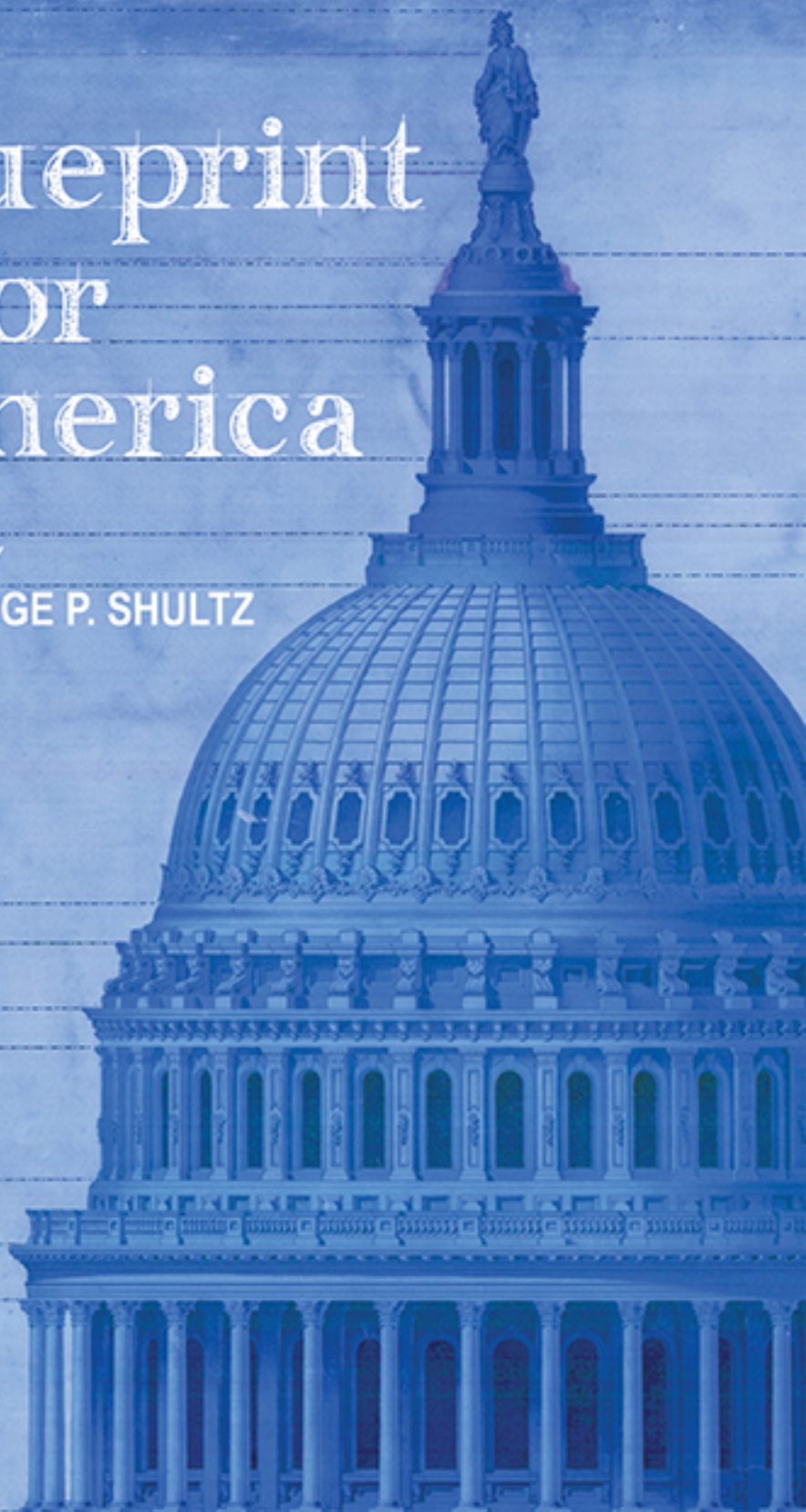


Blueprint for America

EDITED BY

GEORGE P. SHULTZ



INTRODUCTION

Although the word “blueprint” originally referred to a detailed architectural or mechanical plan, it has grown to acquire a more metaphorical meaning. We have chosen the word deliberately because it conveys our intent to offer a coherent set of ideas for the rebuilding of America. This book offers a plan for civic, economic, and security architecture in the broadest sense, for the construction of a solvent America that this generation can bequeath without guilt to the next.

America has long offered a political and economic example to the rest of the world. From its earliest days, its political principles have been rooted in universality, not narrow nationalism; and over the years, it has thrown its doors open to people from every corner of the globe. There is a reason why America draws immigrants not only from lands that are poorer and less well-governed than our own, but also from places where people fare well.

But this American ability to inspire—which we call Exceptionalism—is not automatic. It takes continued efforts to be realized in a changing world. We face challenges today. Washington is rent along partisan lines, seemingly unwilling to work toward useful compromise. This ideological partisanship is compounded by demographic changes that are prone to exploitation by populists on the left and right. A deep recession and an anemic recovery have shaken widespread faith in policies and principles that have served this country admirably for generations.

Add to this threats to global order, from newly emergent nationalistic state assertiveness to the galloping threat of Islamist extremism. The meltdown in the Middle East—particularly in Syria and Iraq—has also had a profoundly destabilizing impact on Europe, shaking some of our closest allies to the core and underlining the need for American global engagement.

Our *Blueprint* offers a series of policy ideas that would help shore up the long-term foundations of American strengths. This book has assembled a series of essays, both explanatory and prescriptive, written by scholars at the Hoover Institution—all professors, thinkers, and practitioners of global renown in their respective fields:

- ✓ Economic success offers the key to America's continued primacy in virtually every global field. It is no accident that our perceived receding from the world's stage has occurred over a prolonged period of sluggish growth, at a rate barely above stagnation. So that is where we start. The economists Michael Boskin, John Cogan, John Cochrane, and John Taylor—a formidable quartet by any standard—address the questions of entitlement reform, deficits, monetary reform, national debt, and regulatory and tax reform.
- ✓ Health care has become such a large part of our economy that it deserves its own discussion: Scott Atlas draws on his front-line tours in the practice of medicine to tackle health care reform and the many problems generated by the Affordable Care Act.
- ✓ The *Blueprint's* focus then shifts toward the inputs of our nation's global competitiveness. Cochrane returns to reframe the discourse on immigration and international trade. Eric Hanushek meanwhile addresses the reform

of K-12 education, a sphere in which this country lags dangerously behind its competitors, even as its universities continue to set the highest standards.

- ✓ Rounding off the international dimension of our *Blueprint* are essays by retired admiral James Ellis, retired general James Mattis, and Kori Schake on their vision of how to restore America's national security. Ellis follows that with a deep-dive on our (sorely lacking) energy security strategy, and James Goodby expounds on the country's practice of diplomacy in a time of turbulent transition.

Across all of this, our project “foreman” George Shultz draws from his own experiences in government, industry, and academia to lead off each section with a range of observations—some prescriptive, others reflective—on spending, human resources, foreign policy, and, in conclusion, the art of governance.

This is not a book of empty rhetoric; nor is it one of ideologically skewed or partisan censure. Yes, there is criticism offered and blame ascribed; but they are directed at the bad ideas and policies that have hamstrung America and knocked it off course. The spirit of our *Blueprint* is wholly positive: we offer ideas, diagnoses, solutions, and road maps. There is a lot of work that can yet be done, so let's get started.