



ISSUE BRIEF

Deterioration of domestic consensus and effective governance

Confusion about the purpose of our national security strategies, even while maintaining commitment to our global primacy

Analyses of threats are useful and relevant to the evolution of an American national security strategy, but our strategy should start by focusing on what endures and empowers America. America's foundational strengths include:

1. America's values: These include freedom, a commitment that government should reflect the will of the people, the "rule of law, a culture of tolerance, a decentralized distribution of economic and political power," and equality and opportunity.
2. America's settled system of governance: "It is a safe bet that the US government will be belated, inefficient, and often misdirected as it comes to grips with essential problems. Nonetheless, it is important to observe how advantaged Americans are because we have had a continuous system of government for two and a quarter centuries and sustain consensus (however rough) about essential rules and boundaries that regulate this system."
3. The human capital of the United States: "Americans have been remarkably courageous, committed, disciplined, honest, educated, adaptive, and innovative. One by one, these attributes are not unique to Americans, but the combination permeates US forces and indeed American society. This yields substantial advantages."
4. America's physical advantages: "America's size and variety . . . cushion it from effects of disasters, both natural and human-made, that might be disabling for other nations."
5. The economic engine of the United States: "American productivity, trade, and capital markets give Americans access to, insight into, and expertise about technologies that have both civilian and military applications. These are remaking warf2.8)T036.3 (ili2.7 (2)-1 a 0w 12UTf0c 0 (m c-3 (ar)w 0 0hension