UNITED
STATES
COAST
GUARD

EVERGREEN IV: YEAR 2 SUMMARY

Emerging Policy Staff | Evergreen Foresight Program

The Program

Evergreen is a continuous cycle of strategic renewal that supports enterprise strategy development. It remains founded on the premise that Coast Guard leaders must periodically break away from their daily activities and create strategic intent in order to best prepare the Service for the uncertainties of the future. Using a scenario-based planning process, Evergreen looks over the horizon to identify strategic needs required by the Coast Guard to meet the demands of a highly dynamic and constantly evolving operating environment.

The program is currently in its fourth iteration, which began in October 2013. At the end of the second year of activity, we have completed the critical elements of the Evergreen cycle: development of alternative world scenarios and the identification of candidate Strategic Needs to address potential Coast Guard challenges across the collection of alternative future worlds.

Identifying Dimensions

The drivers and trends identified during interviews in the previous year's effort were distilled into seven dimensions used to develop the initial set of future worlds. These dimensions are:

- International Stability and Cooperation
- U.S. National Stability and the Role of Government
- Population Shift and Demographics
- Influence of Technology
- Resource Availability
- Global Order
- Environmental Change and Adaptation

The Core Team built scenarios around the intersection of two paired dimensions, exercised to their extremes. A candidate future world down-selection process identified five scenarios for full development.

Developing Scenarios

The goal of scenario planning is to develop alternative worlds that, as a set, represent a diverse array of plausible futures. Scenarios are instruments for ordering perceptions about alternative futures in which decisions made today might fully play out. It is linked to conditions in the present via an internally consistent set of drivers and trends.
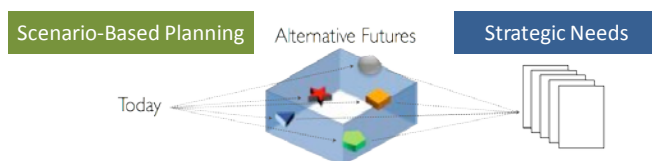
Scenarios are fleshed out in depth and then used as the basis for workshops where strategies are developed that are applicable across a wide range of alternative futures. Within each

scenario, a common set of standard topics is used to provide a baseline for discussion across each alternative world. The standard topics identified by the Core Team are:

- Economy and Commerce
- International Cooperation and Relationships
- Western Hemisphere
- Arctic
- Geopolitical Situation
- Technology
- Cyber
- Maritime Environment
- Climate Resiliency
- Governance and Politics
- Culture and Society
- Energy Revolution

Future Scenarios

Status Woe. Corrupt politicians and ineffective bureaucrats have taken their toll on the U.S. government and economy. Financial planning is nearly impossible, as a highly migratory workforce presents taxation problems at all levels.

Death Spiral: Eyes Wide Shut. The natural environment is unstable and weather conditions are increasingly severe. After decades of environmental agnosticism, polarized public opinion, and political paralysis, the U.S. government is hopelessly behind and has no strategy or policy to address climate change.

The New Opportunity. The world has experienced steady and irreversible climate change as the most extreme predictions are realized. Nations are highly motivated to remain self-sufficient and secure. Isolationism prevails worldwide.

Thank You Server, May I Have Another? The unprecedented blending of reality and the virtual world leads the public to believe that it is possible to achieve both prosperity and safety by retreating into an alternate virtual reality. Cynical pragmatism pervades national government. Those living outside strong, corporation-affiliated communities are easy targets for auditors. Government alliances with nation states, companies, and even Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) are dependent on the perception of advantage, vice ideology.

TechWorld. Scarcity of resources is caused by rapid and large-scale climate change manifested in rising oceans, increasingly violent weather events, ecosystem disruption, and economic and social dislocations. Technology continues to develop at a rapid pace, leading to a high-tech but highly class-divided society in which robots, virtual reality, avatars, sophisticated decision-making algorithms, ubiquitous human/machine interfaces, and constant monitoring via millions of autonomous sensors are the norm.

Strategic Needs Workshops

Strategic Needs are future requirements that the Coast Guard must meet. They are, by definition, stress-tested across a set of uncertain futures. They provide insights about the emerging complexities in the operating environment and the implications those future complexities will have on internal practices, how we interact with stakeholders, and the Coast Guard's value and image. Strategic Needs overlay a strategic context to inform Coast Guard decisions and planning at all levels in the organization.

Alameda Senior Grade participants review candidate Strategic Needs.

A series of four Strategic Need workshops were held in Alameda, California (week of 1 June) and Norfolk, Virginia (week of 13 July). The purpose was to engage and immerse Coast Guard personnel future to develop candidate Strategic Needs for the Coast Guard. Participants included civilian, military, and Auxiliary personnel from operational, logistics, and training units and planning staffs. They ranged in rank from E6 to O6. Approximately 60 individuals participated in the Mid Grade sessions and 40 in the Senior Grade sessions. Most of the participants had minimal exposure to Evergreen and the scenario-based planning process prior to the workshop.

The results of these workshops identified 15 candidate Strategic Needs in the following four areas:

Technology. Addressing gaps in information and keeping pace with rapid change in technology that leads to decreased situational awareness, delays execution of the mission, and directly exposes the Coast Guard to unnecessary risk.

Organizational Alignment. Addressing ways to become a more efficient and effective organization.

Workforce. Addressing improvements to the composition, stability, and effectiveness of the Coast Guard's workforce.

Resilience. Addressing improvements to withstand, recover from, and grow in the face of disruptions and changing demands.

Way Forward

Evergreen IV will continue in the next year by applying a shorter-term, more topically focused effort to look five to ten years out and develop more discrete strategies. We will consider specific topics such as cyber, Arctic, energy, climate change, and others as directed by Coast Guard Senior Leadership. Our first big event on this front will be a Cyber Futures Workshop to be developed and held in the first two quarters of FY '16.

We are engaged in research projects to study and analyze early Coast Guard foresight efforts and to determine how internal stakeholders use Evergreen processes and products. These findings will be applied to efforts to keep Evergreen relevant and valuable to the Coast Guard. We will continue outreach to external agencies by sharing strategic foresight efforts and actively participating in the Federal Foresight Community of Interest (FFCoI) and Public Sector Foresight Network (PSFN).

Additional information on Evergreen is available at www.uscg.mil/strategy/Evergreen.asp.

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