Straitjacket." He also argues that the U.S. should use its military power to maintain the dominance of global financial institutions in the face of any opposition that may arise: "McDonald's needs MacDonnell-Douglass." This stance draws criticism from groups that oppose these global institutions, especially those that charge that globalization actually restricts prosperity in developing countries. In particular, Friedman was criticised for presenting the views and experiences only of elite members of developing societies such as political and business leaders. He was also criticised for advocating the use of American military force to maintain the stability of the global economy. However, he has been widely praised for his strong stance on America's geopolitical, economic, and security need to become more energy independent. He believes this would force the authoritarian rulerships in the Middle East to join the global market, help strengthen America's economy by basing its energy infrastructure on domestic products, and ease the tensions in the burgeoning global energy demand. Finally, it should be indicated that while Friedman is an advocate of globalization, he also points out (in "The Lexus and the Olive Tree") the need for a country to preserve its local traditions even as it globalizes, a process he describes as "glocalization".

Friedman after 9/11

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, Friedman's writing focused more on the threat of terrorism, for which he won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary ("for his clarity of vision, based on extensive reporting, in commenting on the worldwide impact of the terrorist threat"). These columns were collected and published as the book "Longitudes and Attitudes." Friedman supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq, saying that the establishment of a democratic state in the Middle East might force other countries to liberalize and modernize as well, although he has since expressed alarm over the conduct of the war by the George W. Bush administration. Nevertheless, his recent columns have remained at least open to the possibility of a positive outcome to the Iraq conflict. In January 2004 he participated in a forum on Slate.com called "Liberal Hawks Reconsider the Iraq War," in which he stated:

"the right reason for this war, as I argued before it started, was to oust Saddam's regime and partner with the Iraqi people to try to implement the Arab Human Development report's prescriptions in the heart of the Arab world. That report said the Arab world is falling off the globe because of a lack of freedom, women's

empowerment, and modern education. The right reason for this war was to partner with Arab moderates in a long-term strategy of dehumiliation and redignification."

After the 7 July 2005 London bombings, Friedman called for the U.S. State Department to begin producing a "War of Ideas Report" that would spotlight religious leaders and writers advocating violence as well as anyone who suggests that "imperialism, zionism, colonialism or Iraq" explains why the terrorists acted. "These excuse makers are just one notch less despicable than the terrorists and also deserve to be exposed," he said in his 22 July column. Critics at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting point to this as part of a wider trend to marginalise and censor critics of U.S. foreign policy.[1] (<http://www.indexonline.org/en/news/articles/2005/3/united-states-a-new-blacklist-for-excuse-mak.shtml>)

Documentaries

Friedman has also hosted several documentaries for the Discovery Channel from various locations around the world. In "Straddling the Fence" (2003), he visited the West Bank and spoke to Israelis and Palestinians about the Israeli security fence and its impact on their lives. Also in 2003, "Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9-11" aired on the Discovery Times Channel. This program investigated the reason for Muslim hatred of the United States, and how the Sept. 11th attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and The Pentagon were viewed in the Muslim world. In "The Other Side of Outsourcing" (2004), he visited a call center in Bangalore, interviewing the young Indians working there, and then travelled to an impoverished rural part of India, where he debated the pros and cons of globalization with locals (this trip spawned his eventual bestselling book "The World is Flat"). In "Does Europe Hate Us?" (2005), he travelled through Britain, France and Germany, talking with academics, journalists, Marshall and Rhodes scholars, young Muslims and others about the nature of the strained relationship between Europe and the United States.

Bibliography

- *The World Is Flat: A Brief History Of The Twenty-first Century* (2005) ISBN 0374292884
- *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World After September 11* (2002) ISBN 0374190666
- *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999) ISBN 0374185522
- *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (1989) ISBN 0374158940, (updated 1990) ISBN 0385413726

See also

- List of famous Minnesotans

Trivia

Friedman is an avid fan of golf.

External links



Wikiquote has a collection of quotations related to:
Thomas Friedman

Thomas L. Friedman (<http://www.thomaslfriedman.com/>) official Web site

- *New York Times* columns
(<http://www.nytimes.com/top/opinion/editorialsandoped/oped/columnists/thomaslfriedman/>)

- The Wooden Robot (<http://www.thewoodenrobot.com/timesselect.html>) takes on Thomas Friedman
- Washington Week biography (<http://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/aroundthetable/friedman.html>)
- Amazon.com interview (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/feature/-/562744>)
- C-SPAN In Depth (<http://www.booktv.org/indepth/index.asp?segid=5669&schedID=343>) Three-hour video interview
- Thomas Friedman: What makes the Timesman a great columnist? Not that peace proposal. (<http://slate.msn.com/?id=2062905>)
- Interview with Oliver Burkeman of *The Guardian* (<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12956,1012490,00.html>)
- Slate forum: Liberal Hawks Reconsider the Iraq War (<http://slate.msn.com/id/2093620/entry/2093641/#back>)
- FLATMAN I'm sorry, but the world's still round (<http://svaradarajan.blogspot.com/2005/08/im-sorry-but-worlds-still-round.html>) criticism by Siddharth Varadarajan
- The Geraldo Rivera of the New York Times (<http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Nov2003/herman1103.html>) criticism By *Edward S. Herman*, Z Magazine, November 2003
- The Moustache of Understanding (http://www.mnftiu.cc/mnftiu.cc/moustache_of_understanding.html) cartoon parody by David Rees
- Friedman's September 18, 2002 column "Iraq Upside-Down" with commentary by Aron Shtull-Trauring (http://www.shtull-trauring.org/aron/aron/Community/Articles/Iraq_Upside_Down.html)
- "Thomas Friedman Is a Great Man" parody site (<http://thomasfriedmanisagreatman.blogspot.com/>)
- "T. Friederman Goes to Turkey" a pop culture reference to Friedman (<http://www.thewoodenrobot.com/timesselect.html>)
- "The Strategic Class" by Ari Berman discusses Friedman's role in underwriting the agenda of pro-war Democrats (<http://www.thenation.com/docprint.mhtml?i=20050829&s=berman>)
- "Back at the Wheel. Thomas Friedman just loves to grind the gears" (<http://www.nypress.com/16/46/news&columns/cage.cfm>) A critique of Thomas Friedman's writing style by Matt Taibbi
- "The Quest for Symbols" by Said Shirazi (http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Articles/Shirazi_Friedman.htm) - A rhetoric analysis of Friedman's prose
- The World Is Made of Nations, Not Markets (http://larouchepub.com/other/2005/book_reviews/3245world_is_flat.html) by Nancy Spannaus Executive Intelligence Review
- "Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9-11" (http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v_id=284171) The New York Times synopsis of the Discovery Channel documentary of the same name.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Friedman"

Categories: 1953 births | Columnists | Former students of St Antony's College, Oxford | Jewish-American journalists | Jewish American writers | Living people | New York Times people | Pulitzer Prize winners

-
- This page was last modified 02:49, 19 March 2006.
 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License (see **Copyrights** for details).
 - Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.
 - Privacy policy
 - About Wikipedia
 - Disclaimers