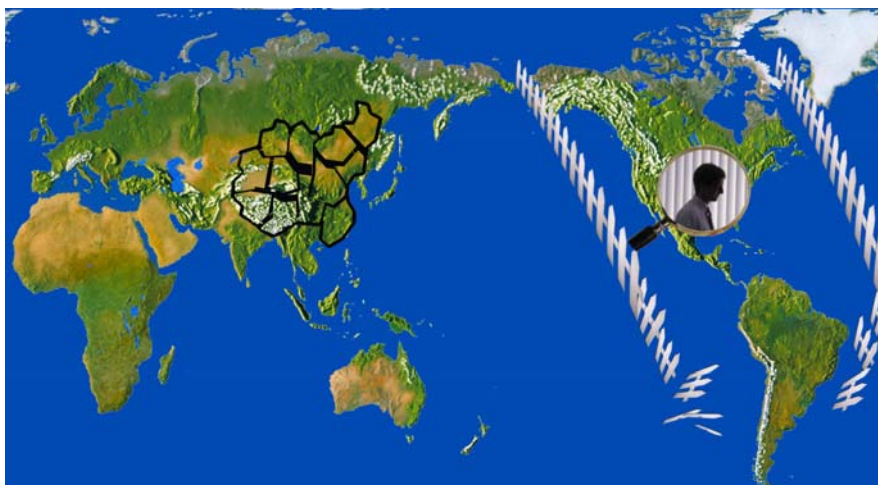


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Rate of Globalization	U.S. Economy	Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life	U.S. Concept of Sovereignty
Decreasing	Strong	High	Traditional



This scenario is incomplete. What follows is the narrative introduction, sometimes called the future history, of one of the USCG Evergreen scenarios. Its purpose is to introduce the scenario to the reader, provide a story context linking that future to today, and provide background for the endstate. The endstate includes the rich, detailed assumptions about the future that are used for strategic planning.

Summary 2025

The world has changed dramatically in the past 20 years and the United States, reacting to a series of physical and economic threats, has been leading many of the changes. On the surface everything seems rosy, but this belies shades of gray in almost every aspect of life.

We have constructed barriers that seem to be effectively preventing replays of the dramatic terrorist events of 2001, 2008, and 2009. We have not, however, stopped terrorism. In recent years, low level attacks in public places and corporate offices are becoming ever more common in the U.S. Responses are a mixture of physical security, certification, and intrusion into the privacy of individuals through such means as the national ID that everyone must now carry. The pervasive invasion of privacy is becoming a big issue as corporations struggle to maintain

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competitive edges and private groups have become increasingly reactionary and their violence is now added to that of the foreign terrorists.

The U.S., historically the leading proponent of globalization, has precipitated a global trend toward regionalization. The Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA), though only a decade old, is already showing signs of success that many believed would take 20 to 30 years.



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The United States economy, which on balance has been growing slowly for the past decade, now seems to be embarking on the most buoyant period since the “Go-Go” days of the 1990s. It still has an enormous debt, but this year promises to provide the first budget surplus in the past quarter century. Real interest rates remain high, however, crowding out some of the entrepreneurs that have been the historic bedrock of American innovation.

To some extent, big research consortia have replaced entrepreneurs, and the U.S. is once again the technology engine for the rest of the world. Its massive investment in systems technology, originally driven by security concerns, is providing efficiency gains for industry. In addition, the new energy technology promises to finally break long-term dependence on foreign oil. Changes in the energy economy, however, are seriously hurting some of the most important trading partners in the still-young FTAA.

Catalysts of Change

What a difference 20 years makes! For most of us the changes of the past two decades have been incremental. But the recent story about Sarah Brady, who was brought out of a coma that she had endured since late 2008, highlighted how dramatic those changes have been in total. Sarah had been an executive at Exxon when she took a long-delayed vacation on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. As her ship approached Key West it was a casualty of the mines laid by the terrorists. Sarah was a survivor, but sustained injuries that put her into a coma that doctors could not defeat. She has no way to appreciate how much she has personally benefited from spin-offs of new non-intrusive imaging capabilities that were developed to enhance our security nets in response to the terrorist act in which she was injured. One of those spin-offs was used to help bring her out of the coma that had lasted for 17 years. Sarah could not understand the world she found when she revived last month. Her last memories had been of a United States that was fighting to climb out of a harsh recession, still embroiled in Iraq, and pushing its “global agenda” both politically and economically.

Of course many things have contributed to the changes that Sarah is struggling to understand, but two sets of events precipitated responses that reinforced each other to help create the new world that she found in 2025:

1. The horrible terrorist attacks in 2008 and 2009 reawakened a vulnerability that U.S. citizens had not felt since 9/11/2001 and the government vowed that it would do whatever it took to assure that events on this scale could never occur again.
2. The destabilization of the Chinese economic juggernaut in 2012 gave voice to those who felt we needed to have greater economic self-sufficiency. If this could not be achieved within the confines of the U.S. we needed to at least build it upon a structure over which we could exert direct influence.



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Terror in the Ports

The terror attacks in 2008 and 2009 raised our national paranoia to a new level. In 2008 the simultaneous mining of three harbors resulted in the loss of 2,356 lives when a large cruise ship sank in the approach to Key West and three smaller ships were sunk in The Charleston and San Francisco harbors. The temporary closing of these harbors caused billions of dollars of losses from trade disruptions and left people uneasy near the water. Once the shock began to wear off, there were calls for extreme measures to make our waters more secure.

Just a year later, a small boat rigged with high explosives rammed an oil tanker in the Louisiana Offshore Oil Platform (LOOP) near New Orleans. Though only seven lives were lost, it took over a month to clean up the oil spill, and operations in the LOOP were disrupted throughout the cleanup process. Once again, the economic impact was huge. The public was stunned and the ensuing public firestorm gave *carte blanche* to the politicians to protect our ports and our borders.

A very harsh response, unprecedented in scope, was approved by Congress with overwhelming popular support. Significantly, the focus began to shift incrementally to securing our borders rather than hunting down terrorists abroad. This included draconian measures against illegal immigration; intrusive, highly restrictive limits on the movements of new immigrants; and intensive surveillance and tracking, including monitoring and control of land, air, and maritime borders.

Trouble in China

While the U.S. was dealing with problems that had their genesis outside their borders, trouble in China was internally bred. Significant early investment in China's industrial base spawned increasing wealth, political influence and some independence in the maritime provinces in the first decade of the century. Then, when the central government began to escalate taxes to fund internal developments in 2012, the levies seemed designed to rely disproportionately on these provinces. There was an outcry, and when the industrial areas refused to pay the taxes, tension soared. Demands that industrial independence become effectively acknowledged were forwarded to Beijing. As the tension spread to the general population, secessionist demands arose in the streets of major cities and local Army units aligned with local politicians. Beijing responded with the PLA in the streets and used the PLA Navy to blockade shipments of organizations that were branded as dissident. Total civil war was narrowly averted, but Beijing was unable to quell the discontent and the ensuing turmoil remained on the verge of civil uprising throughout the next decade.

As the Chinese miracle manufacturing machine became unreliable for a while after 2012, some of its customers began to look for alternative sources of cheap manufacture, if only for a backup. Taiwan has benefited, along with some other countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim. The U.S., however, initiated efforts to strengthen NAFTA which, as we know, ultimately led to formation of the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA).



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The Security Transition

The U.S. economy had barely recovered from the 2006/7 recession when the harbor attacks threw the country back into a deep economic trough in 2009/10. Eventually consumer confidence started to recover, slowly pulling the U.S. economy out of its doldrums, but the dual drags of high deficits from the construction of a symbolic “moat” around the U.S. and changing economic alignments prevented strong growth for over ten years.

A process of consolidating container transshipment ports that can handle the increasing size of container ships began soon after the 2008 attacks and gained momentum following the attack on the LOOP in 2009. Halifax had a head start and became the first North American mega harbor, but has now been joined by Norfolk, Long Beach, and Seattle and plans are underway to add New Orleans. The consolidation has made the rigorous security regimes less of an obstruction to efficient commerce.

A floating security inspection infrastructure, built twelve miles offshore, was completed in 2018. Liquid and gas cargos are now put into pipe lines at these locations and all vessels wishing to approach the U.S. are required to pass a rigorous inspection before being allowed to approach the U.S. coast. Technology has been a big part of this process. Several types of sensors have been developed that build upon the old Back Scatter Gamma Detectors that were developed in the 1990s. Before entering the mega harbors, ships must pass through a sensor array. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has implemented new standards with a requirement for installation of Automated Information System (AIS -- now capable of being monitored from space). Any ship without this system installed must submit to a thorough inspection, which may include electronic tags affixed at the container level, before gaining admittance to U.S. waters and, since 2021, anywhere in the FTAA. In addition, leisure boating registration/licensing has been federalized since 2011 and now all boats over 26 feet must also have AIS installed.

By 2019, the U.S. politicians were publicly declaring victory against the dramatic terrorist threats. What they failed to perceive, however, was that the number of smaller, seemingly random terrorist events was escalating. As this trend has continued, a new layer of security has been overlaid on top of the border security that has so successfully denied the dramatic targets to the terrorists. Unfortunately, there is little or no indication of success in this new arena and the number of attacks on malls, theaters, banks, office buildings, and other public places is at record levels in 2025. During this period, most of the last vestiges of the pre-emptive policies initiated at the beginning of the century have been revamped or eliminated. The threat is now perceived to be at home, and that is where we are fighting it.

The “temporary” National Citizenship Act, originally passed in 2009 following the attack on the LOOP, was renewed three times before it was made permanent in 2021. The legislation involves draconian controls on and surveillance over personal movement and associations. It is renewable, in order for Congress to go along with extreme measures and to avert Constitutional challenges. So far, the Supreme Court has held up legislation in the face of numerous challenges.

There is extensive intrusion in the lives of private citizens, as terror events, though less dramatic than those of the first decade of the century, are occurring with increasing frequency and people



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are concerned about their security. Strict controls have been implemented on immigrations and border crossing, with ongoing surveillance and tracking. Very high-tech universal identity cards are the norm in the U.S. and, increasingly, throughout the FTAA. U.S. government has pushed hard to build hemispheric security and economic integration via the FTAA. Citizens are going along with this, but there is underlying uneasiness and some home-grown anti-government activity.

As privacy becomes less and less obtainable, there is a growing tension between paranoia over personal security and concerns about invasion of personal privacy. So far paranoia has had more political resonance. There is, however, a growing minority of people in the U.S. with an underlying uneasiness about the ever-increasing intrusiveness of the government, and home-grown anti-government activity is proliferating. Ironically, it is now sometimes hard to distinguish whether an attack has been carried out by a terrorist from abroad or by a dissident unwilling to yield the last vestiges of privacy.

The Trade Transition

The government, with one eye on a less reliable Chinese source of supply and another on potential instability in the Americas, moved to jumpstart hemispheric free trade talks in 2013. The groundwork had already been laid over the past few years. The U.S. helped to bolster NAFTA, which had come under attack in Mexico when the U.S. effectively closed the border for a period in 2009/10. The next step was to engage Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela in a dialogue around gains from a hemispheric trade and investment accord. Once the South American big three and Mexico were on board, U.S. negotiators could win broader regional buy-in. The Free Trade in the Americas Accord – the FTAA – was born in 2014, but not before the U.S. and Canada made concessions on future supply contracts and trade support to the region's oil exporters. Select agricultural and mining concessions were also adopted – much to the chagrin of the U.S. non-regional trade partners.

The EU, which had slowed its expansion before 2015, was badly shaken by the instability of China and deeply threatened by the emergence of the FTAA. In response, it has now expanded and become more tightly integrated (on the model of a United States of Europe). The central commission is struggling to make labor markets more liberal and less rigid to better compete. Both the FTAA and EU have developed Defense Forces putting a military overtone on these (originally) economic alliances.

The increasingly interventionist bent in these two large trade blocs is resulting in the imposition of some new trade barriers, but they have not yet become widespread. These barriers are not necessarily tariffs. For example, the FTAA has created its own security standards and, with pressure from the U.S., is aggressively pushing for universal adoption, both for security purposes and for protectionist reasons – partially excluding other nations from our hemispheric trade deal.



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The New Reality

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The U.S. now views the western hemisphere as its home, and it is focusing its trade and defenses in its somewhat expanded back yard.

The technology foundation of the economy was maintained and even strengthened through many of the changes of the past 20 years. During the recessions, electronic commerce was encouraged as a cost saving. As the economy regionalized, infrastructure changes built in new efficiencies leveraging electrons rather than human organizations. The hackers/cyber-terrorists found the new infrastructure to be an intriguing target and periodically were able to leap-frog efforts to protect against them. Though the hackers/terrorists were never fully successful in disrupting broad swaths of the economy, they became adept at disrupting the lives of enough Americans that there was a pervasive feeling that nobody's private information, now widely dispersed in various "secure" systems, was safe.

A new technology, invented in 2015, promised to break the dependence on Mid-East oil reserves. Initially, outside of some narrow technology publications, the technology was not taken too seriously. After all, so many "breakthroughs" never made it to market because they weren't practical or because the technology couldn't be scaled to the mass market economically. This technology, however, was proven to work by 2021 and shown to be scalable at an attractive price by 2023. The implications are still emerging but it is now clear that the impact will be far-reaching. Oil futures have dropped precipitously and 2025 prices are at the lowest levels since the early 1970s.

Though trade is slowly becoming more regional, the capital markets are still global. The U.S. economy, which was starting to improve anyway, has been further fueled by infusions of foreign capital, seeking to ride the apparent economic strength of the U.S. and the FTAA.

"Traditional" terrorists now find their grand targets much more difficult to hit due to the proliferation of security measures both on land and at sea. They also lack funding as a result of the declining fortunes of the oil-rich nations. Attacks have not disappeared, though; they have merely changed their nature. Remaining terrorist cadres, embedded since the early 2000s, have turned to a sporadic stream of lower-level attacks, much like the Hamas attacks in Israel during the 1990s and the kind of personal cyber-attacks described above.

Meanwhile, the paranoia and perceived invasion of personal privacy have formed the keystone of "citizen militias." These indigenous groups are targeting both federal and selected corporate offices through a series of conventional bomb, letter bomb and cyber attacks. The militias are successfully increasing their membership under the banner of fighting for their constitutional rights. One of these groups has recently formed a public arm that is making statements about forming a new political party.

Despite all the news about attacks by both terrorists and reactionaries, people are coping. Like the Londoners in the 80s and Israelis over the past thirty years, life goes on. It has changed, but it has not stopped. Gated communities are popular. Block watches have proliferated. Facilities



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like large sports arenas, convention centers, and major amusement parks have installed extensive security and have been certified for large events. Some tourist destinations, including a number of Caribbean resorts, have also completed substantial new security programs and are now advertising that noted private security firms have declared them “safe” to cater to the American tourist’s need to feel secure.

As 2025 draws to a close, there is a startling dichotomy in the output of polls that purport to show how people in the United States feel about the future. One group of polls, conducted by such organizations as The Conference Board and the University of Michigan, has focused on people’s mood about the future of the economy; these show a buoyant optimism. The second group of polls, conducted by such organizations as Roper and Gallup, has focused on how safe and secure people feel; these show a continuing paranoia that reflects the steady stream of incidents perpetrated by terrorists and home-grown radicals. Politics in the United States is becoming increasingly interventionist. Congress has mandated job security and minimum benefits levels as a middle-class safety net. Recently, as the market has begun to recover, an emerging political pressure for new liberalization/deregulation is becoming apparent. Of course, the technology being rolled out now that will ultimately break our dependence on Mid-East oil is an important addition to all of this. Oil prices are already dropping as oil-producing nations are proving reluctant to withhold supply from a market that will have a rapidly diminishing demand over the next decade or two.

