

## Weekend Reading Suggestions

October 23, 2010 by [Grover Cleveland](#)

1. Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute has [a new policy paper](#) that makes the case for the pending Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with South Korea. Bottom line up front: "Although the accord is not perfect, it would substantially increase access to the South Korean market. Both the Republic of Korea and the United States would benefit from increased exports, economic growth, and job creation."

2. I had hoped to have a full review of Damon Linker's [new book](#) by now, but other projects have intruded. One is certainly forthcoming. In the meantime, read his piece in the [Washington Post](#) that argues for a religious test for political candidates.

Update: Add a third, Charles Murray's [op-ed from Sunday on the New Elite](#). Key section:

There so many quintessentially American things that few members of the New Elite have experienced. They probably haven't ever attended a meeting of a Kiwanis Club or Rotary Club, or lived for at least a year in a small town (college doesn't count) or in an urban neighborhood in which most of their neighbors did not have college degrees (gentrifying neighborhoods don't count). They are unlikely to have spent at least a year with a family income less than twice the poverty line (graduate school doesn't count) or to have a close friend who is an evangelical Christian. They are unlikely to have even visited a factory floor, let alone worked on one.

Taken individually, members of the New Elite are isolated from mainstream America as a result of lifestyle choices that are nobody's business but their own. But add them all up, and they mean that the New Elite lives in a world that doesn't intersect with mainstream America in many important ways. When the tea party says the New Elite doesn't get America, there is some truth in the accusation.

Interesting, but what is the real danger of these out of touch Americans? Enter [Arnold Kling](#), who nails it (with Hayek's voice in the background, whispering "fatal conceit") even though there is less disagreement between the two than Kling suggests:

I am going to disagree with the thrust of Murray's article, which is that the problem of the elite is that they are out of touch with much of America. I think instead that the problem is that those in the elite who go into politics believe that they know more than they really do. In my view, we are in a "cycle of failure," in which policies fail, political leaders respond by usurping more power ("we need to strengthen regulation"), failures get worse, more power gets usurped, etc.

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### WHAT IS A PILEUS?

In ancient Rome, a pileus was a felt cap given to slaves upon receiving their freedom. Since then, this simple cap has been a powerful symbol of liberty.

### MEET THE AUTHORS

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