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... of our most important contemporaries", is how the New York Times describes *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, by Thomas L. Friedman. "The real problem of the world is not, after all, that the people of it are behaving badly, but that they are behaving well: the crisis of the world is a crisis of good will," Friedman writes, attempting to explain why this century will, among other things, see the creation of a truly global economy. "What matters is not how much money or how many jobs or how many children people have. It is how they have behaved, and how they will behave in the future. This is what makes today's crisis a crisis of the 20th century, not of the 21st." Friedman's new work, a follow-up to his previous best-seller, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1989), *The World Is Flat*, is a nonfiction book that attempts to explain why we are where we are and where we are headed. This book offers new reasons for optimism, offering causes for the current economic crisis. A global economy is now in the offing, he writes, making the world smaller, easier to understand and to trade with. His ten predictions for this century include: China will overtake the United States as the largest economy by 2015, the Arabs will be the major oil producers in the next decade, Europeans will have low unemployment by 2005, and the decline of the American middle class will begin in the late 1990s. Friedman also posits the beginning of a new age for the world, calling it the Information Age and discussing its implications for politics and government, the media, religion, the arts, and more. He discusses the new market for consumer goods, the rise of private health care in many countries, the clash between old and new technologies, the return of terrorism as a geopolitical issue, the economic impact of the end of the Cold War, the development of artificial intelligence, and more. He also looks at how the world is going to change with advances in communications and their effects on the media, the world's economy, and politics and governance. Friedman argues that in many respects, the American century has already begun; he says that its main goal was to create a more just world, not a more powerful one. As the book opens, he calls for a new paradigm of international relations, an end to the Cold War, and the creation of a truly global economy, where 82157476af

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