

State of the union

The United States is heading into its greatest political and constitutional crisis since the Civil War, with a reasonable chance over the next three to four years of incidents of mass violence, a breakdown of federal authority, and the division of the country into warring red and blue enclaves.

The warning signs may be obscured by the distractions of politics, the pandemic, the economy and global crises, and by wishful thinking and denial.

**Robert Kagan,
Washington Post, September 23, 2021**