

10 Questions.

The columnist's new book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, is out Sept. 8. **Thomas Friedman will now take your questions**



Next Questions
Ask Mario Batali your questions for an upcoming interview, at time.com/10questions

What moved you to write *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*?

Louland Escabusa

MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES
I spent two years doing documentaries for the Discovery Channel on energy and the environment, and it was really after that I realized something big had happened. The "flat" in *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* is my shorthand for the rise of middle classes all over the world. If this many people are able to live like Americans, the energy and environment implications will be explosive.

Which technologies do you think will emerge as primary drivers of renewable energy?

Bryan Massie

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Do you know what my favorite renewable fuel is? An ecosystem for innovation. That's really what we're missing today—100,000 people out there trying 100,000 different things in 100,000 different garages. Who knows what will come out of that?

Is 10 years a meaningful time frame for anything significant to happen in U.S. energy-consumption patterns?

Seth Frank, SAN FRANCISCO

I don't know whether 10 years is realistic, but I love the idea of an aspirational goal that we can all get mobilized behind. Americans love to reach for the impossible. They love to be challenged that way.

Why does the average American pay so little attention to the lack of a comprehensive U.S. energy policy?

Robert McElcar

SIMPSONVILLE, S.C.



Thomas F. Friedman

SEPT. 2, 2008

So much of it has to do with leadership. For the last eight years we've had a President and Vice President who have basically said our use of oil is a God-given right. Imagine if our President said tomorrow, I'm going to get rid of my armor-plated limousine and I'm going to have an armor-plated Ford Escape hybrid.

Given the environmental challenges facing China, is there any chance that it will seize the green initiative from the U.S.?

Gino Tabacchi, ST. LOUIS, MO.
We say that necessity is the mother of invention, and no country has more of a necessity to develop clean power than China. If we don't lead, someone else will, and China is a very likely candidate.

It seems unlikely that we can continue to support the low-density demographics of much of America. How can we sell the public on the advantages of urban density?

Greg Dressler

ANN ARBOR, MICH.

I think it's got to be a part of a larger understanding. We've gone from thinking the fuels that powered our growth were inexpensive, inexhaustible and benign to understanding they are exhaustible, expensive and toxic. Once you frame the problem that way, people will look at solutions differently.

What do you think the next President has to do to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

Samir Al-Otaibi, DALLAS

I think the plan that President Clinton laid out is the foundation for Israeli-Palestinian peace. Unfortunately, both societies are so broken internally, it will take an American diplomatic initiative to get the two parties to make peace.

What course will outsourcing take in the near future?

Stephen Frank, TORONTO

If it makes economic sense for the parties engaged, it will happen. If you're in the business world, you'd better make sure it is done by you and not to you.

Do you think America will lose its scientific and technological edge in the next 10 years?

Ali Khan, CHICAGO

I am a radical pro-immigration advocate, because I believe that our ability to cream off the first-round intellectual draft choices from around the world remains one of our great competitive advantages. We should pin a green card to any foreign student who comes here and gets a Ph.D.

What is the one thing that every person in the world needs to know about energy policy?

Victor Spinelli, AMBRIDGE, PA.

Former Saudi oil minister Sheik Ahmed Zaki Yamani once said, "The Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones." The oil age will not end because we've run out of oil. It will end because people invent alternatives.



VIDEO AT TIME.COM

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Thomas Fried-

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