



American Resource Center Newsletter U.S. Embassy Helsinki November/December 2015, Issue 10

Great Decisions: Bringing Participants Together to Discuss U.S. Foreign Policy

This fall the American Resource Center organized the Great Decisions discussion group for the second year in Finland. Great Decisions is the United States' largest discussion program on world affairs by the Foreign Policy Association. Participants are provided with materials on the most critical global issues facing America today and have the opportunity to meet weekly for discussion sessions. This year a

bright, enthusiastic group of 15 participants met for eight weeks, covering topics ranging from Syria's refugee crisis to privacy in the digital age to sectarianism in the Middle East.

The final meeting of the year was hosted at the U.S. Embassy Innovation Center where Deputy Chief of Mission Susan Elbow and Assistant Public Affairs Officer Jeanie Duwan welcomed the participants and the moderator of the group, Marko Korkeakoski.



“All Involved” Tells About Six Life-Changing Days in 1992

American author Ryan Gattis visited Finland in November. His novel “All Involved” has just been translated into Finnish as “Vihan kadut.” We invited him to visit Gaudeamus Kirja & Kahvi where he was interviewed by Nora Varjama from the publishing house Like on November 9th. “All Involved” tells about the 1992 Los Angeles riots by interconnected stories of seventeen characters over six days.

A review of the book is available at [Helsingin Sanomat website](#).



WebPicks

collected by the ARC staff

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American Life

America's Green Giant by Martin Filler. The New York Review of Books, November 5, 2015.

Besides being an experimental farmer, prolific journalist, crusading publisher, military health care reformer, and insightful social critic, Frederick Law Olmsted was also the greatest advocate and impresario of the public realm America has ever produced.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/nov/05/frederick-law-olmsted-americas-green-giant/>

The Exemplary Narcissism of Snoopy by Sarah Boxer. The Atlantic, November 2015.

Charles Schulz's comic strip endures because it sparks moral arguments over how to survive in a bitter social world.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/11/the-exemplary-narcissism-of-snoopy/407827/>

Meet the U.S. Ambassador Who's a Reality-TV Star in Denmark by Lisa Liebman. Vanity Fair, November 16, 2015.

Rufus Gifford is changing the way Danes see Americans, one episode at a time.

<http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/11/rufus-gifford-ambassador-tv-show>

Overseas Students Pour Into Some American Campuses, but Other Colleges Haven't Kept Up With the Growth by Karin Fischer. The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 16, 2015.

The United States is experiencing an international-student boom. But that boom is not being shared equally by all colleges.

http://chronicle.com/article/Overseas-Students-Pour-Into/234200?cid=trend_right_h

Raising Kids and Running a Household: How Working Parents Share the Load. Pew Research Center report, November 4, 2015.

As more mothers have entered the U.S. workforce in the past several decades, the share of two-parent households in which both parents work full time now stands at 46%, up from 31% in 1970.

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/11/04/raising-kids-and-running-a-household-how-working-parents-share-the-load/>

Silicon Valley's New Philanthropy by Alessandra Stanley. The New York Times, October 31, 2015.

The enduring credo of Silicon Valley is that innovation, not money, is its guiding purpose and that world-changing technology is its true measure of worth. Wealth is treated as a pleasant byproduct, a bit like weight loss after rugged adventure travel.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/opinion/siliconvalleys-new-philanthropy.html?_r=0

Economy & Politics

Employer Political Coercion: A Growing Threat by Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. The American Prospect, Fall 2015, pp. 12-15.

The letters warned that workers might "suffer the consequences" if the company's favored candidates were not elected. A renewable energy company whose executives I interviewed reported that it encouraged its workers to contact their members of Congress in an effort to renew a federal tax credit for wind energy, warning its workers of the decline in sales of their products if the credit were to expire. In the wake of a number of highly publicized episodes of racial violence, Starbucks executives launched a campaign for their baristas to start conversations with their patrons about race relations in America. According to the best research on these trends by Kate Bronfenbrenner, it is now standard practice for workers to be "subjected to threats, interrogation, harassment, surveillance, and retaliation for union activity."

<http://prospect.org/article/employer-political-coercion-growing-threat>

Men's Lib! by Richard V. Reeves and Isabel V. Sawhill. The New York Times, November 14, 2015.

Richard Reeves discusses his recent New York Times op-ed, co-authored with Isabel Sawhill, on the economic and social transformations that demand today's men be more like women.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/15/opinion/sunday/mens-lib.html?_r=0

The Planet-Saving, Capitalism-Subverting, Surprisingly Lucrative Investment Secrets of Al Gore by James Fallows. The Atlantic Monthly, November 2015.

The former vice president has led his firm to financial success. But what he really wants to do is create a whole new version of capitalism.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/11/the-planet-saving-capitalism-subverting-surprisingly-lucrative-investment-secrets-of-al-gore/407857/>

Silicon Valley's Most Elusive Beast by Adrian Chen. The New York Times Magazine, October 6, 2015.

Silicon Valley's frenzy for 'unicorns' – the new slang for billion-dollar start-ups – continues a long history of acquisitive yearning for that mythical beast.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/11/magazine/silicon-valleys-most-elusive-beast.html?_r=0

Why Hillary Clinton Can't Win by Going After the NRA by Paul Barrett. Bloomberg Businessweek, October 15, 2015.

Rekindling the culture war with the gun lobby is a losing proposition. Here's what can be done to curb violence.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-10-15/why-hillary-clinton-can-t-win-by-going-after-the-nra>

Global Challenges

The U.S. is the Chair of the Arctic Council from May 2015 through May 2017. We will be highlighting Arctic issues in the WebPicks through the chairmanship.

Atmospheric Greenhouse Gas Levels Hit Record, Report Says by Nicholas St. Fleur. International New York Times, November 10, 2015.

Global concentrations of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere surpassed 400 parts per million for a monthly average this past spring, breaching a symbolic barrier set by climate scientists and policy makers.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/11/science/atmospheric-greenhouse-gas-levels-hit-record-report-says.html>

How to Have the Most Sustainable Thanksgiving Ever by Whitney Pipkin. Smithsonian, November 11, 2015.

Traditions and turkey don't have to be incompatible with Earth-friendly practices

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-have-most-sustainable-thanksgiving-ever-180957007/#ezuOmzguMvycfhw.99>

Lyft's Search for a New Mode of Transport by Ryan Bradley. MIT Technology Review, October 13, 2015.

How Uber's archenemy plans to make the world a better place by building a kind of public transit system from private cars.

<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/541791/lyfts-search-for-a-new-mode-of-transport/>

The Plan to Save the World by Rebecca Leber. Mother Jones, November 9, 2015.

What success at the Paris climate conference looks like.

<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2015/11/paris-climate-change-conference>

This Is How Much Water You Waste When You Throw Away Food by Divya Abhat. Smithsonian, November 16, 2015.

Tossing an apple is like pouring 25 gallons of water down the drain, and the average American does that 17 times a year

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-trashing-food-wastes-water-too-180957239/#x31KP7qSWerQEMdw.99>

Why a Paris Climate Agreement Could Actually Be Very Good for the U.S. by Chelsea Harvey. The Washington Post, November 5, 2015.

With the 2015 UN climate conference looming less than a month away, there's a strong economic reason for the United States to support a strong international agreement to curb carbon emissions, says a new report: There are trillions of dollars to be gained at home from other countries' climate mitigation efforts.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/11/05/why-a-paris-climate-agreement-could-actually-be-very-good-for-the-u-s/>

Arctic Issue: What I Learned on a Luxury Cruise Through the Global-Warming Apocalypse by Roy Scranton. The Nation, October 21, 2015.

To see the Arctic death spiral firsthand, and to see the Arctic before it melted, I took a 17-day "adventure cruise" and learned an inconvenient truth: We can't make it stop.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/what-i-learned-on-an-arctic-cruise-through-the-global-warming-apocalypse/>

Why Universities and Industry Should Collaborate on Climate Change by Robert Armstrong. The Christian Science Monitor, November 9, 2015.

To achieve the kind of environmentally sustainable future we will want our grandchildren to inherit, we need everyone on board, Armstrong writes.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/Energy-Voices/2015/1109/Why-universities-and-industry-should-collaborate-on-climate-change>

International Relations

Fighting ISIS Online by David Talbot. MIT Technology Review, September 30, 2015.

The Islamic State is an Internet phenomenon as much as a military one. Counteracting it will require better tactics on the battlefield of social media.

<http://www.technologyreview.com/review/541801/fighting-isis-online/>

How Refugees Are Selected, Vetted, and Settled in the United States by Jenny Yang. The National Journal, November 23, 2015.

The process can take up to three years to complete.

There are more than 60 million displaced people around the world, including 4 million Syrians who have fled conflict and violence in their home country. The world is witnessing the largest refugee crisis since World War II.

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/s/111312/how-refugees-are-selected-vetted-settled-united-states?mref=landing-big>

Pulp Propaganda by Jeet Heer. New Republic, October 1, 2015.

Roy Crane's Buz Sawyer comics were famous for adventurous battles against America's cold war foes. But no one knew that the U.S. government was behind it all.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/122962/pulp-propaganda-roy-cranes-buz-sawyer-cold-war-comics>

Time to Act on Ukraine by Robert D. Kaplan and Elizabeth Rosenberg. The National Interest, November 24, 2015.

"A deal should involve material and internationally recognized Russian progress toward its Minsk commitments, in exchange for relief from some financial sanctions."

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/time-act-ukraine-14426>

What the Paris Attacks Will Mean for the Upcoming Climate Conference by Rebecca Leber. New Republic, November 17, 2015.

Prior to Friday's deadly terrorist attacks, Paris had been set to host a global party—the UN climate change conference known as COP21—at the end of the month. In scope and tone, there were echoes of the Olympics, with representatives from 127 countries gathering in the spirit of peace and cooperation, and thousands of onlookers flocking to cheer them on to a successful climate agreement. Flashy spectacles were to be as much a part of the entertainment as the negotiations themselves. Climate activists had organized marches on the eve and last day of the conference, and Al Gore planned a weekend concert from the foot of the Eiffel Tower. The climate conference has been years in the making, and boosted by a lot of hype.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/123953/what-the-paris-attacks-will-mean-for-the-upcoming-climate-conference>



“There Shall Be No Night” Finnish-American Relations During World War II



Professor Henrik Meinander

We had the pleasure of hosting journalist and historian Gordon F. Sander at Kaisa Library on November 3.

His presentation “There Shall Be No Night’ Finnish-American relations during World War II” was preceded by an introduction by Professor Henrik Meinander from the Helsinki University.



Historian Gordon Sander



Did You Know?



National Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation is a ceremony that takes place at the White House every year shortly before Thanksgiving. The President of the United States is presented with a live domestic turkey, usually of the Broad Breasted White variety. Generally the National Turkey Federation and the Poultry and Egg National Board are involved. The ceremony dates back to the 1940s, with presidents occasionally sparing the bird presented to them; since 1989, during George H. W. Bush’s first Thanksgiving as president, it has been an annual tradition for the president to “pardon” the turkey.

Thanksgiving is celebrated on November 26. The U.S. Embassy Finland is closed but the ARC remains open. Welcome!

(Read more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Thanksgiving_Turkey_Presentation)



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