

Thoughts on July 4th

by George Friedman - July 4, 2016

Editor's note: The following column originally ran in 2016, but it is as timeless as ever. Happy Fourth of July from us at GPF to all who celebrate.

Two hundred and forty years ago today, the American people were declared to be a unique and independent nation, distinct from all others. This was the conception of the people, but the sovereign government of **the United States** was born in battle. The revolution lasted eight years and about 25,000 died – a higher percentage of the population than died in World War II. This led over time to the Constitution, which founded the regime that governed the American people.

It was a unique regime because it did not trust politicians. The founders feared the politicians' desire for power. To solve this problem, they founded a regime so unwieldy, so inefficient, that **very little could get done**. Their vision of America was a country of businesses and farms, churches and societies. They envisioned a nation whose heart was not in Washington – an artifice invented to hold politicians – but in private life. The life of farmers, businessmen, clergymen and eccentrics. Few other governments were founded with such fear of governance.

I recently told a foreign friend that his country has excellent relations with Washington, but it needs a better relationship with America. Many of our non-American friends live in countries where the political capital is the heart of the country. That isn't the case in the United States. The American revolution was fought to make certain the government was weak and society strong and free. Our founders feared strong presidents and contrived to cripple them before they took office by confronting them with two Congressional houses run on different rules and a Supreme Court. Very little can get done, yet America flourishes.

When you marvel at our candidates for president, bear in mind that the U.S. president is among the weakest heads of government in the world. The sacrifice of 25,000 was to make sure tyranny would not rule this country. If the price was political paralysis, it was a small price to pay.

Author: George Friedman

[Read more from this author on geopoliticalfutures.com](#)