

Foreword

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The Aspen Strategy Group (ASG) was founded at the height of the Cold War, as the world faced the threat of cataclysmic nuclear warfare between two superpowers. We are facing uncertain and precarious times now. It has been a year characterized by turbulence and instability due to the concurrent crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting global economic fallout, and escalating racial and domestic turmoil. More Americans have been lost to the coronavirus than in all our wars since World War II combined. At this critical moment, the mission of the ASG to bring together experts for open-minded, nonpartisan dialogue is more important than ever.

The thirty-sixth ASG Summer Workshop in August 2020 brought together virtually over seventy of our members and experts from government, academia, journalism, and the private sector. Over two full days of debate and conversation on Zoom, the ASG focused on multiple national security challenges facing the United States: race, democracy, and political divisions in America; the future of U.S.-China relations; the global economy; and foreign policy priorities for 2021. The pandemic was woven into the fabric of every working session. As always, our discussions were held with the goal of taking the strategic long view and developing actionable policy recommendations.

This book covers many of the ideas discussed during our working sessions and the strategic recommendations that resulted from those discussions.

The issues addressed in this volume give the reader a flavor of our thoughtful discussions this summer but will, of course, require continued deep debate. It is our hope that the following chapters will contribute meaningfully to the formulation of our nation's future foreign and domestic policy. Although America is facing substantial challenges both at home and away, we know we have the capacity for resilience, self-correction, and innovative growth. Solving these challenges now will help us bend the arc of history in a positive direction.