

# Acknowledgments

While no publication of this type is possible without the contributions of a great many people, there usually are a few special contributors whose talents, work ethic, and willingness to go the extra mile make it something quite special.

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We believe that this *Index* helps to provide a better informed understanding and wider appreciation of America’s ability to “provide for the common defence” that undergirds The Heritage Foundation’s vision of “an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish.” Judging by reception of the *Index* during this past year—some 480,000 unique visitors to the *2017 Index* website alone, a sixfold increase over our inaugural *Index* released in 2015—we are encouraged that so many Americans are similarly concerned about the state of affairs in and the multitude of factors affecting our country.

The Heritage Foundation seeks a better life for Americans, which requires a stronger economy, a stronger society, and a stronger defense.

To help measure the state of the economy, our Institute for Economic Freedom and Opportunity publishes the annual *Index of Economic Freedom*.

To help measure the state of society, our Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity publishes the annual *Index of Culture and Opportunity*.

And to help Americans everywhere more fully understand the state of our defenses, our Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy is publishing this fourth annual edition of the *Index of U.S. Military Strength*.

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Finally, as always, The Heritage Foundation also expresses its profound appreciation to the members of the U.S. armed forces who continue to protect the liberty of the American people in an increasingly dangerous world.