

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE GROUP

- Central Texas -

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Dr. Francis Gavin

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## "History and Policy: Five Ways to Use History Well"

Policy makers typically ignore or misuse history. They are attracted by simplistic theories and analogies and take little account of huge events outside their policy-making domain. Scholarly historians can cure those blindnesses but are seldom invited to. Specifically, trained historians can help improve policy decisions by bringing the perspectives of vertical history (deep causes), horizontal history (complex linkages), chronological proportionality (many big deals aren't big for long), and unintended consequences (irony abounds), and by recognizing the limits of policy.

Our members suggest:

### Books

*Age of Fracture*, Daniel Rodgers, Belknap/Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, USA, 2011, 360 pgs

*Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History*, Margaret MacMillan, Modern Library, New York, USA, 2008, 188 pgs

*Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Charles MacKay, Wilder Publications, Virginia, USA, 2008, first published in 1841, 360 pgs

*The Historian's Craft*, Marc Bloch, translated from the French by Peter Putnam, Vintage Books, New York, USA, 1953, 197 pgs

*Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, Free Press, New York, USA, 1986, 270 pgs

### Articles

*The Global Budget Race*, D. J. Besharov and D. M. Call, *Wilson Quarterly*, Autumn, 2010, pgs 38-50

Austin booksellers suggest:

*A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, Samantha Power, Harper, New York, USA, 2002-2007, 620 pgs BKP

*Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Jared Diamond, Penguin, London, U.K., 2005/Rev 2011, 589 pgs B&N

*Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others*, David Day, Oxford University Press, Oxford, U.K., 2008, 288 pgs BKP

*How the West Was Lost: Fifty Years of Economic Folly – And the Stark Choices Ahead*, Dambisa Moyo, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, USA, 2011, 226 pgs BKP

*The Age of The Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It*, Joshua Cooper Ramo, Little Brown & Co., U.K., 2010, 288 pgs B&N

*The Fourth Turning*, William Strauss and Neil Howe, Crown Publishing Group, New York, USA, 1997 B&N

*The Great Political Theories: A Comprehensive Selection of the Crucial Ideas in Political Philosophy, Vol. 2*, ed. Michael Curtis, Harper Perennial, New York, USA, 2008, first published by Avon in 1962, 496 pgs BKP

*The Lessons of History*, Will Durant and Ariel Durant, Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, New York, USA, 2010, 117 pgs B&N

*The Philosophy of History*, Mark Day, Continuum, London, U.K., 2008, 255 pgs BKP

*The Tyranny of Dead Ideas: Revolutionary Thinking for a New Age of Prosperity*, Matt Miller, Holt, New York, USA, 2010, 258 pgs BKP

*Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, Daniel Drezner, Princeton University Press, Princeton, USA, 2011, 136 pgs B&N

*Why the West Rules - For Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal about the Future*, Ian Morris, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, USA, 2010, 400 pgs B&N

B&N = Barnes & Noble

BKP = Book People