

Abstract

Defining Dynamic Political and Foreign Policy Constraints **Erik Peterson, Senior Vice President, Centre of Strategic and International Studies and Director, Global Strategy Institute, United States**

A first-order priority in attempting to forecast shifts in policies—domestic and external—is identifying the broader constraints within which such changes will occur. Increasingly, the most onerous of these constraints are global in nature—fundamental changes in demography, the specter of dislocation when it comes to critical resources, technological innovation and diffusion, the flow of knowledge, the changing nature of conflict, and the capacity of organizational systems to mitigate risks and exploit opportunities. Such taxonomy offers the possibility of defining feasibility zones against which a range of policy options and outcomes can be explored.

Many of the aforementioned constraints are already affecting the trajectories of many of the most powerful actors at the international level. It will be argued that we now stand at a remarkable time at which every major power—United States, China, Russia, Europe, and India—has arrived at a critical inflection point the consequences of which are vital to understanding how the future policy environment will unfold.