



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE  
PRESIDENCY & CONGRESS

# A Time of Testing

*Applying the lessons of history to the challenges of today*



2021

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# A Time of Testing

The past year provided a dramatic stress test of our national fabric. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic freefall tested the ability of our politics and our people to meet a once-in-a-century threat. Gross civil rights violations and the worst civil unrest in half a century tested our society's ability to come to terms with a history of systemic racial injustice. A tumultuous presidential campaign and a post-election period marred by unfounded allegations of widespread voting fraud tested our democracy. Increasing provocations and challenges from major powers China and Russia, and distress among traditional allies, tested the tenor of America's global leadership.

During this time of testing, the work of the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) was shaped by all of these profound challenges. Yet, as we begin a new year our spirits are lifted by a sense of optimism. There are vaccines on the horizon that could end the health crisis and open the economy, allowing us to reconnect with the world. A new administration promises to restore American leadership and its close ties with key allies. Presidential elections are themselves rituals of national renewal, offering hope of a fresh start on the never finished business of building a more perfect union.

## Our Work in 2021

In the coming year, we will seek to translate the lessons learned in our national security programs to the changing dynamic of a new administration and a shifting geopolitical landscape. Cooperation with allies on digital trade and supply chains, data governance and investment in advancing technologies will become even more vital as we seek to leverage the community of democracies as a force multiplier. A strategic approach to space as a national se-



curity domain, and the further integration of commercial space capabilities, will remain a key source of national strength and focus. Nuclear arms control discussions between the United States and Russia, and the need for greater bipartisan congressional engagement based on successful arms control paradigms of the past, will be another key focal point of our work. In all of these areas we will bring together key stakeholders from Congress, the Executive Branch and the private sector in search of innovative solutions to the challenges we face as a nation.

America's young leaders have learned a lot about resiliency and adaptation over the past year, and we have continued to convene them to discuss public policy making at the highest levels of government. Our 50th anniversary Presidential Fellows class will soon embark on their careers with much to teach future leaders. Over the past year we have been especially impressed with the commitment shown by Presidential Fellows alumni to the continued success of our program, and we look forward to enhancing those connections as we grow and increase diversity in the group.

Though we are cognizant of the deep political divisions in our country, and the challenges ahead in bolstering faith in our democratic system, we are also encouraged by a bipartisan movement that seeks to reform the incentives in that system and increase its integrity and openness.

In the year ahead, we will increase our cooperation with business and civic leaders in order to do our part to strengthen this foundation stone of our democracy – free and fair elections.

On behalf of the Trustees of the Center, we welcome your partnership as we tackle the important work ahead in 2021.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenn Nye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Glenn C. Nye III**, President and CEO  
Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress

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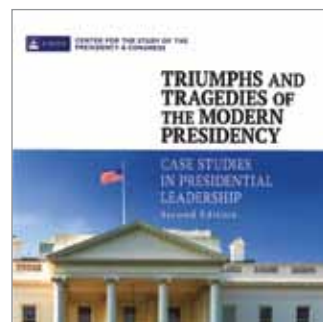
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## Section One

# In Defense of Bipartisanship & Informed Debate



THE PAST YEAR HAS been one of the most tragic and tumultuous in American history. It began in the midst of a historic House impeachment and Senate acquittal of the president for alleged abuse of power. Then came a global pandemic that of this writing has claimed the lives of more than 300,000 Americans, and the resultant economic

freefall. In the summer the streets of the country were riled by widespread racial protests. The year ended with a sitting president refusing to accept the results of a presidential election, threatening the founding American principle of a peaceful transition of power.

The late Ambassador David M. Abshire, the long-time president of the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC), and a former adviser to numerous presidents, warned in his memoirs that the nation was heading in this dangerous direction because of a great deterioration in civility and hyper-partisanship in our political debates (see page 46). Today, too many of our political leaders claim to revere the Constitution, he noted, and yet they reject the spirit of consensus-building and compromise that created it in the first place.

At CSPC we view it as part of our core mission to promote bipartisanship and civility in our politics, the better to find the common ground necessary to move our nation forward. To advance that cause, former Representative Mike Rogers, R-MI, became the inaugural David M. Abshire Chair at the Center. Rogers' spirit of bipartisanship, reputation for reaching across the political aisle, and deep expertise on matters of national security were all on prominent display during his many years as Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. As his record over the past year and the following essay make clear, Rogers has brought all of these attributes to bear in his important work as CSPC's David M. Abshire Chair.

# A Time for Resilience

**T**he past year was certainly one of the most challenging and tragic in our country's history, and it impacted the lives of us all. With relatively little warning, the way we live, work and interact with one another was completely upended. The economy ground to a halt, travel stopped, and many Americans found themselves isolated in their homes, viewing the world through the window of a computer screen. As of this writing more than 300,000 of our fellow citizens lost their lives to a voracious virus.

While we certainly continue to face significant challenges relating to the global pandemic, however, we proved more resilient than I think many people recognized or anticipated. We are slowly adapting to the COVID reality and will, I believe, return to a measure of normalcy once vaccines are widely distributed, risk management becomes the norm, and preventative measures are implemented.

## **Great Power Competition**

Reflecting on 2020 and COVID-19, we can see that the pandemic exposed systemic fragilities and weaknesses within the international order, and accelerated trends that were well underway. The liberal international order, established by the Greatest Generation in the aftermath of World War II, experienced perhaps the most severe challenge in its 70-year existence. Authoritarianism, populism, and isolationism became more attractive for some people in the midst of a chaotic global response to the pandemic, a trend that was encouraged by the economic largess of the Chinese Communist Party. In last year's report, I wrote at length about the return of Great Power Competition with China and Russia. For the foreseeable future that will be the predominant



dynamic in geopolitics, and it is incumbent upon us to look forward, and plan and prepare for this strategic contest.

Throughout 2020 the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) examined just how this competition between the United States, Russia, and China is likely to play out in diverse domains such as space, intelligence, economics, information, technology, and more. We assembled an impressive roster of experts from government, academia, the media, and the private sectors to offer their insights on how this contest will impact the United States, and how this nation needs to change its thinking and approach to better compete. In a testament to CSPC's resilience—a key theme throughout all of our speakers' presen-



Visitors to the National Mall are reminded of the iconic leaders and costly wars that shaped America.

tations—the Center not only continued its research during COVID-19, our pace of activity actually accelerated.

In the establishment of the U.S. Space Force, the first new U.S. armed service in over 70 years, we saw a clear recognition of these new realities. Our adversaries are seeking to develop their own capabilities on orbit, as well as counter our own. No other nation relies more on space than the United States, or is as vulnerable to the denial of space-enabled technologies. CSPC's National Security Space Program brought together senior leaders of both the Space Force and the Air Force, as well as representatives of the commercial space sector, to explore ways that the national security enterprise can be strengthened for great power

competition. Only by treating space as a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation challenge, and only by leveraging the power of our commercial sector innovators and entrepreneurs, will we be able to ensure the United States' lasting leadership in near earth orbit and beyond.

I'm pleased to say that we've managed to have an impact on the national security space front. Our first set of recommendations was well received throughout the executive and legislative branches, and our counsel was sought by the senior leadership of the Air Force and the Space Force.

In space, just as on land, air, and at sea, U.S. leadership is critical to ensuring stability and prosperity for all nations. In the recent past we became perhaps too comfortable with

the status quo, taking U.S. space superiority for granted and expecting few real challenges to the international order or the normal way of doing business. In that comfort zone, we failed to recognize the growing vulnerabilities of our space enterprise.

### **Economic Vulnerabilities**

COVID also exposed the fragility of our globally interconnected economic system. The same system that ensures that I can find an item online and have it shipped to my home in a matter of days, if not hours, revealed itself as vulnerable to external shocks such as COVID. While a clear benefit for consumers, our reliance on foreign countries for critical supplies was also exposed as a vulnerability. Not surprisingly, we saw that countries in crisis will protect themselves and their own populations first, and become reluctant to sell critical pandemic related supplies internationally.

Our offshoring of critical medical and equipment production thus left us exposed to global supply shortages when the crisis hit. This is not to reject globalization wholesale, or rely on purely domestic manufacturing to close ourselves off from the world, as some would argue. Far from it. What we need is a smarter and more forward-looking industrial policy, one that ensures critical materials are either

made here in the United States, or can be reliably acquired or domestically sourced in moments of crisis. Investing in our domestic capabilities will pay dividends, and make us more competitive on the international stage.

We're seeing this dynamic already in play with the push-back against Huawei, ZTE, and Chinese telecommunications manufacturers. At the Center the implications of geo-technological competition have been a focus in recent years, and this tech race is a prime example of why we need to be smarter about our supply chains. If we become reliant on one supplier or a series of suppliers controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, we compromise our national security. We cannot afford such dependency at any price. Through CSPC's dialogues with experts and stakeholders on these issues, we've found areas of common ground that the White House and Congress can leverage to strengthen our economy, empower businesses, and enhance our global competitiveness.

The Center's efforts are developing smarter policies which will allow American innovators and entrepreneurs to better compete with foreign suppliers, like those from China. We are also helping to create an honest assessment of what capabilities are truly critical to our country's competitiveness and security. We need to set the stage for a winning

The Washington Monument honors George Washington, the first president and "Father of Our Country."







*“If we are to succeed in this era of great power competition, we need more consensus, not less. If we are to address the real societal challenges our country faces, we need more humanity and civility, not less.”*

—Congressman Mike Rogers, (ret.)  
CSPC David M. Abshire Chair

tech strategy, and I believe the Center’s work is helping to achieve that goal.

### **Next Four Years**

The Biden-Harris Administration will find itself with a full plate of international challenges. Not the least of these will be strengthening a weakened global order post-pandemic, and rising to the challenge of great power competition. The reassertion of U.S. leadership in the face of a revanchist Russia, an expansionist China, an aggressive Iran, and an unpredictable North Korea would tax any administration even at the best of times, but it will prove especially challenging for a new administration that is also responding to a devastating global pandemic.

Critical to that effort will be development of a forward-looking national strategy, one that recognizes there will inevitably be difficult trade-offs and constrained resources. In the process we must not compromise our values. We must remain firm in our principles, committed to our allies, and flexible enough to respond to challenges and opportunities alike.

It’s important to note that competition does not mean conflict, though there is always the danger that the former will turn into the latter. Carefully managing these complex relationships requires a firm understanding of our national interest, and the interests of allies and adversaries alike. As I wrote in last year’s annual report, in troubled times such as these our alliances matter more than ever. I stand by that statement. In the post-pandemic world, our alliances will be even more important. Washington must stand by its allies, seek their counsel, and lead by example to succeed in this new era of great power competition. If U.S. leadership is found wanting our Asian and European allies will chart

their own independent courses, ensuring greater regional and global instability.

As we look to the future, the United States has an opportunity to reassert its leadership and reshape the world. The new administration will need to clearly communicate to the public the challenges that lie ahead, and the consequences of failing to overcome them. The administration will also need to reach across the political aisle to fashion economic and national security policies with a firm, bipartisan foundation. Congress must also resume its role as a co-equal branch of government, working with the White House but not beholden to it, and certainly not abdicating its oversight roles and responsibilities.

If we are to succeed in this era of great power and geo-technical competition, we need more consensus, not less. If we are to ensure that our children live in a better world, we need more cooperation, not less. If we are to address the real and significant societal challenges our country faces, we need more humanity and civility, not less.

CSPC’s mission to foster bipartisanship and consensus-building in order to move the country forward is as important as ever, and I’m pleased to continue my role as the David Abshire Chair into 2021. Our goal is to facilitate a spirited and productive discussion on the major issues of the day, and to develop real recommendations and solutions that can empower both the White House and Congress to act. I’m firmly committed to that approach because it has achieved demonstrable success in a host of areas, including space, geo-technical, nuclear nonproliferation, and election reform.

This year was certainly trying for all of us, but thanks to the hard work of the CSPC team, we’ve managed to continue pressing forward. I’m eager to see what we manage to achieve in the next twelve months. □

# Friday News Roundups

In this historic year the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) offered cogent analysis of each week’s news in our “Friday News Roundups,” which give our experts and researchers an opportunity to dig deep behind the headlines to provide insight and historical context. The up-to-the-minute commentary complements our longer-term work by allowing us to connect current news to deeper trends. The topics we have covered in the last year range far and wide, including COVID-19 pandemic and related economic issues, the Black Lives Matter protests after the killing of George Floyd, and political and security issues in Europe, Russia, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific.

## Soleimani—Why Now and What Next?



According to reports, Soleimani became “complacent” and felt he was “untouchable.” The United States had designated him as a terrorist and the Qods

Force as a terrorist organization, but then did not act. His operational security appears to have become much more relaxed, flying in and out of Baghdad International Airport and touring battlefield sites with frequent photos, not something for which he was previously known. Undoubtedly the United States was actively tracking him, knowing his movements in and around the region, but until early January, the authorization for his killing had not been granted. So, what changed?

*Joshua Huminski, Director, Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence and Global Affairs—January 10, 2020*

## America’s Chernobyl



“No one could see it coming” they said, as the Pentagon warned in 2017 about shortcomings in U.S. pandemic preparedness and the 2019 HHS exercise “Crimson Contagion” demonstrated how disjointed the federal response could be. Some experts in government tried to raise the warning, but the impact on the stock market angered the White House.

At the Defense Department, military commanders were

instructed to check that their preparations for the pandemic didn’t cross White House messaging. On Thursday night, the commander of the USS Theodore Roosevelt, suffering from its own rapid outbreak, was relieved of command for “poor judgement” for too widely circulating his plea for assistance from higher up the chain of command.

*Dan Mahaffee, CSPC Vice President—April 3, 2020*

## How the Pandemic’s Economic Fallout Will Shape Our Politics



If there was any hope that the coronavirus pandemic would bring the American people together to fight a common—if invisible—enemy, it was quickly dashed.

It was subsequently doused in gasoline and lit on fire as armed protestors staged rallies across the country decrying stay-at-home orders while angry neighbors on Nextdoor, a popular community-based social media platform, rage-posted about the proliferation of mask-less joggers. Media echo chambers reinforce preconceived ideas that shape or cloud our view of the pandemic and appropriate policy responses. As states and localities across the country begin the process of opening up, we face the next challenge, recovering from the economic impact of the crisis.

*Erica Ngoenha, CSPC Director of Presidential Fellows—May 29, 2020*

## Old World Arrogance

Whereas Washington’s vision of America’s role in the world was driven by hope and a penchant for peace, a



never-ending push for American empire is driven by fear and has infected the minds of most figures in the foreign policy establishment. Surely the

United States faces challenges greater than those George Washington could have ever imagined. In a world where our nation could be annihilated by a foreign power in a matter of minutes, it is not outlandish to assert that America must be more engaged in world affairs than in 1797. The assertion that moving troops out of Germany, a country that we have not been at war with in 75 years endangers American national security, however, is pure fantasy.

*Chris Condon, CSPC Policy Analyst—July 31, 2020*

### Narrowing the Transatlantic Trump-Gap



The question on whether US-Europe ties could ever be restored is an interesting one. Could you ever get the toothpaste perfectly back into the tube?

One thing is for certain: Europeans are not convinced that the mere presence of Joe Biden in the Oval Office would induce a return to the normal expectation that the US should be a global leader and close European ally. And while most of Europe does not believe in the possibility of completely closing the transatlantic Trump-gap, European leaders will be holding their breaths hoping that it could at least be narrowed.

*Maria H. Damsgaard, CSPC Policy Analyst—September 4, 2020*

### It Is Time to Leverage Finance to Combat Climate Change



Addressing the fact that the costs of climate change are borne diffusely by the whole world remains the most important public policy conundrum.

Without fixing it, efforts to decarbonize, clean, or green the economy will be starved for resources and face built-in opposition from the risk- and change-averse. Establishing a carbon price and setting up a means for emitters to pay it without creating excess compliance costs is a real challenge. Getting it right, however, will allow the full

force of the capitalist system—the largest engine of human improvement in history—to come to bear on a problem of epochal proportions. Pulling the lever in November for people who are willing to implement such a plan is also pretty important.

*Michael Stecher, CSPC Senior Advisor—September 18, 2020*

### The Seeds of an American Insurgency



If we cannot see our police departments as divorced from partisan politics, then this nation finds itself in a precarious position. Placing the police on one

side of our political divide puts us all in a dangerous position. Politicized policing is the opposite of law and order. While we look with alarm at the growth of violence and the threat of violent political conflict on our streets, the seeds of an insurgency are planted in rhetoric that furthers the cycle of violence. Politicizing law enforcement accelerates the descent away from the rule of law. Unrest and insurgency become inevitable as political leaders become impotent bystanders to a deepening cycle of violence—or, worse yet, tacitly acknowledge and foment violence for their ends.

*Dan Mahaffee, CSPC Vice President—October 2, 2020*

### Operation GOTHIC SERPENT: The Battle of Mogadishu



Many members of the assault force were lacking actual combat experience—only a handful were veterans of Panama, Grenada, or Desert Storm—

and there was little frame of reference for the rigors of a gunfight. The lack of experience meant the assault force would repeat techniques used in the previous six missions of the deployment, providing a pattern for enemy insurgents to predict and then ambush accordingly. On the day of the fateful mission in downtown Mogadishu, the assault force did not bring the necessary equipment and resources to accommodate contingency planning. The chain of command was unclear and confusing, especially for the U.N. peacekeeping forces who would later be requested to help extract the assault force.

*Ethan Brown, CSPC Policy Analyst—October 9, 2020*

# Timely Commentary on National Challenges

“Social media is a great way for states like Russia and China to drive us apart and sow chaos by pushing false information. It is important to remember that Russia and China have and continue to claim that the United States is their enemy. Their national strategies and foreign policies reflect this.”

Mike Rogers, CSPC Abshire Chair  
*The Hill*, March 27, 2020



The momentous events for 2020 have done very little to sway the tribalism of Americans. Nearly everything is viewed through partisan lenses. The same will likely be true with the health of the president, and of the country.”

Glenn Nye and Dan Mahaffee,  
CSPC President &  
Senior Vice President  
*The Hill*,  
October 2, 2020



“While Iceland is a Nordic country culturally and traditionally, they look toward the United States in many ways. They are a vital NATO partner and the U.S. is Iceland’s largest trading partner.”

Robert Gerber,  
CSPC Senior Adviser  
*Investible Universe* Podcast,  
December 11, 2020



“The final straw was President Trump’s attack on mail-in balloting during a general election beset by a pandemic, insisting without evidence that it will lead to “the most rigged election in history.” That sustained attack on the legitimacy of a presidential election could all but portend a constitutional crisis in a close contest.”

James Kitfield, CSPC Senior Fellow  
*Breaking Defense*, October 30, 2020



“Amid the pandemic, Americans have shifted how they work, learn, play, and worship, leveraging decades of digital innovation for remote jobs, online classes, modern gaming, and video services. This technology is made possible by infrastructure and networks that allow innovators to build on a connected society.”

Glenn Nye and Dan Mahaffee,  
CSPC President & Senior Vice President  
*The Hill*, May 26, 2020



“The SolarWinds breach could be the most significant cyber incident in American history. Russian intelligence infiltrated and sat undetected on U.S. government networks for nearly 10 months. What is truly scary is that the Russians are inside the house now. Who knows where they’ve planted malware, corrupted or deleted data, locked users out of systems, or destroyed systems entirely?”



Mike Rogers,  
CSPC Abshire Chair  
*The Wall Street Journal*,  
December 20, 2020

“When an overwhelmed and under-informed population is represented by a gridlocked legislature and an administration in crisis, is it any wonder that China and Russia are competing at a higher level? Beijing and Moscow are fighting us while we are struggling to find our own footing.”



Joshua Huminski, Director  
Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence & Global Affairs  
*The Hill*, July 17, 2020

“The world is currently living through a time of great instability, and in the past such periods of deep economic distress and geopolitical tensions have given rise to dark political forces, and are ripe for confrontation among nation-states. History will not judge kindly American political leaders who stood idle while a nuclear arms race was added to that already volatile mix.”



Glenn Nye & James Kitfield,  
CSPC President & Senior Fellow  
*Defense One*, December 10, 2020

“As Congress continues to use technology to do its work during the pandemic, it will hopefully become more familiar with technology and its significance in our culture, commerce, and innovation in America. Technology is a critical tool to embrace for the safety and efficiency of the legislative branch, even if it misses the drama that Frank Capra would have wanted.”



Dan Mahaffee,  
CSPC Senior Vice President  
*The Hill*, May 15, 2020

“President Trump’s apparent willingness to pardon the man who committed the largest and most damaging leak of classified information in U.S. history is one of the strangest things we’ve heard in a very strange year. Edward Snowden does not under any circumstances — now or in the future — deserve a pardon.”

Mike Rogers and Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger,  
CSPC Abshire Chair and Congressman



*The Washington Post*,  
August 18, 2020

“As the stewards of this critical region, the Arctic countries must act swiftly to safeguard our shared destiny. Markers must be laid down to ensure the Arctic is democratic and sustainable, and is an arena where scientific innovation benefits the whole planet.”



Robert Gerber,  
CSPC Senior Adviser  
*The Hill*, October 5, 2020



“As Congress considers how to support the economy, it has to remember that critical infrastructure and communications systems are investments that unlock further potential in innovation and prosperity. 5G can take us to the next level, and policies to speed its rollout should be included with any stimulus or infrastructure plans.”

Glenn Nye & Dan Mahaffee,  
CSPC President and  
Senior Vice President  
*The Hill*, May 26, 2020



“President Donald Trump’s attempts to influence the electoral processes in Michigan, and elsewhere, is cause for both concern and alarm, and should be roundly rejected by both Democrats and Republicans alike. By attempting to use the trappings of the Oval Office to influence state officials, he is violating norms of behavior and setting a dangerous precedent for the future — not just here, but internationally.”

Mike Rogers, CSPC Abshire Chair  
*The Detroit News*, November 21, 2020



“In an era of civil unrest, a time of political discord, and a time when U.S. citizens are losing faith in the electoral process, now is not the time for dismantling the credibility of civilian-military relations. A dangerous example of this erosion is exhibited in the open letter to General Mark Milley, arguing in favor of Defense Department participation in the removal of Donald J. Trump from the White House, should he lose the upcoming election.”

Ethan Brown,  
CSPC Military Fellow

*The Diplomatic Courier*, August 19, 2020



“U.S. allies including Europe, Japan, South Korea, Canada and Australia still have huge economic and political weight [in influencing China]. The record underscores that weight and the cost of U.S. withdrawal from alliance leadership.”

Sherman Katz,  
CSPC Senior Adviser

*Financial Times*, July 31, 2020



“As the country is distracted by the piecemeal restrictions on immigrants wrapped in the veneer of pandemic precautions, the administration has been methodically dismantling our legal immigration system.”

Erica Ngoenha,  
CSPC Director of External Affairs

*The Hill*  
July 15, 2020



“Washington handed Russia the greatest victory and most successful active measures campaign result for which it could have hoped. American unity of response and action on Russian revanchism is shattered, the policy process is hamstrung by a confused administration, and the American public is squabbling over what is truth.”

Joshua Huminski, Director  
Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence & Global Affairs

*The Diplomatic Courier*, June 6, 2020



“Our country is not separate or alone. If we abdicate American leadership, abandon our alliances, and betray the trust and admiration many once held for our country, what replaces it will almost certainly be worse, not just for ourselves, but the world as a whole.”

Glenn Nye & Mike Rogers,  
CSPC President and Abshire Chair  
*The Hill*, April 20, 2020



“The next year need not and should not be the “terrible-tuos” for the Space Force. It is an opportunity to build on the progress achieved in 2020 and move ahead with the task of defining its future.”

Joshua Huminski, Director  
Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence & Global Affairs  
**SPACE NEWS** *Space News*, December 11, 2020

“China’s imposition of near totalitarian restrictions on Hong Kong, along with its imprisonment of more than one million Uyghur Muslims in concentration camps and its aggressive behavior across the South China Sea illustrates its intentions better than any Western analysis could.”

Mike Rogers, CSPC Abshire Chair  
*The Hill*, July 28, 2020



“Failing to pass anti-gerrymandering reform during my term in Congress has been a decade-long disappointment. I co-sponsored a bill to impose criteria on states to use independent commissions — but failed to convince too many colleagues to support it. My hope was revived seeing how successful efforts have taken root at the state level.”

Glenn Nye,  
CSPC President  
**THE FULCRUM**  
*The Fulcrum*, June 19, 2020



“During much of the Cold War, tensions between nuclear-armed superpowers were kept in check by an architecture of military de-confliction agreements and arms control agreements erected over decades. But today’s world bears an unsettling resemblance to the early years of the Cold War, when missteps like the Korean War, Berlin Blockade and Cuban Missile Crisis pushed the major powers to the brink.”

James Kitfield, CSPC Senior Fellow  
*Yahoo News*, June 6, 2020



“When turning on the cable news or diving into social media, it is obvious that Americans find themselves living in either red or blue realities. We stand on perilous ground as we let partisanship color our perceptions of the government, the role it plays in our safety and security, and a sense of national unity.”

Dan Mahaffee,  
CSPC Senior Vice President  
*The Hill*, May 19, 2020



# Timely Analysis & Reporting on National Defense

In 2021 the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) will continue its long history of operating at the intersection of strategy and national security. Our continuing focus on national security issues includes regular analysis and media commentary by CSPC's experts, including President and former Congressman Glenn Nye III; David M. Abshire Chair Mike Rogers, former chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and a regular CNN commentator; Dan Mahaffee, Senior Vice President and Director of Policy and lead on CSPC's "Geotech" project; Joshua Huminski, Director of the Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence and Global Affairs and lead on CSPC's National Security Space Program; CSPC Senior Fellow and national security correspondent James Kitfield, a three-time recipient of the Gerald R. Ford Award for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense; and Ethan Brown, CSPC Senior Military Fellow.

*"Our competition against China is perhaps the most significant challenge since the Cold War with the Soviet Union. This is one that will define our economic and national security agenda and will touch all Americans. This will also shape our future and those of our children and grandchildren."*

—Mike Rogers, CSPC Abshire Chair  
*The Hill*, November 17, 2020

*"Due to the hyper-partisanship that long ago infected Washington, D.C., the current generation of lawmakers has little memory of the deep and sustained bipartisanship that was necessary to build the foundation of strategic stability that kept the Cold War dormant and the nation safe for decades. With his long experience with these issues as the former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and as vice president, President-elect Biden remembers what bipartisanship on critical strategic issues looks like."*

—Glenn Nye & James Kitfield,  
CSPC President & Senior Fellow  
*Defense One*, December 10, 2020

*"The goal is not just advancing American interests, but frustrating Russian efforts wherever possible and warning other competitors. If we are to win in the new era of great power com-*



Visitors to Arlington National Cemetery honor those who served the nation in uniform.

*petition, we must shift our mentality and get out into the field. Russia is already there."*

—Joshua Huminski, Director  
Mike Rogers Center for Intelligence & Global Affairs  
*The Hill*, June 29, 2020

*"Redefining the information space as a formal domain of warfare is one step that can be taken to truly make it a policy priority—just as surely as the disinformation campaigns of malicious actors have affected the United States and partners of late. They are certain to grow in complexity and virulence going forward."*

—Ethan Brown, CSPC Military Fellow  
*Modern War Institute (West Point)*, November 25, 2020

*"With great power competition heating up even as Arctic ice caps melt due to climate change, the Greenland Iceland United Kingdom Gap and those nearby maritime transit routes are retaking the strategic significance they held during the 20th century. As Winston Churchill once cited the German General Karl Haushofer, "Whoever controls Iceland holds a revolver that is always pointed at Britain, Canada, and the United States."*

—Glenn Nye & Maria Damsgaard,  
CSPC President & Policy Analyst  
*The Hill*, November 5, 2020



## Section Two

# Fixing a Broken Political System



AS WE CONTEMPLATE the year ahead, a sitting U.S. president is refusing to accept the results of a presidential election, inflaming an already hyper-partisan body politic and electorate. Some political leaders have politicized the government's response to a global pandemic that has already claimed more than 300,000 American lives. The nation remains deeply divided on volatile issues such as race and immigration. And we began the past year with Congress enmeshed in a historic impeachment drama.

The downward spiral in our political discourse that led to these compounding crises has been many years in the making, and its origins are primarily structural. The American people are fed a steady diet of disinformation and divisive rhetoric, and they constantly read stories even in reliable media of a political system awash in dark money, pay-to-play politics, and gerrymandered electoral maps that unfairly advantage one party over the other.

The hallmark of the American political experiment, however, is an instinct for continual self-improvement and national renewal, which are core values at the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC). To address our current challenges, CSPC has teamed with like-minded reform groups to form a “Fix the System” coalition driven not by partisan rancor, but rather by a bipartisan spirit of reform and national renewal. We seek to build on a “reform wave” in the 2018 mid-term election that saw campaign and election reform initiatives win in more than two dozen states and localities. CSPC also continues to draw lessons from a Commission on Civility and Effective Governance that we launched to travel around the country and identify drivers of political incivility.

# The Biden Administration's First One Hundred Days

**E**ven in the most tranquil and “normal” of circumstances, a presidential transition and the “first hundred days” are a complicated and tenuous time for an administration. For the Biden administration, this transition comes in the midst of a nearly unprecedented confluence of crises. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact are a historic challenge on their own, yet those once-in-a-century crises are compounded by our deadlocked politics, a drawn-out transition, and continued efforts to delegitimize the outcome of the 2020 election.

The Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress publishes a volume of case studies in presidential leadership—*Triumphs & Tragedies of the Modern Presidency*—that examines the “first one hundred days” of every modern president, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt. The lessons that can be drawn from their experiences tell us that a new administration’s “first hundred days” are often shaped by the size of their electoral mandate, the power dynamic in Congress, and the nature of the crises presidents confront early in their term. These historical lessons, combined with the unprecedented circumstances of our times, illustrate the mammoth task ahead for President Joe Biden and his team.

## First Hundred Days

Virtually every president of the modern era has chafed at the “First One Hundred Days” as an artificial measuring stick, one set impossibly high by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression, when he shepherded 15 major new laws through a compliant Congress. And yet none of FDR’s predecessors have fully escaped the “hundred days” expectations game, in part because this liftoff phase is when new presidents and administrations are at their most aspirational, and thus revealing.

The first hundred days are also when election headwinds are at their stron-

The Biden administration begins in the midst of political upheaval and a nearly unprecedented confluence of crises.





gest, and mandates can be claimed and leveraged. A president's party almost always loses Congressional seats in mid-term elections, for instance, making it imperative that a new administration starts strong. Lyndon B. Johnson, the master legislator and presidential arm twister who early on achieved one of the most transformative legislative agendas in modern history, described this phenomenon best: "I keep hitting hard because I know this honeymoon won't last. Every day I lose a little more political capital. That's why we have to keep at it, never letting up."

The traditional honeymoon period for a new administration's first hundred days has dwindled dramatically. In the era of the permanent campaign, hyper-partisanship in Washington, D.C., and endless jockeying and maneuvering by the political parties as they prepare for the next election, the election cycle never pauses for long to allow for actual governance. Add to that dynamic the nearly unprecedented circumstance that the previous president refused to concede, and publicly mulls another run to return to the Oval Office, and the winds in the face of the new administration will be strong indeed.

### **A Bureaucratic Behemoth**

Modern presidents also have to stock the massive executive branch bureaucracies responsible for overseeing the largest economy in the world, and underwriting an international order that is largely dependent on the United States to enforce its rules and norms with a globe-spanning diplomatic corps and military. They have to appoint no less than 15 Cabinet secretaries, and shepherd more than 1,000 political appointees through an increasingly cumbersome vetting and confirmation process. The average time required for Senate confirmation of a top-level political appointee, for instance, has grown from less than three months during the Kennedy administration to roughly nine months in the 21st century.

For the Biden administration, an early challenge has been balancing personnel demands among the various stakeholders and factions in the political coalition that delivered the Democratic nomination, and then the White House. Differences between centrists and progressives, as well as generational divides, complicate this challenge.

### **Electoral Mandates**

Presidents who win in landslides like Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson obviously have distinct advantages in their first hundred days. While President Biden had the best electoral performance defeating an incumbent president

New presidents often underestimate the power Congress has to delay or derail a presidential agenda.



since Reagan defeated Carter in 1980, his electoral mandate is perhaps more constrained than any modern president. Disappointing congressional races for Democrats, and the delegitimization of the election by President Trump and his supporters have clouded Biden's mandate.

Beyond these circumstances, perhaps the most common mistake made by new presidents is underestimating the power lawmakers have to delay or derail a presidential agenda, and thus the need to nurture good relations with key members of Congress. That is especially true of chief executives who ran as Washington outsiders, such as Dwight Eisenhower and Jimmy Carter. With his long career in the Senate and as Vice President, Biden will have an advantage over many of his predecessors in dealing with Congress.

### **Overloading the Circuits**

Another common mistake of new presidents is to try and ram through an overly ambitious agenda that shorts both White House and Congressional circuits. Jimmy Carter arguably made this mistake by rapidly pushing a long list of proposals for specific new legislation, including bills on energy conservation, tax reform, and welfare reform, among many other initiatives—sometimes without first consulting lawmakers whose districts were impacted.

Reagan learned from Carter's mistakes. His transition team decided to focus on just a few major policy priorities. Reagan also successfully used his considerable charm to



court the Democratic Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill.

While President Biden has many such relationships across the political aisle, given the bitterness of the recent election campaign, the contested results, and the delayed transition, those relationships will be sorely tested by political incentives that reward obstruction over compromise. As Biden witnessed firsthand as vice president following the Tea Party movement’s rise to power in the House, moving an agenda through Congress becomes nearly impossible when an opposition’s only goal is to block and delay.

### **Picking the Cabinet**

That obstructionism is likely to coalesce all the faster as cabinet picks come before the Senate. Speculation always abounds about what picks might get rejected, or what scandals might have slipped through the most careful vetting. For the Biden administration, the nomination of retired Army General Lloyd Austin to be Secretary of Defense has created an early potential pressure point, as Congress must consider whether to grant a waiver given his limited time out of uniform.

There are certainly historical precedents where such controversies slowed the momentum of a new administration trying to start strong out of the gates, including George H.W. Bush becoming bogged down in his unsuccessful nomination of Texas Senator John Tower to be secretary of Defense; Bill Clinton’s nomination of Zoe Baird to be attorney

general before she became embroiled in the “Nannygate” controversy, and had to withdraw; and Congress’ rejection of Barack Obama’s attempt to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center within a year of his taking office.

### **Crisis Management**

One narrative thread that runs consistently through the case studies in CSPC’s *Triumph & Tragedies of the Modern Presidency* is the testing of new presidents by crisis. Of course, many administrations are born of crisis, whether it’s Franklin Roosevelt assuming power at the height of the Great Depression; Lyndon Johnson taking the oath on Air Force One after the assassination of John F. Kennedy; Gerald Ford ending the “long national nightmare” of Watergate and the Nixon resignation; or Barack Obama trying to check the global financial meltdown behind the Great Recession. Harry Truman (World War II), Dwight Eisenhower (the Korean War), Richard Nixon (Vietnam), Barack Obama (Iraq and Afghanistan), and Donald Trump (Iraq and Afghanistan) all inherited hot wars that demanded immediate attention and difficult, life or death decisions.

For those who would lead “the indispensable nation,” crisis is always lurking just beyond the visible horizon. Consider that in their defining first years in the Oval Office, Harry Truman had to decide whether or not to drop the first atomic bombs on Japan; John F. Kennedy confronted the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba; Gerald Ford faced the Mayaguez crisis in Cambodia and the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese; Ronald Reagan was shot in an assassination attempt; George H.W. Bush launched the invasion of Panama; Bill Clinton dealt with the “Blackhawk Down” military debacle in Somalia; George W. Bush was rocked by the worst attack on the homeland since Pearl Harbor on September 11, 2001; and Donald Trump climbed the escalation ladder and threatened North Korea with “fire and fury” over the rogue state’s nuclear weapons program.

For the Biden administration, there are not only the crises of the ongoing pandemic and its economic impact, but also an era of increased global instability, existential threats like nuclear weapons proliferation and climate change, and warming competition and tensions between the major powers. Like its predecessors, the Biden administration will thus have to overcome numerous and significant obstacles from its very first months in office. Given the very real imperative to do so while also trying to heal and unify a fractured nation, it’s not a stretch to note that the challenges President Biden and his administration will confront are historic. □

# Reforming a Broken Political System

**B**y nearly any standard 2020 was one of the most tumultuous years in modern U.S. history as the nation confronted a once-in-a-century pandemic and the worst economic freefall since the Great Depression.

The past year also included a presidential election, a time of customary division and a high-stakes competition both among politicians and the American electorate. The refusal of President Donald Trump to accept the results of the election greatly added to the stresses of an already difficult year.

The tumult of 2020 reinforced the need to reform an electoral system that too often rewards hyper-partisanship and dangerous incivility. In recent years the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) has embraced that challenge, joining with like-minded reform groups to craft sensible, long-term reforms to a political system and electoral process that incentivizes political combat over cooperation. We are pleased to report that the bipartisan movement dedicated to fixing that system for the good of all Americans is growing in numbers and strength.

Because election officials were forced to rapidly adapt to the pandemic, the 2020 presidential election cycle provided a severe stress test of our electoral system. Throughout the year we were ever mindful of President Abraham Lincoln's warning from 1838 that the greatest danger to America would most likely come from within if we let our divisions get the best of us. We should heed Lincoln's admonishment: "At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher."

## Keeping Faith in Elections

CSPC's work has long been focused on the twin crises of Congressional dysfunction and declining faith in our insti-

tutions of government. A sitting president leveling unfounded allegations of widespread voter fraud in swing states certainly lowered the public's faith in our electoral system. Those false allegations generated an inspiring and unprecedented response from across the political spectrum, however, and provoked pushback from civic and business leaders. Respected political leaders from both sides of the aisle joined forces to form SafeVote, for instance, projecting a message of trust in the election system. They encouraged voters to participate in the election using any lawful methods available, from voting in person before or on Election Day to safely mailing in ballots.

CSPC Trustee and former Republican governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania took a lead in this effort alongside former Democratic governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, pulling together bipartisan election officials and leaders, including many Secretaries of State, to bolster faith in the election system. Their action helped change the dynamic of the



election and spurred others to join forces in cross-partisan groups defending the integrity of the election. Similarly, the National Council on Election Integrity assembled an all-star cast of political figures of all political stripes to promote the safe participation of all voters in the 2020 election.

We even saw corporate leaders join the reform movement in ways they have been reluctant to in the past. Civic Alliance brought together Chief Executive Officers of some of America's marquee commercial brands to stand up for our democracy and encourage citizens to have faith in our electoral system. The alliance encouraged voters to participate in the election despite rhetorical attacks on various voting options by some politicians and the public health challenge of voting during a pandemic. They launched a massive media campaign to declare themselves "100% in for Democracy".

### **Progress in Systemic Reform**

This past year also witnessed a major step forward in sys-

tems reform when millions of Virginians voted on November 3rd to change the Commonwealth's constitution in order to create a commission, complete with citizen participation and transparency, to replace the old gerrymandered system where politicians drew maps to choose their voters rather than voters choosing their politicians. The elimination of gerrymandering in Virginia was the culmination of a multi-year, bipartisan effort, and it establishes Virginia as a leader in the movement to relegate unfair gerrymandering to the dustbin of history. Much more work lies ahead, however, as states across the country redraw political maps in 2021 following the reapportionment of Congressional districts after the nationwide decennial census.

### **The Work Ahead**

This year will thus represent an opportunity to change redistricting methods before states lock in their Congressional maps for the coming decade. A federal law mandating

In the past year the worst civil unrest in half a century tested our society's ability to come to terms with a history of systemic racial injustice, including suppression of minority voters.



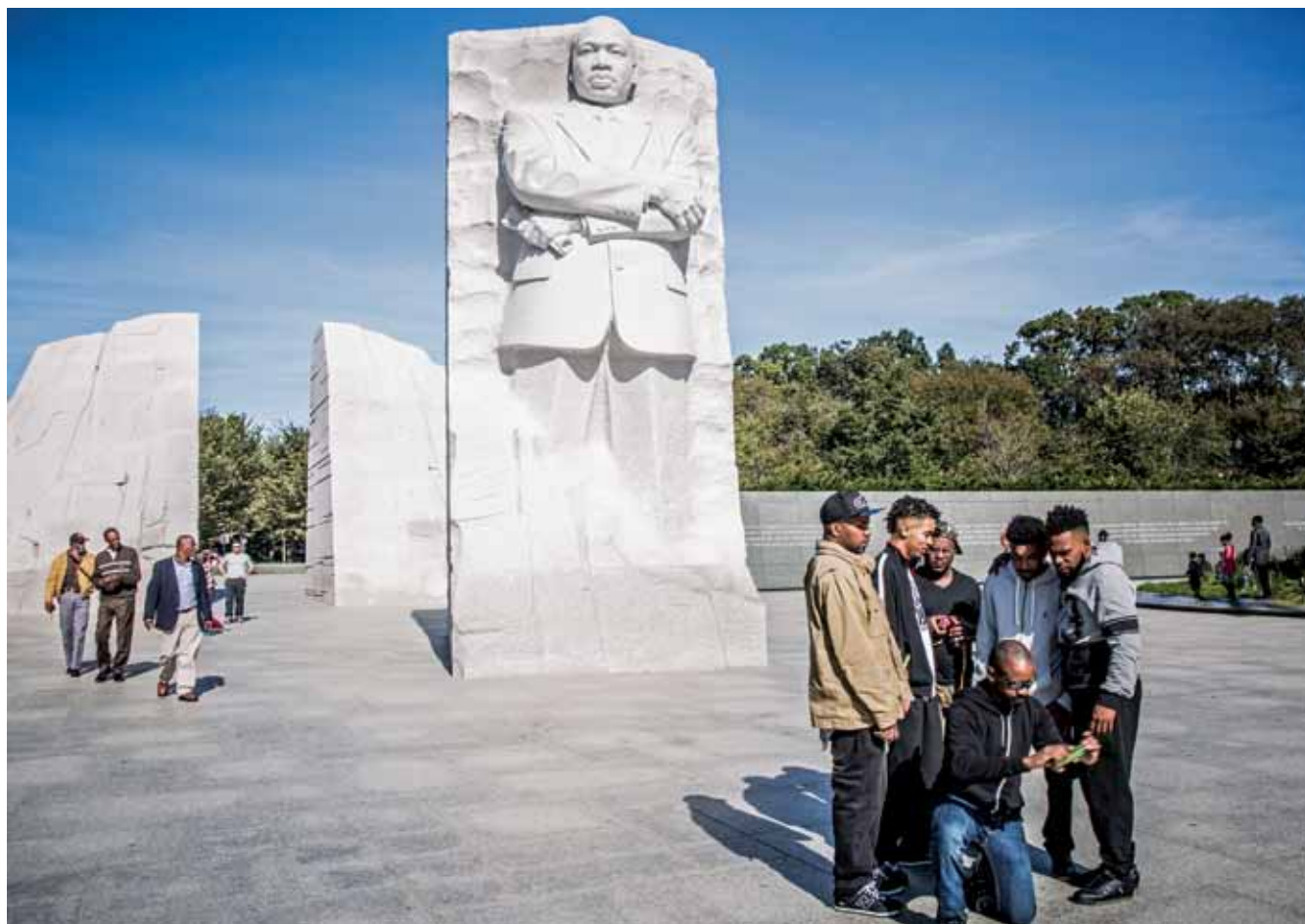
the use of commissions to draw maps, such as the proposed John Tanner Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act, would be the ideal way to promote better methodology across all states. There are other ways to bring pressure on state legislatures to bring greater transparency to the process of drawing electoral maps. Corporate leaders who leaned into the effort to protect our democracy in 2020 can play a powerful role in bringing attention to the redistricting process. They need to call on legislators to forgo the tempting practice of gerrymandering maps to the benefit of the majority party in power and instead embrace an unbiased and balanced approach that would promote better governance and fairer elections.

CSPC has also worked together with a coalition called “Fix-the-System” which brought together non-partisan reform supporters under an umbrella of coordinated action beginning in 2018. The coalition blends strengths in thought leadership among policy makers, grassroots outreach, and reform innovations at the state and federal level. We will continue to pursue opportunities for joint action or

coordination of individual efforts to have the maximum impact on potential reforms in the year ahead.

We already see signs of increased business leader engagement on such long-term reforms. Individual members of the Young President’s Organization (YPO) have formed a Democracy Group whose swelling membership is dedicated to a better functioning political system. These business leaders have stated clearly that, though our political system often focuses on personalities, systems drive outcomes. Reforming those systems will be the focus of our work in the year ahead, and coordinating with like-minded civic and business groups will be key to our success.

The country has endured a period of great division, and many of the drivers of mistrust endure. We are a resilient nation, however, equipped with a drive for reform and the ability to overcome steep challenges. In the year ahead, CSPC will continue to heed President Abraham Lincoln’s warning about the dangers of unchecked internal divisions as we join forces with those who choose the high road of national renewal over division and incivility. □



The Martin Luther King Memorial is a powerful reminder that his dream of a just and equal society requires the work and renewal of each American generation.



### Section Three

# Project Solarium 2021



SHORTLY AFTER HIS ELECTION as President in 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower embarked on what became known as “Project Solarium”—a strategic review to evaluate policy options in the early days of the Cold War. From that exercise, Eisenhower developed the “Long Haul”

strategy that balanced the threats the United States faced from abroad with the need for policies that emphasized strength and prosperity at home, culminating in America’s post-World War II ascendance as a global superpower and standard bearer for democracies and free peoples around the world.

Because the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) was originally established more than 50 years ago at President Eisenhower’s behest, the spirit that animated “Project Solarium” is embedded deep in our institutional DNA. Through our Project Solarium 2021 programs, CSPC encourages “out of the box” thinking in addressing major national challenges and looks to bridge the gaps between government policymakers and lawmakers on the one side, and leaders in the private sector and academia on the other. In each of our projects we convene stakeholders and influential thought leaders and engage them in respectful dialogue that seeks to leverage emerging technologies and find novel solutions to the complex challenges facing the nation.

# Great Power Competition in Space



**T**he emergence of COVID seemingly brought the world to a halt, with economic activity all but stopped, international travel frozen, and the world adapting to pandemic living. Yet, at a grand strategic level, great power competition continued unabated with Russia and China jockeying for position, challenging the liberal democratic order, and seeking to advance their interests at the expense of the West's wherever and whenever possible. This competition is playing out in traditional hard power domains, via economics and diplomacy, but also in unconventional ways and in novel domains, especially space.

As a result of the increasing importance of the space domain in this era of great power competition, the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) has established a National Security Space Program to help educate members of the House and

This Rocket Lab rocket is representative of a new generation of commercial space launchers that the United States must leverage to maintain space superiority.

Senate and their staffs, as well as the Department of Defense, on reforms to policy and programs needed to secure America's leadership in space.

### **U.S. Space Superiority Challenged**

Though space was never a truly benign sanctuary, the United States' lead in this critical domain was rarely challenged in the past. For most of the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War eras, the U.S. could do what it wanted in space, in whatever timeframe and manner that it chose. The Soviet Union possessed anti-satellite capabilities and would have almost certainly sought to deny America's advantages in space in the event of a conflict, but the United States was able to leverage space for economic and national security ends like no other nation on earth. Today space capabilities are so ubiquitous in the daily lives of Americans that most of our citizens cannot conceive of doing without them.

Indeed, operating in and from space became so commonplace that a type of torpor descended on the national security space community. There was no longer a real drive for innovation or risk taking—the attitude was that what worked before still works, so why change it? As America became comfortable with business as usual, China and Russia sought to aggressively expand their own capabilities and develop ways of countering our strengths in orbit. That ten year gap in capability in space between the United States on one side and China and Russia on the other became five years, then two years, then one year, until today there is perhaps no gap at all. Space is no longer a sanctuary, it is increasingly seen by the major powers as a potential war-fighting domain.

At the same time the commercial space industry has literally taken off, making access to space cheaper, satellites smaller and lighter, and space capabilities generally more affordable. This shift has opened up new pathways to companies seeking to leverage space. Now flight-proven rockets are launching and then returning to earth intact. Mega-constellations of several thousand satellites are being deployed. The development of a true space economy is just over the horizon, and certainly within the grasp of the younger generation.

### **The Space Force**

In recognition of these new realities, Congress has recently created the Space Force, re-established U.S. Space Command, and launched the National Space Council to coordinate inter-governmental space policy development. While there has been much guffawing and criticism of the nascent Space Force, it is important to recognize that the intellectu-

*As America became complacent, China and Russia have aggressively expanded their own space capabilities, and developed ways of countering U.S. strengths in orbit.*

al foundation of the new service was poured well before the Trump administration. In all likelihood, it was only a matter of time before space became its own combatant command or similar unique entity.

Since its creation in December 2019, Space Force has moved with remarkable speed to establish its structure, its organizational culture, and its strategic vision. In just the past year it has created a series of “deltas” in lieu of the Air Force’s “wings,” inducted its first enlisted trainees, conducted several launches, and is working to ensure that it remains light and agile enough to become a truly 21st century service.

Much work remains to be done. Chief among this “to do” list is communicating to the public why space matters to them, and why the loss of space capabilities is an existential threat to America’s national and economic security. Without the public’s support, especially in a time of COVID-constrained resources and competing priorities, the service may lose the bureaucratic battle well before the on-orbit battle takes place.

### **Prioritizing Space Acquisition**

As CSPPC has worked to highlight and address in the past year, getting space acquisition right must be a top priority. This means not just changing how we buy things, but what we buy. Too often, especially in government, trimming the margins is seen as progress. Shaving a month or two off of an acquisition cycle that stretches into many years is all well and good, but doesn’t actually change anything or help us



Blue Origin's reusable launch vehicles herald a new era of more affordable space launch services.

get inside Beijing's or Moscow's planning cycles. For example in terms of launch, if we continue to lock in block-buys of five years with bespoke capabilities that demand decade long-planning and development timelines, we will almost

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*The commercial space industry has taken off, making access to space cheaper, satellites smaller and lighter, and space capabilities generally more affordable.*

certainly look up and see Russia and China racing past us in the new era of great power competition.

As was the case during the Cold War, succeeding in this era of great power competition means having a whole-of-government and a whole-of-nation approach, as well as a

coherent alliance strategy. We must continue cross-governmental coordination on issues such as space traffic management, orbital debris mitigation, space situational awareness and others. We must also work with our allies and through

international institutions to ensure that liberal democracies establish and maintain a rules-based order in space. Failing to do so will allow Russia and China to fill the vacuum.

Getting space right requires critical leadership and focus, and a recognition that while the space domain remains intangible for most, it is just as critical as cyber to the way we live and work. CSPC's National

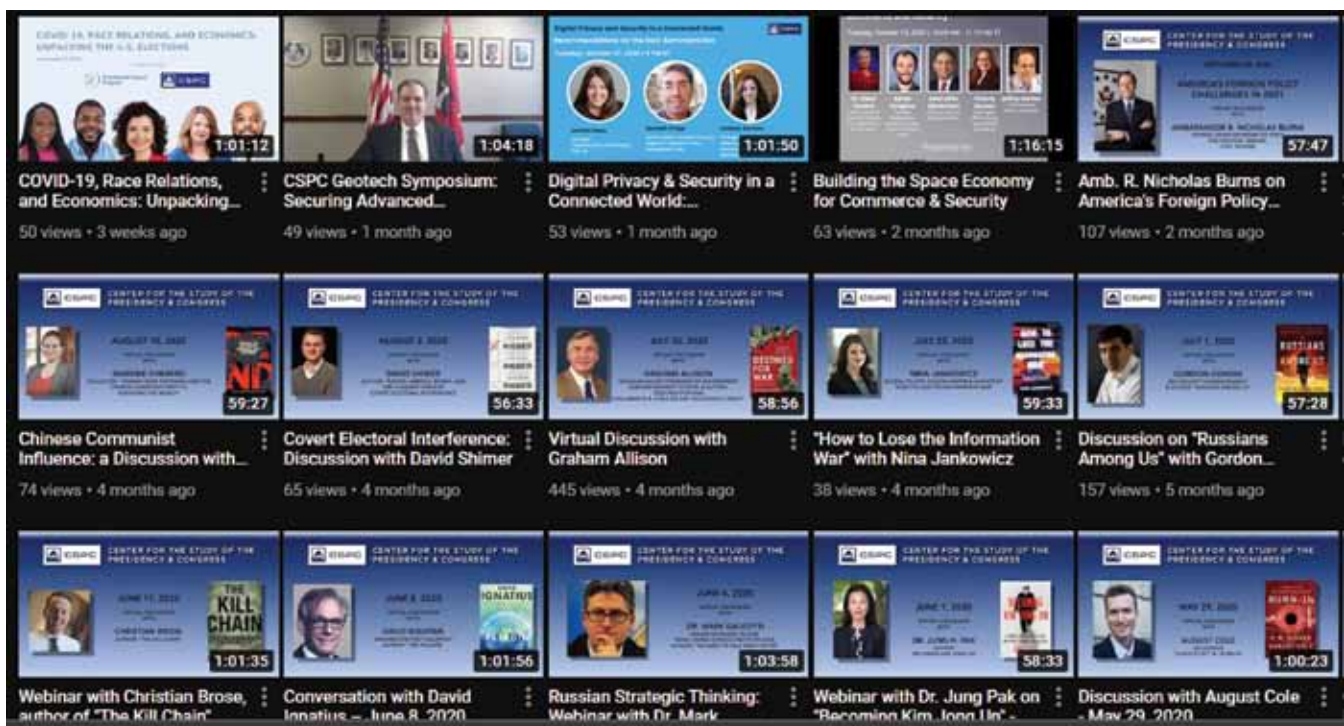
Security Space Program will continue its important work in the year ahead by bringing together the right people to discuss issues surrounding national security space, and by developing innovative new approaches to ensure America's continued primacy in space. □

# Virtual Roundtables with Noted Authors

The global pandemic presented a challenge that the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) seized as an opportunity. With noteworthy authors and national security experts unable to interact with audiences in public forums, the Center leveraged its extensive network of relationships to launch a series of online webinars on great power competition. The series explored how that competition would impact key areas such as space, intelligence, economics, information and technology.

Over the course of 2020, CSPC held nearly thirty of these webinar events on national security. Book authors and national security experts we featured included former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence Sue Gordon; former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Martin Dempsey; *Washington Post* columnist, author and national security expert David Ignatius; BBC Security Correspondent Gordon Corraera; former Member of Parliament Sir Nicholas Soames; Harvard University Professor and author Graham Allison, and many others.

These events grew from book reviews in the *Diplomatic Courier* written by Joshua C. Huminski, the Director of the CSPC affiliated Mike Rogers' Center for Intelligence & Global Affairs. During the course of the lockdown, Mr. Huminski reviewed nearly 40 books and invited many of the authors to discuss their work in well-attended CSPC webinars. Notable books reviewed included *Putin's People*, by Financial Times reporter Catherine Belton; *Active Measures*, by Thomas Rid; *Battlegrounds* by former National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster; *Becoming Kim Jong-Un* by former CIA officer Jung Pak; *The Shadow Commander* by Arash Azizi; *Burn* by P.W. Singer and August Cole; and *The Powerful and the Damned*, by Lionel Barber. □



# Averting a Runaway Nuclear Arms Race

Recent jockeying between U.S. and Russian negotiators on even a short, one-year extension of New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) highlighted just how complex and difficult arms control negotiations have become in an era of renewed great power competition, destabilizing new technologies and increasing levels of international tension and distrust. With the two nations possessing roughly 90 percent of nuclear warheads worldwide, the future not only of both countries but humanity itself depends on their successfully managing and limiting the threat posed by these ultimate weapons. Little wonder that the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has reset its Doomsday Clock to just

Moscow flexes its military muscle during a parade in Red Square.



one hundred seconds to midnight, the closest it's ever been to Armageddon.

Over the past year, the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) has worked to revitalize communication and bipartisan consensus in Congress, and between Congress and the Executive Branch, on the imperative of reducing the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Working with our partners at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, we plan to convene stake holders in a series of off-the-record meetings to explore innovative new approaches to nuclear nonproliferation as soon as pandemic restrictions are eased. We have also virtually convened an informal working group of Russia experts to add context to those discussions and help chart the way ahead.

### **Arms Control Architecture Teetering**

During the Cold War, there was greater domestic political consensus that U.S. national security was served by an architecture of arms control treaties and agreements; regular dialogue and consultation mechanisms; and other transparency and confidence-building measures that managed risks and mitigated tensions in U.S.-Soviet relations. This architecture kept the Cold War cold for decades.

In the current climate, there are partisan divides and significant distrust between Congress and the Executive Branch on policy toward Russia, our nuclear posture, and support for NATO and other multilateral arrangements. An updated mechanism is needed, and it should build on the positive examples and bipartisan spirit of the Congressional Arms Control Observer Group of the 1980s, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in the 1990s, and the National Security Working Group of the 1990s and 2000s—all of which fostered cooperation within Congress and between Congress and the Executive Branch on key national security issues.

Because the current generation of lawmakers has little memory of deep and sustained bipartisanship on such a significant scale, there is a need to cultivate and encourage some key Members of Congress to establish a new Congressional Liaison Group on Strategic Stability. This liaison group could serve to facilitate bipartisan cooperation, re-establish Congressional foreign policy prerogatives, and provide both support and oversight of Executive Branch arms control policy. By reopening a bipartisan Congress-

sional dialogue on these issues, avenues to reduce tensions with Russia and bolster global action on arms control can be explored.

### **A Nascent Arms Race**

The intense jockeying back and forth over just a brief extension of New START and the near collapse of talks, however, is yet another indication that the United States, Rus-

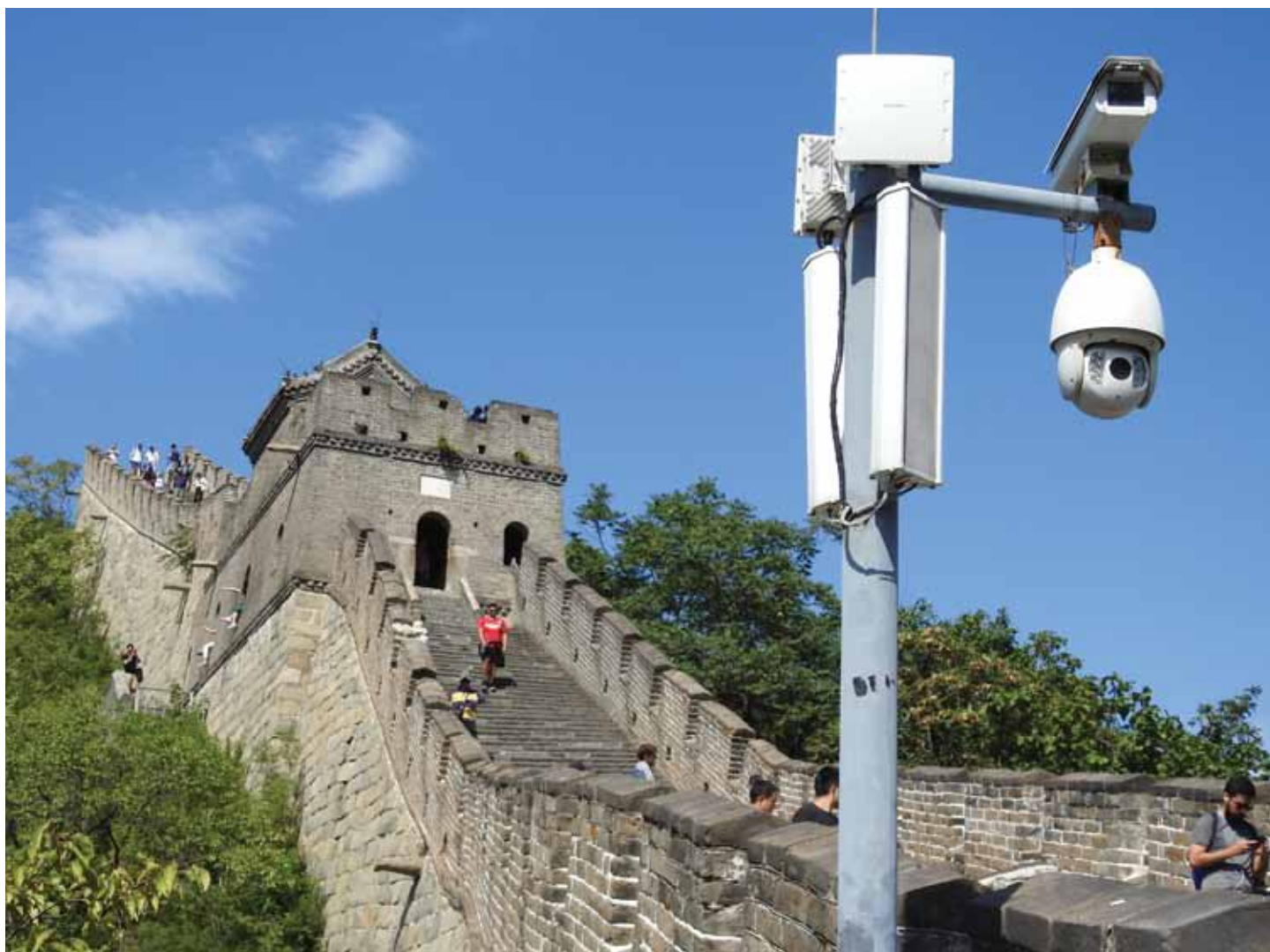
*The need to halt a dangerous nuclear arms race with Russia will weigh heavily on the Biden administration and the next Congress.*

sia and China have entered a new era of competition and high tensions, including an incipient nuclear arms race. All three nations are in the midst of aggressive modernizations of their nuclear arsenals, and are pursuing new technologies such as hypersonic missiles, space weaponry and offensive cyber capabilities that threaten to disrupt the delicate balance of nuclear deterrence based on “mutually assured destruction.”

These growing tensions in U.S.-Russia-China relations have prompted many experts to draw parallels with the Cold War. With the carefully constructed Cold War architecture of arms control and verification treaties, de-confliction agreements and open communication channels near collapse, however, and as military provocations increase dramatically, today's world bears an unsettling resemblance to the darkest early years of the Cold War, when missteps and crises like the Berlin Blockade, Korean War and Cuban Missile Crisis pushed the major powers to the brink.

The need to halt this dangerous spiral in major power relations, and an emerging nuclear arms race, will weigh heavily on the Biden administration and the next Congress. Both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue will need to make rebuilding a foundation for strategic stability a top priority. Achieving such a bipartisan consensus in this hyper-partisan moment will undoubtedly prove difficult. Yet the danger this escalating threat poses to the security of the American people—and the existential stakes involved for all of humanity—demand no less. □

# “Geotech” & Great Power Competition



In many ways 2020 was a year of acceleration. While many things slowed or came to a stop because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deadlocked, zero-sum politics of Washington, D.C., key geopolitical and technological trends continued to accelerate throughout the year. The pandemic itself has increased our reliance on technology, while also demonstrating the vulnerability of international supply chains to disruption. Geopolitical tensions also increased as great power

China is aggressively exporting its “surveillance state” technologies to a host of autocratic regimes around the world.





competition returns to the fore, and liberal societies and authoritarian regimes find themselves in a race for technological predominance.

In our new report on this strategic competition for technological superiority, “Geotech: Ensuring Free Societies’ Innovation Leadership,” the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) tracks these geopolitical and technological trends, and identifies ways that the incoming Biden administration can best organize itself, work with Congress, and initiate dialogue with both the U.S. private sector and international allies to win the Geotech competition.

### **Growing Tensions**

There is no question that geopolitical tensions have grown considerably. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic uncertainty greatly challenged governments around the world. Tensions also grew as a result of the consolidation of power in China by General Secretary Xi Jinping. In this new China, Xi wields unprecedented power and is paramount over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which in turn is paramount over the state and military. Both are increasingly intertwined with the private sector.

With China’s history of humiliation at the hands of

*General Secretary Xi Jinping now wields unprecedented power, and is paramount over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which in turn is paramount over the state and military.*

more technically advanced Western powers, the CCP has focused on pursuing policies to ensure leadership in key cutting-edge technologies. Beijing seeks to leverage those technologies for regime dominance at home and coercive military power overseas.

The growth of great power tensions is complicated by the interdependence of the Chinese economy with that of the United States and its allies. As CSPC has pointed out in previous Geotech reports, lessons from the dueling blocs during the Cold War only go so far as an apt comparison. Competition with China will require both a forceful defense of our interests and values, alongside the challenging task of finding common ground to confront global challenges.

### **21st Century Mercantilism**

In the meantime, the Chinese playbook for technology leadership has become clearer to Western policymakers. China’s



*China has even coined the term “wolf warrior”—from a Chinese Rambo-style action movie—to describe the highly nationalistic, and thoroughly insulting rhetoric now coming from Chinese diplomats.*

economic and security interests combine, hand-in-glove, to ensure Chinese technology advancement at the expense of international competitors. This technology playbook not only challenges U.S. and allied policymakers and private sector leaders attempting to compete with China, but it also unfairly tilts the global marketplace towards China. All of this combines into a model of 21st century mercantilism.

China’s technological mercantilism abroad has been matched with a crackdown on internal dissent at home, further ratcheting up international tensions. Most notable is the widespread repression of the Muslim Uighur ethnic minorities of Xinjiang, and the crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong with the imposition of new laws criminalizing dissent and effectively ending the “one country, two systems” dynamic.

As these trends accelerate, China has largely dropped the mask of a responsible stakeholder in the liberal international order. Instead, Chinese diplomats have become increasingly aggressive. China has even coined the term “wolf warrior”—from a Chinese Rambo-style action movie—to describe the highly nationalistic, and thoroughly insulting rhetoric now coming from Chinese diplomats. Facing a coordinated onslaught of economic measures and a war of words with Beijing, Australia is now the proverbial “canary in the coalmine” for how China and other authoritarians seek to bully free societies.

### **Russian Technology**

Though not nearly as integrated into the global economy nor as advanced in its technological aims as China, Russia remains a significant technological competitor. Much like the Soviet Union, Russia can match the West and China in some areas, and even excel in technological acumen in arenas such as advanced weapons systems. Moscow’s challenge is to develop, manufacture, and deploy these technologies at the scale necessary for competition in a global marketplace. Regardless, U.S. policymakers must remain vigilant of Russian efforts to improve its military technology, and blur the lines between Russian intelligence operations, organized crime, and technology competition.

Addressing the complex nature of the Geotech challenge will require strategic planning and vision on the part of the United States and its allies. Planning for technological breakthroughs becomes a matter of when, not if, they will occur. Increasingly policymakers must also focus their concerns on which side of the ideological divide between liberal democracies and authoritarian societies the breakthroughs occur. □

# Partners on Strategic Technologies

In great power competition, one of the unique advantages that the United States enjoys is the range of allies and partners it can marshal into military, diplomatic, economic, and, increasingly, technological coalitions. Given the number of global challenges, these partnerships are vital for U.S. security and prosperity. In both our research and convening, the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) stresses the importance of these alliances, and in the coming year we will continue

to educate policymakers and the general public on the importance of U.S. alliances, while also fostering dialogue between U.S. policymakers and their counterparts in allied capitals.

## Allies in Great Power Competition

In evaluating the balance of power between the United States, China, and Russia, the partnerships and alliances of the United States stand in stark contrast to Beijing and Moscow's client states and mercantilist exploitation. Unfortunately, the rhetoric from President Trump over the past four years largely belittled our allies and their contributions, while displaying rhetorical affinity for authoritar-

ians from Moscow to Pyongyang to Cairo.

Unlike the Cold War, where the competition between superpowers divided the world into Washington-aligned, Moscow-aligned, and non-aligned blocs, the geopolitics of the 21st century are far more complex. The shrinking of the world through globalization and economic interdependence make the return of Iron or Bamboo Curtains unlikely. Yet spheres of intense competition include economic, political, diplomatic, cultural, and military dimensions. And in that competition, Winston Churchill had it right: "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them."



## Geotech Partnerships

CSPC’s Geotech Project continues to stress that the United States must marshal its allies and partners around a vision of the role liberal democracies must embrace in setting technology standards and fostering innovation. While China will rely on the size of its own domestic market and seek to partner with existing and aspiring authoritarians—or enmesh the developing world in corruption and debt colonialism—the United States and its allies can build an alternative to China’s digital mercantilism.

While Beijing continues to alienate many nations with coercion and bullying, U.S. policymakers should celebrate and nurture U.S. allies and partners. The stakes are high. For example, as data volume drives development in artificial intelligence, China has an advantage both in the size of its domestic population and the lack of limits to how much data it can appropriate from its citizens without recourse. By building shared technology approaches, the United States can counter this advantage.

We cannot assume, however, that the security or economic decisions made in Washington will automatically be embraced by our allies. While an increasing number of countries around the world have banned Huawei from their 5G networks, for instance, others remain open to Chinese access to their networks and data for the sake of faster, cheaper 5G deployment. For many countries, there are complicated economic interests in play.

## A U.S.-Japan-Europe Dialogue

It is thus important to begin a U.S.-Japan-Europe dialogue—which could be expanded to include other international partners—to find common ground on data sharing that addresses privacy and data management concerns, while also competing with both China’s domestic marketplace and its authoritarian model for data management.

An area of particular concern is the growing influence of China in international organizations, many associated with the United Nations, including bodies that set international standards for technology. This is territory where the United States and its allies have unfortunately ceded influence—

across administrations and governments—as Beijing prioritized these international fora.

Finally, during the campaign, President-elect Joe Biden spoke of a “summit of democracies” while other ideas about a “D-10” or expanded G-7 are bandied about. While questions remain about who would be invited and what would be on the agenda, these groups present an opportunity to build multilateral coordination on technology policy, trade, data management, supply chain security, and other Geotech issues.

## Fostering Dialogue & Cooperation

Throughout 2020 and looking forward into 2021, CSPC continues to explore avenues to better strengthen these alli-

ances and foster dialogue between U.S. policymakers and their allied counterparts, especially to include strengthening the important U.S.-Japan alliance. In 2020, CSPC hosted virtual Geotech symposiums to bring together member and staff delegations from the U.S. Congress and the Diet of Japan to discuss Geotech issues and joint U.S.-Japan cooperation on

these topics. CSPC has also fostered dialogue on cybersecurity between U.S. and Japanese private sector leaders.

The Center has also engaged in dialogue with our Australian partners, and in 2020 we featured Australian Embassy Defense Attaché Major General Andrew Freeman as the inaugural speaker in CSPC’s Defense Attaché dialogues. These are designed to foster dialogue between U.S. policymakers and Capitol Hill staffers with the military representatives from our closest allies.

CSPC is also working with key European partners. In June of 2020, CSPC Abshire Chair Mike Rogers testified before Great Britain’s House of Commons Defense Committee to discuss the importance of securing British 5G networks from Huawei and other Chinese vendors. CSPC also continues to foster dialogue with the Embassy of France and partners in the Czech Republic.

In 2021, CSPC will continue to build and nurture these critical partnerships, while doing our part to educate policymakers and the public on the strong friendships and partnerships that help keep America secure and prosperous. □



## Section Four

# Fostering Enlightened Leadership



**SUCCESS IN BUILDING** the liberal world order as the foundation for “The American Century,” let alone victory in the Cold War and development of the world’s most productive economy, required enlightened leadership in both the White House and Congress, and the support of an informed citizenry. We are this country because presidents and Congressional leaders united to construct the interstate highway system; launch the modern space program by putting a man on the moon; advance the civil rights movement and strengthen social safety net programs; pass the Clean Air and Water Acts and other major pieces of environmental legislation; and lay the groundwork for the internet, giving America a head start on the Information Age.

At the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) we have always viewed as a core mission the recognition and celebration of enlightened leadership and the development of the next generation of national leaders of character. We do that each year through our Presidential Fellows program, which this year celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and with our annual awards dinner honoring public servants who have shown the traits we believe exemplify our best leaders: strategic vision, civility, and a passion for reform and national renewal.

# Honoring the Iconic Lives of Congressman John Lewis & Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Each year the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress (CSPC) bestows annual awards to honor distinguished public servants. As an organization that closely studies the lessons of history, it is fitting that our inaugural *Thurgood Marshall Award* went to Congressman John Lewis and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, two iconic champions of equality whom we lost this year. In choosing to name the award after Thurgood Marshall—to accompany our *Publius*, *Eisenhower*, and *Hamilton* awards—we hope to remind ourselves and future generations of the lesson that America’s continued success requires not only compromise, security, and prosperity, but also justice.

This nation is only as strong as the hearts of its people. The lives of Justice Ginsburg and Congressman Lewis were dedicated to strengthening our hearts, so that all can partake of this nation’s bounties, and thus bring America closer to its ideals. Justice Ginsburg knew what “Me too” meant long before it became a hashtag. John Lewis lived a life that spanned choruses of “we shall overcome” to chants of “black lives matter.” The story of their lives demonstrates to us all that lasting change comes not only from the power of advocacy, but also the hard work of governance and institution building—while practicing the art of compromise with grace and civility.

Our December virtual awards ceremony for John Lewis and Ruth Bader Ginsburg featured conversations with individuals who knew them well: Rep. Robert “Bobby” Scott, D-VA, Chairman of the House Education & Labor Committee; National Public Radio Legal Affairs Correspondent Nina Totenberg; and (via recorded remarks) Congressman James Clyburn, D-SC, Majority Whip in the House of Representatives.



Congressman John Lewis receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor—from President Barack Obama (left).



In 1965 a young John Lewis would be bloodied, but undeterred, in leading civil rights marchers over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama (left).



After her death in 2020, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg became the first woman in U.S. history to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol.



During the virtual awards ceremony, CSPC President Glenn Nye and Rep. Robert “Bobby” Scott, D-VA, talk about the late John Lewis’ penchant for stirring up “good trouble” (top); NPR Legal Affairs Correspondent Nina Totenberg talks about her friend Ruth Bader Ginsburg with CSPC Board Vice Chairman Pamela Scholl (middle); and Congressman James Clyburn, D-SC, Majority Whip in the House of Representatives, shares memories of John Lewis.

# An Honor Roll of Leaders

Recognizing and celebrating enlightened leadership is one of our core missions at the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC). Last year we awarded Gwynne Shotwell, President and CEO of Space X, and Heather Wilson, President of the University of Texas at El Paso and former Secretary of the Air Force, with our *Eisenhower Award* (see photo, below right). The award recognizes exemplary leadership, strategic vision and

character in the mold of the 34th President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II. We were also pleased that in 2019 CSPC Board of Trustees member Edwin Meese III received the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor—for his distinguished leadership while serving as attorney general under President Ronald Reagan (photo right).

Each year CSPC honors leading public servants of character and integrity with one of its four awards: the *Publius Award* for leadership and bipartisanship in government; the *Eisenhower Award* for leadership in national security affairs; the *Hamilton Award* for economic or fiscal leadership; and the *Thurgood Marshall Award* honoring champions of equality and justice.

Some of CSPC’s past award winners include: Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor; Senator Susan Collins, R-ME; Senator Joe Manchin, D-WV; Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-CA; Senator Roy Blunt, R-MO; Congressman Steny Hoyer, D-MD; Senator Bob Corker, R-TN; Senator Mark Warner, D-VA; Senator Bill Frist, R-TN; Senator John Breaux, D-LA; Defense Secretaries Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel and Ash Carter; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen; Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke; and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter receiving CSPC’s *Eisenhower Award* for national security leadership (above right).

Senators Bob Corker, R-TN, and Senator Mark Warner, D-VA, accepting CSPC’s *Publius Award* for bipartisan leadership (right).







CSPC Trustee Edwin Meese III receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor—for his distinguished leadership while serving as attorney general under President R Ronald Reagan (left).



Senators Susan Collins, R-ME, and Joe Manchin, D-WV, receiving CSPC’s *Publius Award* for bipartisan leadership (above left).



Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, receiving CSPC’s *Eisenhower Award* (above right).



CSPC Trustee Paula Dobriansky speaks with *Eisenhower Award* recipients Heather Wilson, former Secretary of the Air Force, and Gwynne Shotwell, President and CEO of SpaceX (left).

# 50 Years of Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders

This year the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) welcomed our 50th class to the Presidential Fellows program. Since 1970, the Center has operated this leadership development initiative with the aim of building a cadre of future leaders committed to public service and civil dialogue. The timing of this half century anniversary served as an important reminder of why the program was originally created.



CSPC's 2000-2001 Presidential Fellows class gathers for a photo in front of the White House following a tour (above).

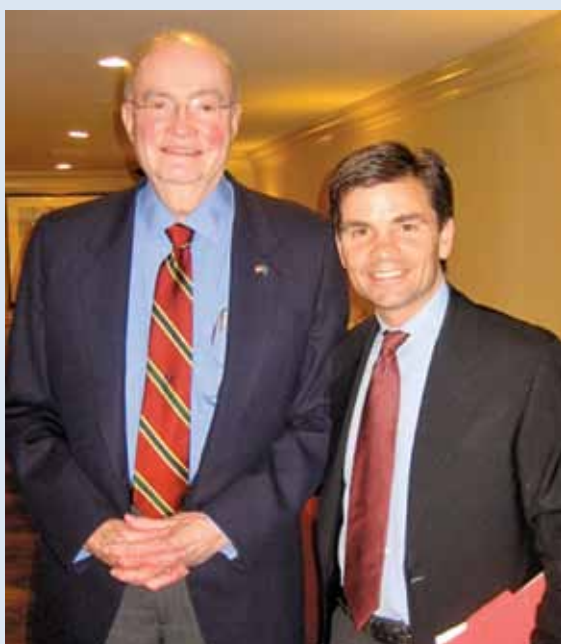
U.S. Coast Guard Academy cadets pose for a photo during CSPC's 2006 Awards Dinner (left). Presidential Fellows from the 2002-2003 class join First Lady Laura Bush for a photo at the White House (far left).



The Presidential Fellows program was launched during the politically divisive Vietnam War era and designed to serve as an antidote to the internal divisions rocking our country. Fifty years later, we find ourselves in a similarly hyper-partisan political moment. As we look to build a better, more unified country in the future, we believe that next generation leaders will play a crucial role. We are honored to play a part in developing tomorrow's changemakers.

Beyond our political divisions, the coronavirus pandemic presented unique challenges for all of us this year, and the Presidential Fellows program was no exception. We quickly transitioned in the spring of 2020 to a virtual format. We are very proud of our 2019-2020 Fellows for their perseverance in the face of enormous and rapid change. As we prepared to welcome our 50th class this fall, we were committed to providing a transformative experience for our Fellows despite the problems posed by the pandemic, and to pay tribute to our past by celebrating our 50th anniversary.

We embraced the flexibility provided by our new digital environment to host speakers beyond our typical geographical reach. Our online programming has featured award-winning journalists from outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, medical personnel on the front lines of the battle against COVID-19, and policy experts tackling the nation's



CSPC Presidential Fellows from the 2018-2019 class participate in a group discussion (above).

ABC News Anchor and Presidential Fellows alum George Stephanopoulos poses for a photo with then CSPC President and CEO Ambassador David M. Abshire at the 2008 Spring Leadership Conference.



CSPC's Director of the Presidential Fellows program Erica Ngoenha, converses with the 2020-2021 class of Fellows over Zoom.

most challenging issues. We look forward to the day when we can safely convene again in person, but until that day arrives we will continue to produce high-level digital programming for our Fellows.

In transitioning away from an in-person celebration of our 50th anniversary, we launched a commemorative digital publication that chronicles the evolution of the Presidential Fellows program over the past 50 years. We examined the political environment that led to the program's founding, chronicled the program's major milestones, and highlighted some of our most accomplished alumni.

An enduring bright spot in this challenging year was the expansion of our engagement with alumni. Prior to the start of the pandemic, we hosted our first-ever "Alumni and Friends" reception in New York City. We launched a monthly Alumni Spotlight series to catch up with former Fellows and share stories of enduring friendships. We celebrated alum Nate Morris's endowment of his eponymous Fellowship at the University of Kentucky's Gatton College of Business and Economics. Both on and off-line our Fellows alumni community was a source of pride. □



*The New York Times* National Politics Reporter Astead Herndon speaks to the 2020-2021 class of Presidential Fellows during a virtual panel discussion on the 2020 elections (left). The 2019-2020 class of Fellows discusses the impact of the emerging pandemic on the elections in March 2020 with Jessica Taylor, the Senate and Governors Editor for *The Cook Political Report* (far left).

## Section Five

# Capturing the Lessons of History



THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY of the Presidency and Congress (CSPC) originally grew out of President Dwight Eisenhower's expressed wish for an institution dedicated to capturing the historical lessons of governance and applying them creatively to the challenges confronted by the modern presidency and Congress. CSPC's books, publications and reports are in keeping with that mission and tradition.

In our anthologies of case studies in modern governance, *Triumph and Tragedies of the Modern Presidency*, and *Triumph and Tragedies of the Modern Congress*, (Praeger) some of the leading historians, political scientists, and journalists in the country examine major milestones in domestic and foreign policy that have made us the country we are today. In *Twilight Warriors* (Basic Books), CSPC Senior Fellow and award-winning correspondent James Kitfield analyzes the lessons that U.S. soldiers, spies and special agents have learned after nearly two decades of fighting a global war against terrorists and insurgents. In *The Statesman* (Rowman & Littlefield), the late David M. Abshire, former CSPC President and adviser to presidents, imparts the lessons learned from a rich career and life spent in public service. **CSPC Reports offer creative solutions and specific recommendations to address complex challenges facing the nation.** CSPC's *Presidential Studies Quarterly* is the only scholarly journal that focuses entirely on the most powerful political figure in the world—the President of the United States.

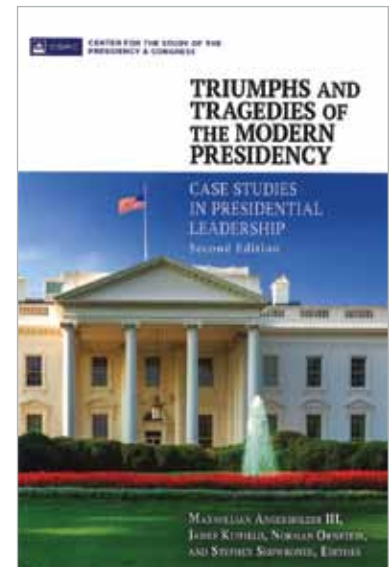
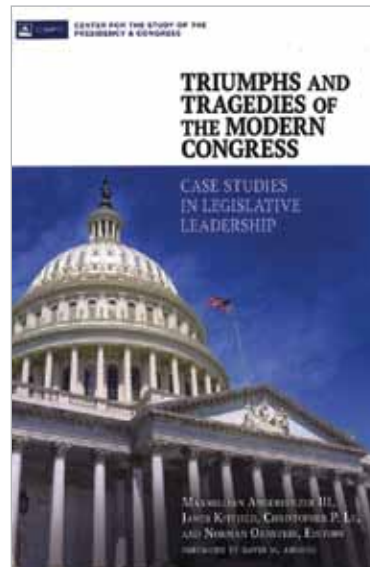
# Triumphs & Tragedies in U.S. Governance

The Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) publishes two anthologies on the subject of presidential and Congressional leadership: *Triumphs & Tragedies of the Modern Presidency*, and *Triumphs and Tragedies of the Modern Congress*. Through case studies we ask some of the top historians, journalists and political scientists in the country to identify the lessons learned from past presidents and Congresses, the better to understand current events. Our writers examine the first one hundred days of every post-World War II president and look at their domestic and foreign policy milestones that laid the foundation for the “American Century.”

These anthologies offer important lessons on leadership, as well as the pitfalls that any administration or Congress would do well to avoid. Historians will long ponder the Trump administration as one of the most unorthodox and disruptive in history, for instance, but it was not altogether ahistorical. The same powerful forces that both empowered and constrained his modern predecessors shaped Trump’s tenure in the Oval Office, for good and ill. In that sense President Trump’s triumphs revealed familiar alignments of political actors and motivations, just as his tragedies followed a recognizable script. As Mark Twain reputedly mused, “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.”

The Trump administration fell into a common trap, for instance, of trying too hard to reverse the previous administration’s legacy. That led to the avoidable mistake of the Trump administration spending much of its critical first year in office—when election winds are strongest—in an unsuccessful attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

As only the fourth president in U.S. history to win in the Electoral College only to lose the popular vote, Trump had a limited mandate, and it showed. Like FDR, LBJ and Barack Obama, however, Trump’s party initially enjoyed majority control in Congress, though not a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate.



Trump also stumbled into two of the most common mistakes made by new presidents: underestimating the power lawmakers have to delay or derail a president’s agenda, and failing to recognize the need to nurture good relations with key Members of Congress. That’s been especially true of chief executives who ran as Washington outsiders, such as General Dwight Eisenhower, who chose not to even send a first-year domestic program to Congress, and Jimmy Carter, who surrounded himself with aides from Georgia who often kept Congress at arm’s length, and suffered from it.

As the classic outsider initially rebuffed by a fractious Congress, Trump wisely changed course and relied heavily on his Vice President and former Congressman Mike Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, and then House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-WI, to push through the GOP tax reform bill, a far-reaching overhaul of the tax code and President Trump’s most notable domestic achievement. In his single-minded focus on reelection and disdain for norms, however, Trump later withheld military aid authorized by Congress to try and pressure a foreign country to investigate his political rival, becoming in the process only the third president in U.S. history to be impeached by the House of Representatives. Thus do the rhymes of history foretell presidential tragedies as well as triumphs. □

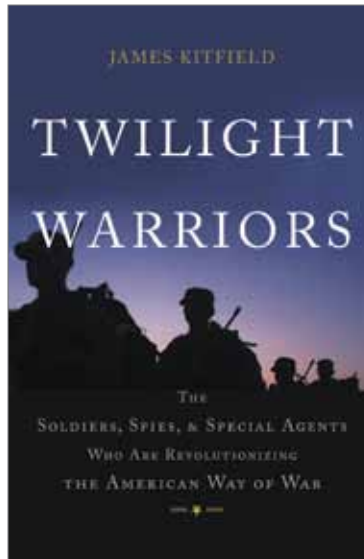
# Lessons from America's Longest Wars

On January 3, 2020, Iranian Quds Force commander Qasem Suleimani arrived at the Baghdad International Airport and his convoy of vehicles soon departed for the city center. Though considered the second most powerful man in Iran and thus apparently in his own mind untouchable, Major General Suleimani was chief of a U.S. designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and he and his closely allied Shiite militias throughout the Middle East had the blood of hundreds of Americans on their hands. So after his convoy cleared the airport, a U.S. drone flying overhead fired a Hellfire missile that

killed Suleimani and nine companions. In the end, the Iranian arch terrorist met the same fate as other terrorists chiefs on the classified U.S. “most wanted terrorists” list, to include Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (killed in 2019), Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden (killed in 2011), and Al Qaeda in Iraq chief Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (killed in 2006).

Each of those deaths underscores how U.S. military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies have learned and adapted during nearly two decades of fighting a global terrorist movement. CSPC Senior Fellow James Kitfield’s *Twilight Warriors: The Soldiers, Spies, & Special Agents Who Are Revolutionizing the American Way of War* (Basic Books), chronicles that fight against a determined and adaptive enemy, drawing on Mr. Kitfield’s extensive reporting from the frontlines, and distilling “lessons learned” from America’s longest wars.

Lessons like it takes a network to defeat a network. Under the pioneering leadership of General Stanley McChrystal, Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), the secretive war-fighting subcomponent of U.S. Special Operations Command, adapted to Al Qaeda’s global network by incubating its own network-centric model of military operations. That model relies on an unprecedented synergy that developed in the war zones between Special



Operations Forces, intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and conventional military forces.

Another hard lesson U.S. commanders learned was the difference between counterterrorism versus counterinsurgency. At some tipping point a campaign of terrorism can transform into a much larger and more widely-supported insurgency powerful enough to compete with government forces for control of territory. Beyond that inflection point a strictly counterterrorism campaign of targeted strikes on terrorist leaders is ineffective. Just as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State survived the death of Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghda-

di, respectively, the Quds Force will continue as a significant terrorist threat despite the demise of Suleimani.

After President Trump campaigned on a promise that “torture works” and promised to bring back waterboarding and “a hell of a lot worse,” it was inevitable that a debate would ensue over whether to bring back the CIA’s discarded program of “enhanced interrogation techniques” that much of the world views as torture. For their part, the U.S. military and most counterterrorism officials have never forgotten where that detour into darkness led—unreliable intelligence, demoralized interrogators, and guilty terrorists like 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who still cannot be tried in a court of law because they were tortured.

*The Wall Street Journal* lauded *Twilight Warriors* for providing “an enlightening tour of 21st century counterterrorism—its success and failures, its evolving technologies, and its ever-festering rivalries among national security agencies.” General Dennis Reimer, former Army Chief of Staff, calls it “undoubtedly one of the best books I have ever read—a brilliantly written narrative and real world adventure that draws the reader in.”

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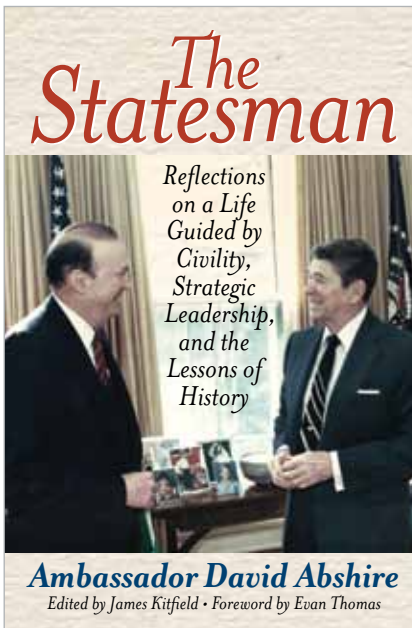
*James Kitfield is a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress.*

# The Wages of Incivility

**T**he Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) has published “The Statesman” (Rowan and Littlefield), the posthumous memoirs of the late David M. Abshire, the former Chairman and President of CSPC, co-founder of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the U.S. Ambassador to NATO. Among his many government positions, Abshire was special counselor to President Ronald Reagan during the Iran-Contra controversy. In this excerpt from “The Statesman,” Abshire presciently warned how a marked increase in incivility in our political discourse was threatening the long term health and security of our democracy.

As I write this at the end of my career, our country has lost its sense of strategic direction and common purpose. Our politics have entered a period of hyper-partisanship and gridlock. Overseas we are transitioning from a unipolar world of uncontested American power to a multipolar world where we face challenges to our interests and security from multiple directions. Dangers gather on every front. Put simply, our country is in deep trouble.

*We are in danger of becoming a nation so absorbed by our divisions and bitter internal squabbles that we no longer attempt great deeds, nor dare lead free peoples.*



We have come to this impasse in large part because of a great deterioration of civility over the past decade and a half. Today, too many in Congress claim to revere the Constitution, and yet they reject the spirit of consensus-building and compromise that created it in the first place. Today, too many politicians seem utterly opposed to any of the compromises required for our Constitutional system of republican federalism to function at all. It must be their way, or no way. That fundamental lack of civility and respect among political partisans has in turn produced a profound deficit of trust. And just as civility is the springboard for trust, so too is

trust the springboard for compromise and cooperation, the essential ingredients of democratic governance. Without them our leaders lack the political consensus required to take the country to higher ground. So on top of this deficit in civility and trust, we also confront a leadership deficit.

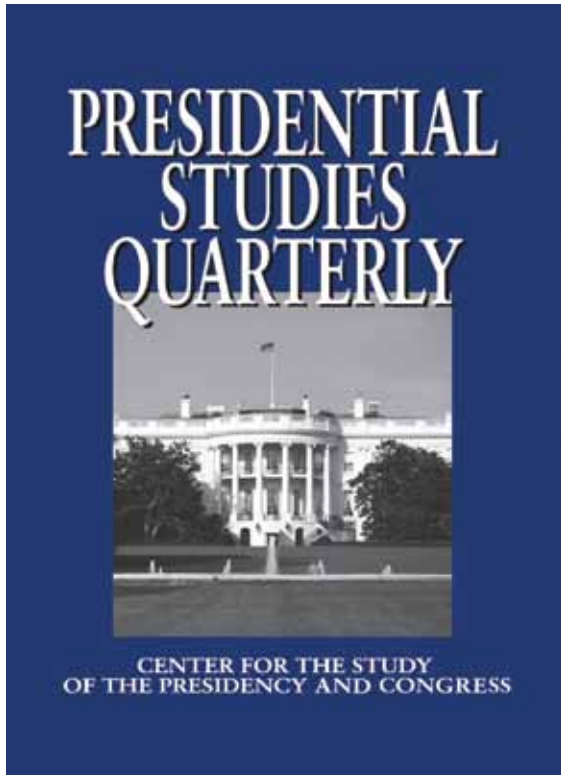
We as a people are living with the bitter fruits of this dysfunction. We can see it in the political gridlock that led to the downgrading of the United States’ credit rating for the first time in history. It’s evident in the routine budgetary impasses that diminish the strength of an already stressed U.S. military even as dangers gather, and in domestic infrastructure that was once the envy of the world, now crumbling into disrepair and obsolescence. It’s there for all the world to see in a political discourse of embarrassing crudeness and banality. We are in danger of becoming a nation so absorbed by our divisions and bitter internal squabbles that we no longer attempt great deeds, nor dare lead free peoples. □

The late David M. Abshire was formerly the Chairman and President of the Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress. This essay is excerpted from his memoir, “Statesman: Reflections on a Life Guided by Civility, Strategic Leadership, and the Lessons of History” (Rowan and Littlefield).



# Presidential Studies Quarterly

**P**residential Studies Quarterly (PSQ) is the only scholarly journal that focuses entirely on the most powerful political figure in the world—the President of the United States. An indispensable resource for understanding the U.S. president, the online-only “Presidential Studies Quarterly” (PSQ) offers articles, features, review essays, and book reviews covering all aspects of the office. Containing award-winning articles, PSQ is published by Wiley-Blackwell and edited by the distinguished Presidential scholar Dr. George C. Edwards III. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing issues the journal four times annually in March, June, September, and December.



## **Timely Research**

“Presidential Studies Quarterly” not only highlights the latest scholarly research and thinking about the Presidency, but it also discusses topics that are of current interest in the field in features such as “The Polls,” “The Law,” “The Contemporary Presidency,” and “Source Material.”

## **Blind Reviewed Articles**

PSQ evaluates submitted research through a “double blind” peer review process which ensures that readers receive only the highest-quality, objective scholarship that is free from partisan editing or selection. The editorial board members include some of the most renowned scholars and professionals in the discipline:

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Richard J. Ellis, Willamette University □

# Crafting Novel Responses to National Challenges

The Center for the Study of the Presidency & Congress (CSPC) has a tradition of encouraging “out of the box” thinking, and working to bridge divides between government policymakers and lawmakers on the one side, and leaders in the private sector and academia on the other. In each of our projects we convene stakeholders and influential thought leaders and engage them in respectful dialogue that seeks to leverage emerging technologies and find novel solutions to the complex challenges facing the nation.

## Winning the Space Race



U.S. space superiority is being challenged to a degree not seen since the height of the Cold War. China and Russia, among others, are developing and fielding significant counter-space capabilities and rapidly expanding their own space capabilities. To outpace these potential adversaries the United States must

leverage a revolution in commercial space launch and radically rethink the way it approaches national security space.

## Modernizing Government Procurement



For America’s continued prosperity, government procurement must better enable the drive for innovation that has made the United States the world’s preeminent economic power in the Information Age. That has become increasingly difficult as complex government rules and regulations continue

to attach themselves to the procurement system like barnacles on a ship. The result is today’s risk-averse, lowest-common-denominator approach to government procurement that is totally mismatched in government purchases of advanced consulting, professional services and Information Technology systems. With the “Better Business of Government” report, CSPC continues to educate policymakers on

the imperative of adopting a more “mission-oriented” and innovation-focused procurement system.

## Owning the “Geotech” Future



The United States and its partners are in a heated competition with authoritarian societies to set the technological standards for the future. Leadership in the field of Geotech—the linkage of geopolitics and technology—will determine the 21st century balance of power. To meet this challenge, America must develop a Geotech strategy that recognizes the existential stakes involved and leverages allies and partners.

## Averting a Nuclear Arms Race



The need to halt a dangerous spiral in major power relations, and an emerging nuclear arms race, will weigh heavily on the Biden administration and the next Congress. Both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue will need to make rebuilding a foundation for strategic stability a top priority. Achieving such a bipartisan

consensus in this hyper-partisan moment will undoubtedly prove difficult, but absolutely necessary. □

All reports available at [www.thepresidency.org](http://www.thepresidency.org).

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