Creating and Sustaining Strategic Intent

in the

Coast Guard

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Creating and Sustaining Strategic Intent in the Coast Guard

FOREWORD

For more than two centuries, the United States Coast Guard has been "always ready to respond" when citizens stood in need. Today, the Service's readiness and ability to react are at the very core of its identity, and the Coast Guard has justified pride in knowing it can respond to unexpected events with alacrity, creativity, and excellence. The capacity to react quickly and appropriately to the unforeseen and unpredictable must always be a distinguishing feature of the Service.

The world the Coast Guard must operate in, however, is changing profoundly. The terror attacks of September 11th are the most vivid illustration, but accelerating change has been buffeting the Service since the end of the Cold War. Rapid, almost dizzying advances in technology, global networks, trans-national forces, and international markets are profoundly reshaping global maritime security. The emerging maritime domain is a much riskier place, and is changing the face of every Coast Guard mission. It is essential today that the Coast Guard think and act with an understanding of the forces behind the changing world of the 21st century.

Two or three decades ago, Coast Guard programs could establish doctrine and acquire assets, confident that while the size or scope of their mission portfolio might change, the future would be pretty consistent with the past, and any surprises could be managed by reacting and adapting. Change and surprise were simply opportunities to excel. Today, however, change and surprise have the potential to fracture the basic premises of the organization. The hard program and acquisition decisions made today can either leave the Service on a reasonably good footing to react to uncertain future threats, or leave it severely disadvantaged. It is not enough to be a world-class responder anymore; the Coast Guard needs to become a world-class anticipator as well.

To achieve this, the Coast Guard has committed to developing a method for anticipating the full range of plausible future operating environments it may face. To its present toolkit of world-class rapid reaction skills, the Coast Guard is adding a world-class capability to think "over the horizon," complementing its tactical excellence with sophisticated and flexible strategic thinking.

The Coast Guard is doing this through an enterprise we call *Evergreen*.

The purpose of *Evergreen* is to provide the Coast Guard with the essential tools, knowledge and insights to act effectively despite much greater uncertainty about the future. The process is not designed to supersede or diminish the tradition of rapid response and tactical flexibility that has been hallmark of the Coast Guard. Rather, its purpose is to complement and build on that proud legacy. Evergreen provides strategic processes and actions that will ensure that the Service is and remains "always ready," no matter what the future may bring.

The Evergreen[1] process is the result of seven years of Coast Guard experience with scenario-based strategic planning – a technique for thinking about future

[1] Readers of this publication will see the terms "Evergreen" and "Project Evergreen" throughout this document. *Evergreen* is the name for the entire process of developing and executing strategies, as well as instilling strategic intent throughout the Coast Guard. *Project Evergreen*, on the other hand, refers more narrowly to the scenario-based strategy development exercise that ran from August to December 2003.

uncertainty that was developed in the 1960s and is now used by leading organizations world-wide. Since 1998, more than 300 officers, senior enlisted personnel, civilians, and contractors in the Coast Guard have contributed to strategy development and implementation using this approach. We have experimented with this technique, and we have critically evaluated the strategies that emerged from it in the cold light of reality several years later. We have taken the processes apart and rebuilt them as we learned what worked best and what needed alteration to suit the unique requirements of the Coast Guard.

The term *Evergreen* is emblematic of our intent. We are instituting a continuous process of strategic planning and strategic renewal, based upon the calendar of each Commandant's command tenure. This will allow the Coast Guard to maintain strategic continuity as it prepares for large changes in its operating environment. It will address not only the pressing crises of the moment, but also the less urgent, but potentially more important issues over the horizon. And like all good doctrine, Evergreen contains critical feedback channels to ensure learning and improved performance in the future.

From the start, Evergreen was meant not only to develop long-range plans or strategies, but also to instill *strategic intent* throughout the Coast Guard. Strategic intent is a shared organizational understanding of where the Service as a whole is going and why. Strategic intent infuses everyday actions across the entire Service with a larger purpose, keeping ultimate organizational objectives top-of-mind as Coast Guard people go about their daily tasks. This, more than any particular plan or strategy, is the guiding vision of Evergreen.

We firmly believe that broader strategic thinking must balance the inevitable "tyranny of the present" if the Coast Guard is to maintain its readiness, keep and nourish its people, and act as an efficient and effective steward of the public trust.

I. The Roots of Evergreen

The modern United States Coast Guard is the product of a series of metamorphoses in response to evolving national needs. In 1790, when Congress established the Revenue Marine, securing funds for the fledgling federal government was the pressing national issue. Another pressing need of the new nation was to make commerce by sea safer; one of Congress's first acts was providing funds to build lighthouses, an act that eventually led to the establishment of the Lighthouse Service. In 1848, the Life-Saving Service was created to satisfy the nation's humanitarian instincts and to protect the seafarers on whom this maritime nation depended. In 1915, the Lifesaving Service merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to become the United States Coast Guard. The Lighthouse Service joined the Coast Guard in 1939. During both World Wars, the Coast Guard moved to the Department of the Navy and fought side by side with the other services. Safety, law enforcement, and, later, environmental protection became major focuses of Coast Guard activity and attention after the Second World War. And most recently, the events of September 11th and the resulting national commitment to homeland security have ushered in yet another era for the Service. The history of the Coast Guard, then, is the continuing story of how it has changed the nature, scope and mix of its services to meet the evolving needs of the nation.

Three years prior to the terror attacks of September 11th, the Coast Guard, recognizing this history of frequent alterations, initiated a comprehensive strategic planning exercise called *Long View*. Emerging plans for a massive recapitalization of Coast Guard assets (known as the *Integrated Deepwater System*, or simply *Deepwater*) stirred concern among the Service's leadership about the lack of attention to long-term challenges and issues facing the nation in the maritime domain, and the lack of truly strategic long-term planning in the organization. Long View was conceived in response as a process for understanding and managing the risks and uncertainty facing the Coast Guard over the next 20 years.

Long View was, in an important sense, "counter-cultural." Traditionally, the Coast Guard has rewarded people for superior *reaction and response*. Long View, while in no way devaluing these imperatives, was devoted to inculcating an additional capacity for *anticipation*. By anticipating future risks and changes in operating conditions, the Service would be able to deliver superior reaction and response, with the right assets, positioned in the right places, with the right skill sets, all geared to a changing world.

Long View predated the events of 9/11. But the collapse of the Soviet Union, the accelerating pace of globalization, and the relentless march of the information revolution already suggested the inevitability of fundamental change, with direct and potentially far-reaching consequences for Coast Guard missions and operations.

The question became how to anticipate, with any degree of confidence, important trends and events almost a quarter century out. The Coast Guard addressed this challenge by embracing an innovative mechanism for strategy development known as scenario-based strategic planning.

Scenario-based planning is a tool for the development of long-term strategies. It works particularly well for organizations facing operating environments marked by potentially rapid change and high uncertainty. Whereas traditional planning "assumes away" uncertainty with one comprehensive single-point forecast, scenario planning explicitly considers and explores a range of plausible future operating environments. The United States Air Force had successfully embraced scenario planning, as had a number of leading global companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, IBM and 3M. The Coast Guard saw in scenario planning a creative and rigorous way to anticipate a range of risks, challenges and issues not yet on its radar screen, as well as a way to inform strategic and operational decisions throughout the Service.

In Long View, the Coast Guard and a consulting company, the Futures Strategy Group, constructed five distinct scenario "worlds" that described different plausible future operating environments of 2020. Each of these scenarios was informed by extensive research and interviews designed to flesh out a broad array of key variables: trends, forces for change, and events. The project team developed a "future space" formed by the four scenario dimensions shown below.

Combining the dimensions in their polar extremes yielded 16 discrete scenarios, from which the Coast Guard leadership ultimately chose five. The guiding criterion for selection was to choose the set that, together, best captured the range of challenges and opportunities the Service might face between the present and the year 2020. Summary descriptions of the five Long View scenarios follow:

Balkanized America: The world is troubled by regional and ethnic conflicts. Terrorism strikes frequently, and increasingly close to home. The U.S. involves itself only in international forums that serve its narrow, parochial interests. The scope of federal government activity has been scaled back to mostly essential economic and security roles. At the same time, regional, state and local governments have inherited broad policy and regulatory responsibilities, including environmental protection, previously controlled by Washington. The U.S. economy is lethargic, though certain sectors and geographical regions are strong.

Pan-American Highway: Large regional trade blocs have coalesced around two currencies: the dollar (in the Americas) and the euro (in Europe and neighboring nations). Inter-American trade and commerce is booming. Asia in particular was mired in a deep slump for most of the first decade of the new century after the devaluation of the yuan in China. A grab for Vladivostok by China caused a four-way military stalemate in the Northwest Pacific between China

Role of Federal Government	U.S. Economic Vitality	Threats to U.S. Society	Demand for Maritime Services
Limited or Substantial	Strong or Weak	Low or High	Low or High

and the U.S., Russia, and Japan. In response to crises and ongoing tension in Asia and the Americas, the U.S. has reallocated its military presence: the Navy to the Northwest Pacific, to monitor a shaky peace; and the Army to the Americas, with hemispheric defense its primary mission.

Pax Americana: Over the past 20 years, the world has suffered economic catastrophe, social and political instability, and regional wars. For the U.S., it was a difficult period that shattered our arrogance and gave us a taste of real vulnerability. The U.S. of 2020, having suffered 125,000 civilian and military casualties, is a very different country from the one that entered the new millennium. Outside the U.S., there are sporadic incidents of terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups. The U.S. spends heavily on anti-terror programs.

Planet Enterprise: Transnational corporate behemoths have vastly increased their power in a fast-paced, prosperous world. They have successfully pitted national governments against one another in order to force down the general level of regulation and government intervention, and to ensure permeability of borders and free trade. The threat of general war or serious terrorism is perceived to be at an all-time low, because of dramatically heightened U.S. military and surveillance superiority and commitment to the "world economic order."

Taking on Water: The world economy is strong and stable, with the exception of the U.S. and Latin America. Europe and the Pacific Rim have embraced free market reform, while the U.S. is muddling through with stagnant economic growth and heavy social burdens related to an aging population. A stagnant economy and ever-ballooning entitlements have caused heavy and persistent federal budgetary pressures. High levels of environmental deterioration, spread unevenly across the globe, affect economic stability, but little is done in response. Economically displaced persons from the Caribbean and Latin America are flooding into the U.S., legally and illegally, in record numbers.

In a structured three-day workshop, teams of senior Coast Guard officers and civilians immersed themselves in these five worlds and developed ten strategies that were common or "robust" across them. Summaries of these strategies are on the following page.

Long View's Legacy

Long View went a long way toward creating a truly strategic long-term agenda for the Coast Guard. Sound, creative strategies and related initiatives emerged from the Long View process as it wound up in 1999. Strategic dialogues between organizational "silos" were both launched and supported by Long View activities. Participants felt intellectually challenged, and, in some cases, changed by the experience. Most visibly, and importantly, the concept of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) – a strategy embraced as a key antidote to the threats posed by terrorism – crystallized as Long View's Strategy 4, long before 9/11. MDA has evolved into a critical organizing principle for the Coast Guard in its post-September 11th role in the new Department of Homeland Security.

Overall, however, actual incorporation of Long View strategies into formal Coast Guard planning activities proved to be uneven. Perhaps the greatest stumbling block was Long View's lack of integration into then-ongoing budgeting and planning activities. It seems clear that, if long-term planning and strategy development were not somehow "baked into" budgeting and planning, they would not be taken seriously.

Long View Review

In October 2002, the Coast Guard, having re-examined the process and output of Long View in light of 9/11 and the impending move to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), decided that a more thorough re-evaluation of that output would be a good basis for launching an examination of near-term Coast Guard strategy. A key component of that effort was an analysis of the successes and shortcomings of Long View. In the months following 9/11, it became apparent that the project's original strategies, if implemented decisively, would have better prepared the Coast Guard for that event.

The Long View Strategies

1. Take a leadership role in defining and developing an integrated maritime management system.
2. Shift from a program-focused approach to mission planning and execution to an integrated cross-programmatic approach that better serves the nation.
3. Institute a geographically based unified command structure that can plan and execute diverse missions simultaneously.
4. Acquire full maritime domain awareness.
5. Identify, prioritize and energize strategic partnerships and alliances in line with organizational needs and emerging mission requirements.
6. Develop a flexible, dynamic human resources system that provides the capabilities essential for complex, diverse and multi-mission operations and management.
7. Acquire or cultivate the ability to manage information, create knowledge, design effective business processes, use decision support tools, optimize resources and manage risks in order to create and balance successful mission outcomes.
8. Develop a philosophy of information management and an information technology acquisition approach that leverages the best capabilities of the marketplace and the best practices of successful agencies and firms, and seek wherever possible to purchase the best systems the market has to offer rather than develop systems in house.
9. Maintain critical focus on core Coast Guard missions by outsourcing non-core functions where justified by analyses of all costs and benefits.
10. Cultivate and manage a clear and commanding public image of the Coast Guard's identity, missions, and the value the Service delivers to U.S. citizens in the performance of its missions.

The "Long View Review" examined four questions:

• Did Long View suffer from unstated or hidden assumptions?

• How did Long View perform through the lens of 9/11 and the year that followed?

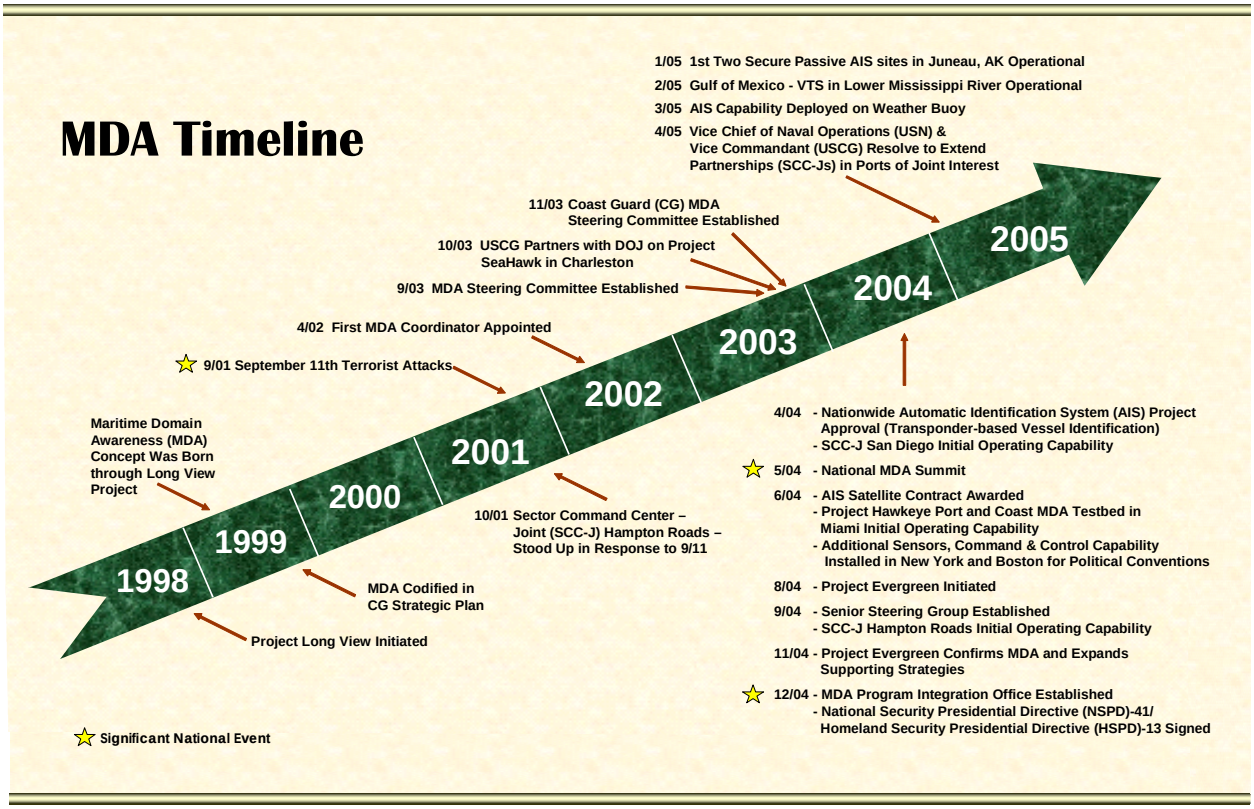
• Which of the additional 80 scenario-contingent strategies developed for Long View that did not make the final list in 1998 were relevant in 2002-04?

• How thoroughly and how well were Long View strategies implemented?

The evaluation team judged the content of the scenarios to be broadly sound. All five scenarios remained plausible and strategically viable three years after the completion of Long View. Strikingly, several of the scenarios had described significant terrorist threats on U.S. soil. The major shortcoming identified by the Core Team was the fact that none of the five scenarios called for an extended period of terrorism (or war) as a central scenario theme. They appeared either as "background" circumstances or transitional events. Consequently, terrorism was treated somewhat academically, without full appreciation for its myriad impacts – economic, political, psychological and otherwise – on the nation.

The strategies that emerged from Long View also held up well. As stated above, "Maritime Domain Awareness" is a cornerstone of the Coast Guard's current strategy in the campaign against terrorism. Further, the concept has been subsumed in a larger presidentially directed effort to create a National Maritime Security Strategy (NSPD-41/HSPD-13). (See chart below.)

Long View Review uncovered, however, several hidden assumptions that affected the initial study. The Coast Guard was assumed to be eternally budget-deprived. Deepwater was deemed inviolate. And the concept of an extended war was not included in any scenario. While these assumptions did not drive Long View to poor strategies, they may have blunted the challenge to traditional thinking about Coast Guard missions and capabilities.



The Long View Review team identified several areas for improvement. One qualified as a significant weakness – strategy implementation. With the development of "robust" strategies, the project had simply come to an end. The strategies were neither properly delivered to the field nor executed. Many organizations do "too much planning and not enough action," in the words of the review team. But effective strategic planning must lead to action. It must prioritize resource allocation and contribute to organizational alignment.

The massive shift in the course of world history caused by 9/11, along with the unstated assumptions of the Long View scenarios, indicated the need for new (or significantly reworked) scenarios and more organization-wide use of the scenarios. Upon completing its analysis, the team recommended that the Coast Guard embark on a second iteration of scenario-based planning. This effort came to be known as *Project Evergreen*.

II. Project Evergreen

Background

Project Evergreen, like the Long View Review, was born into the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States.

The Service responded creditably to the crisis, evacuating a million people from Manhattan, ensuring the security of New York Harbor, dispatching Strike Teams to deal with the anthrax murders, patrolling ports throughout the United States, and in general coming through admirably in the biggest crisis to hit America in half a century or more.

But this response had a down side. Reserves were called up for far longer periods than they had ever anticipated. Some assets, such as small boats and their crews, were pushed beyond their limits. Coast Guard personnel faced substantially new risks in Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security (PWCS) operations with little or no training and insufficient equipment for confronting terrorism. The Service scrambled to meet a new set of challenges it was not prepared for, with assets and people designed and trained for a very different world.

When the initial crisis period passed, the Coast Guard found itself in an entirely new landscape. A "new normalcy" of a permanently higher operational tempo, more attention from the public, the administration, and the Congress, and continuing integration into a new Department, all combined to create an entirely different strategic environment for the U.S. Coast Guard in the first decade of the 21st century.

Project Evergreen was a result of the lessons learned from Long View, 9/11, the Long View Review, and the new challenges of moving into the Department of Homeland Security. From the start, Project Evergreen was envisioned as both a *tool* for developing long-range strategies and as a *catalyst* for instilling strategic intent throughout the Coast Guard organization.

Project Evergreen was launched in the autumn of 2003 under the guidance of the Coast Guard's Office of Strategic Analysis (G-CCX), with direction and facilitation support provided by the Futures Strategy Group (FSG). Members of the Coast Guard core team were drawn from G-CCX and other representative parts of the headquarters organization, including, among others, Human Resources, Intelligence, Public Affairs, Budget & Programs, and Reserves.

Evergreen Scenario Research and Interviews

The project plan called for a broad range of interviews, including the entire Leadership Council and the senior-most members of headquarters operations and staffs. Beyond this group, a range of junior officers and enlisted people across the various Coast Guard districts was also interviewed. Finally, the perspectives of a select group of non-Coast Guard opinion leaders, with backgrounds in foreign policy, fisheries, and port security, among others, were integrated into the research results. The objective of these interviews was to gain insight into the forces for change that would affect Coast Guard missions

and operations and to understand how these "drivers" were likely to converge to create unanticipated challenges and opportunities. These interviews, blended with the knowledge and insight of the core team, provided a solid foundation for the next step in the process: defining the Coast Guard's future "inquiry space." (See diagram below.)

Identifying and Choosing Future Scenario Worlds to Explore

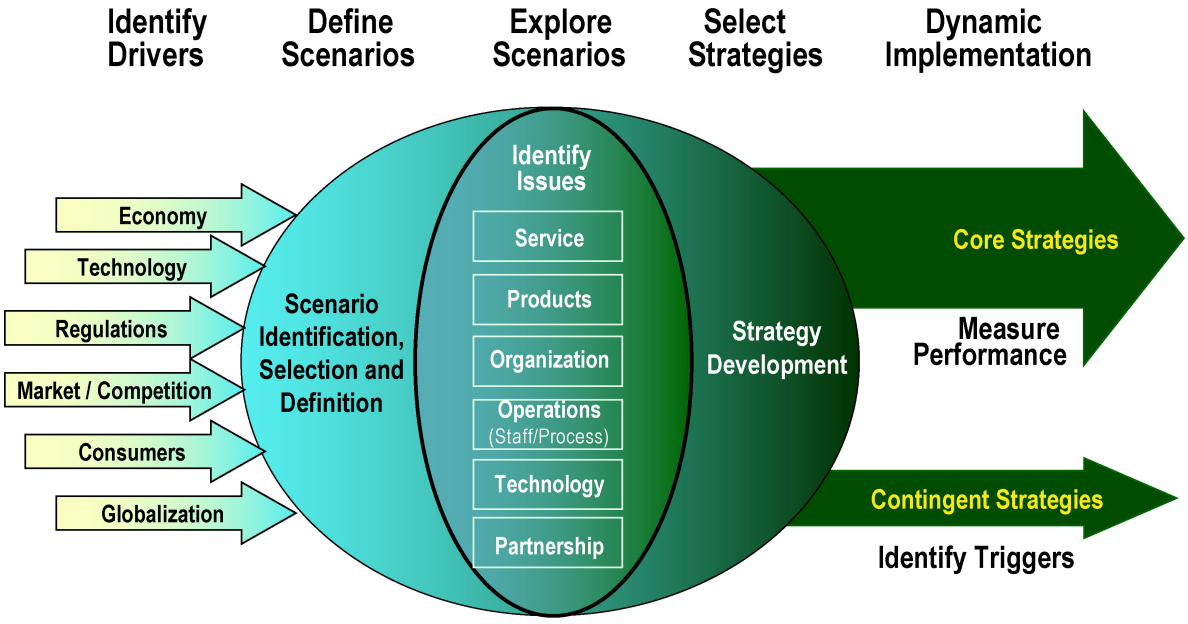
The initial research and interview phase of the scenario exercise identified a large number of drivers that would shape the Coast Guard's future operating environment. As in the previous Long View project, the Project Evergreen team sorted, merged and boiled down the drivers and identified four high-level forces for change. These forces, dubbed "dimensions," are the large-scale, elementary variables that define an organization's future planning space. In the Project Evergreen case, four dimensions were identified:

- Rate of Globalization (Increasing or Decreasing)
- U.S. Economy (Strong or Weak)
- Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life (High or Low)
- U.S. Concept of Sovereignty (Traditional or Non-Traditional)

Combining and varying these dimensions in their extreme states generated 16 possible combinations – 16 discrete scenarios. The project team tentatively named and sketched out plausible stories for each of these candidate scenarios (see chart on next page).

The Leadership Council chose five of these scenario "worlds" to be fleshed out and "lived in" in exhaustive detail. They chose the five they felt posed the greatest risks and opportunities to the Coast Guard, while also capturing the broadest range of plausible outcomes over the planning horizon.

Evergreen Scenario Planning Concept



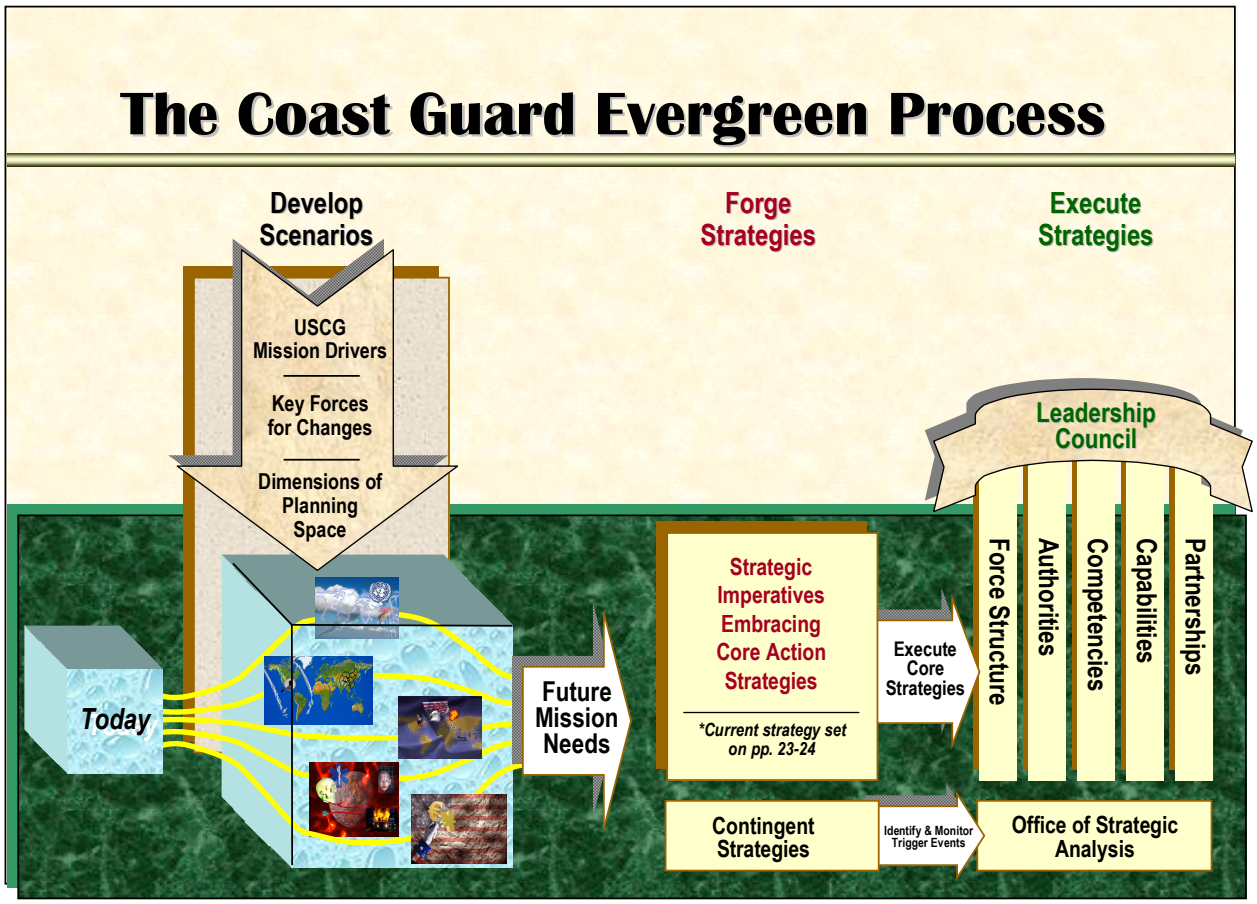
Project Evergreen Scenario Space

	Rate of Globalization	Public Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life	U.S. Concept of Sovereignty	U.S. Economy Strength	Name
1	Increasing	High	Traditional	Strong	
2	Increasing	High	Traditional	Weak	
3	Increasing	High	Expansive	Strong	
4	**Increasing**	**High**	**Expansive**	**Weak**	**"Forever War"**
5	Increasing	Low	Traditional	Strong	
6	**Increasing**	**Low**	**Traditional**	**Weak**	**"Left Behind"**
7	**Increasing**	**Low**	**Expansive**	**Strong**	**"Rising Tide"**
8	Increasing	Low	Expansive	Weak	
9	**Decreasing**	**High**	**Traditional**	**Strong**	**"Fortress Americas"**
10	Decreasing	High	Traditional	Weak	
11	Decreasing	High	Expansive	Strong	
12	**Decreasing**	**High**	**Expansive**	**Weak**	**"Code Quebec"**
13	Decreasing	Low	Traditional	Strong	
14	Decreasing	Low	Traditional	Weak	
15	Decreasing	Low	Expansive	Strong	
16	Decreasing	Low	Expansive	Weak	

Note: The five highlighted rows represent the scenarios chosen for development by the Coast Guard Leadership.

After the five scenarios were selected, the project team created fuller, more detailed stories for each of the five. Each scenario world contained a "future history" chronology and a narrative that highlighted critical distinguishing features of the scenario world. These two scenario features brought a sense of real plausibility to those who would be expected to plan within them. In addition, for each, a detailed "characteristics matrix" was developed, delineating the state of a common set of 45 drivers culled from the scenario research and interviews. The state of each driver was characterized and described within each of the five worlds to give the scenarios granularity and plausibility. Moreover, by fleshing out the drivers, the scenario team was able to produce realistically detailed and internally coherent scenario documents that workshop participants in the next phase would be able to use with confidence.

Summary descriptions of the five scenarios can be found on the following 10 pages.



Rising Tide

Rate of Globalization	U.S. Economy	Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life	U.S. Concept of Sovereignty
Increasing	Strong	Low	Expansive

From the vista of 2025, it seems like a lifetime ago when world politics were tied up in an unending list of seemingly intractable problems: terrorism, conflict in the Middle East, nuclear proliferation, AIDS, poverty in Africa, to cite but a few. It was probably no coincidence that the beginning of the 21st century was a low point for global cooperation and multilateralism. That began to change with the dramatic Palestinian-Israeli peace accord of 2008. World leaders are hardly holding hands in solidarity around every single issue, and human nature has certainly not changed in the last two decades. But a new spirit of multilateral cooperation has clearly taken hold. This comes at a critically important moment as world leaders struggle with the downside of rapid world growth and rising prosperity: the threat of large-scale ecological disaster.

The global economy is finally on a development path that is benefitting all but the most remote and disconnected countries. Greater political freedom and economic opportunity have undermined terrorism and extremist politics. Cross-border integration has increased and accelerated the movement of goods, services, people, culture and ideas. It has also made cities more heterogeneous. People are traveling more. And all of these exchanges are breaking down barriers, eroding distrust, and making evident the positive possibilities of inter-dependence and cooperation.

But this is clearly not Shangri-la. This connected, globally minded world is not without profound challenges. Severe weather events occur with disturbing frequency, climates are shifting, and sea levels are rising. All of this is pointing to an environment that is rebelling under continued abuse, and possibly teetering on disaster. The large number of aged is severely straining many countries' national retirement and medical programs. And there are serious social challenges, some associated with continued advances in technology.

Climatic shifts and rising sea levels many had long feared (and others had stubbornly denied) have come to settle the debts of the world's environment-degrading excesses. Extreme weather patterns are causing frequent and severely destructive atmospheric conditions throughout the world. The polar ice caps have continued to recede to the point where the arctic region is navigable fully half the year.

Rising Tide

The call to action to prevent further degradation of the environment is urgent, and the response is finally more than window dressing. Few developed nations are willing to be seen as perpetuators of the problem. A real international community is working to deter and persuade "free rider" nations. Hydrocarbon reduction efforts are largely UN-led, with strong backing from most developed countries. Many smaller and less developed countries are profiting from clean air and water credits, and industrialized nations are cutting back on heavily polluting manufacturing and services. These changes are having a balancing effect between have- and have-not nations. Specifically in the U.S., the virtual elimination of the terrorism as a perceived clear and present danger, coupled with an increased interest in safeguarding environmental resources, has prompted a dramatic change of focus resulting in the Department of Homeland and Environmental Security (DHES).

US baby-boomers and their counterparts in Europe have hit retirement, and the resulting population graying is placing an extremely heavy burden on many nations' social services.
The population shift, together with a reduction in overall population in several European countries, has brought national pensions to the brink of insolvency in spite of otherwise reasonably healthy economies. Increased immigration from Africa and the Middle East into Europe is a welcome influx in countries where the working population needs to be bolstered, but is a jolt to the system for other nations content with their economies.

The world of "always-on" Internet, through a variety of convenient, yet intrusive devices, is allowing less and less personal privacy. Paranoia over theft of identity and intellectual property has risen sharply, and is not altogether unwarranted. A sad irony associated with today's communication capabilities that create a virtual connection to others is that those best connected through technology are often the least connected with reality.

Illustrative Challenges and Opportunities for the Coast Guard in Rising Tide

Challenges	Opportunities
➲ More complex funding model (fee for service, other public sector) ➲ Increased globalization leads to increased uses of waterways and increased stress on Coast Guard resources ➲ Cultural challenges going from military to non-military uniformed service	➲ Increased profile and mission set for Coast Guard (LE, regulatory, SAR, etc.) ➲ Northwest passage opens up – new mission for Coast Guard ➲ Strong U.S. economy, significant maritime commerce, no serious funding constraints ➲ Need for maritime domain intelligence, most logically provided by the Coast Guard

Forever War

Rate of Globalization	U.S. Economy	Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life	U.S. Concept of Sovereignty
Increasing	Weak	High	Expansive

It is not our worst nightmare – not even close. We are free and still the single most powerful nation of earth. We trade with the world and, if our technology no longer dominates, we are first among equals. We are back on the moon. While we have suffered reverses in our unilateral foreign policy, we have also led in some huge multilateral victories. Domestically, there has been a sustained resurgence in a localized service ethic and a sense of community that has done much to replace the failing social safety net.

But if not our worst nightmare, life in 2025 certainly has become a bad dream. The United States is a nation stretched thin. We are stretched thin in our global military deployments. We are stretched thin defending our nation from constant and frequently successful terrorist attacks. Our economy is stretched thin under a staggering debt leading to worrisome unemployment and a sense of personal economic vulnerability. Almost all families are dual (or more) income and tend toward living in multi-generational settings. Community activities are often the center of social life.

Meanwhile, our non-security infrastructure is in patch-and-repair condition, while our schools and social services do more with less every day. Even our social fabric is stretched thin. The domestic political scene is now made up of inter-generational tensions and dozens of competing political groups whose style is bitter, in-your-face, and uncompromising. Single issue politics and opponent-demonizing are now so common as to make us wonder what it was once like when opponents actually worked together for common good (or even shared a meal together).

For the past 15 years, our armed forces have been engaged in combat across the globe against myriad enemies who strike with weapons of global terror at the U.S., its citizens, and its allies. St. Petersburg, Russia was devastated by a nuclear device in 2007 and a nuclear weapon was discovered on its way to Boston in 2022. Now China, once a partner, has become a geo-political and military adversary with impressive regional power, emerging global reach, an active arms diplomacy, world-class strategic weapons, and a space program. After a ten-year period of stable democratic rule in Iraq, the U.S. is now back in force

Forever War

to sustain the regime against fundamentalist attack. In so doing, the U.S. has earned the hatred of Muslims generally, and Iran in particular. While the U.S. is hated by many for its actions in the Persian Gulf, it has also experienced significant multilateral successes, including peace on the Korean peninsula, the "managed merger" of China and Taiwan, and the suppression of the global WMD threat. As a result of these pressures and commitments, the draft is back within the framework of a National Service Act that fills military and Homeland Security needs first.

The U.S. has adopted a fairly classic repeat of the "national security state" from the Cold War era. The Federal Government is officially laissez-faire in the management of the economy. However, the size and importance of the DOD and DHS budgets superimpose a kind of command economy in defense and security-related areas. The government is very interventionist in these matters, and Congress uses security, rather than economic development, as the channel for pork-barrel activities. The Federal Government and the states share responsibilities and a very tight budget for social programs. Many environmental regulations have been suspended to help struggling industries.

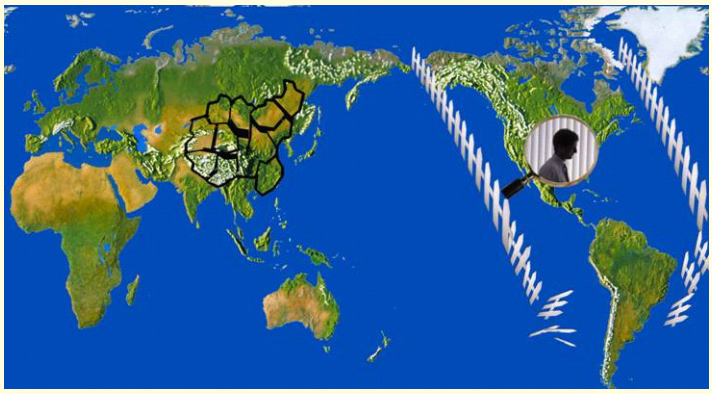
In general, the global economy is moderately strong. It is, in fact, a very global marketplace increasingly structured around information flows, digital relationships and Asian markets. By 2025 the U.S. is *not* the undisputed economic or technological leader. The best growth prospects are in Asia. On the strength of its internal market and exports to U.S. and Europe, China (with Japan and a unified Korea) is emerging as *the* new economic power. Globalization and world trade are based on the tripod of American security guarantees, Asian economic growth, and e-based economic structures.

Illustrative Challenges and Opportunities for the Coast Guard in Forever War

Challenges	Opportunities
➲ Sustained terror siege and intense pressure on the Coast Guard not to allow another maritime terror attack	➲ Draft is on – Coast Guard is attractive
➲ DHS hamstrung by earmarked funding – Coast Guard is stretched thin, with chronic funding uncertainty	➲ Natural resources (e.g., fisheries) are considered a national security issue
➲ Terror and crime have become blurred – search and rescue very risky	➲ Critical role for Coast Guard in domestic and foreign port security
➲ Huge training challenge given declining education and basic skills	➲ Critical role in DHS regional maritime C^2
➲ Unable to shed legacy missions	➲ Full interoperability with Navy communications, weapons systems, and logistics

Fortress Americas

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



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 to be on a positive trajectory, but this belies shades of gray in almost every aspect of life.

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. 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.

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. 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 competitive edges and private groups are increasingly reactionary. Their violence is now added to that of the foreign terrorists.

While the U.S. was dealing with problems that had their genesis outside its borders, China was brewing trouble internally. As the tension spread to the general population, Beijing was unable to quell the discontent, and the ensuing turmoil remained on the verge of civil uprising throughout the next decade. The Chinese miracle manufacturing machine became unreliable for a while after 2012, and some of its customers began to look for alternative sources of cheap manufacturing.

Fortress Americas

The U.S., historically the leading proponent of globalization, has precipitated a global trend toward regionalization. The Free Trade Association of the Americas – 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. The FTAA, though only a decade old, is already showing signs of success that many believed would take 20 to 30 years. 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 United States economy, which on balance has been growing slowly for the past decade, now seems to be entering 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. The U.S. is once again the technology engine for the rest of the world and large, research-driven organizations are ramping up their hiring. Its massive investment in systems technology, originally driven by security concerns, is providing efficiency gains for industry. In addition, a new energy technology promises to eventually break long-term dependence on foreign oil.

Illustrative Challenges and Opportunities for the Coast Guard in Fortress Americas

Challenges	Opportunities
➲ Maritime terror – harbor mining, attack on ships	➲ North-South trade route exploding
➲ Complicated diplomatic and hemispheric security relationships	➲ Shifting resources away from migrant interdiction
➲ Recruiting is difficult for Coast Guard – strong economy offers many opportunities	➲ New offshore trade platforms for Coast Guard to manage (challenges, too)
➲ Lack of clarity, role ambiguity between DHS and DOD	➲ Access to pervasive new information sources

Code Quebec

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

In 2025, the world has suffered through outbreaks of infectious disease that have killed millions. World trade is staggering back to its feet, under super-strict health regulations and certification procedures. Although developing countries have been hardest hit, both health-wise and economically, the developed world has not been spared. The worst effects of a first global pandemic were dodged by richer nations in the mid-2000s. But a "second wave" of infection hit the United States, in particular, extremely hard.

The first epidemic, "SARS 2," hit the United States in the mid-2000s, striking western port cities. Tens of thousands died, the worst epidemic since the flu of 1918. Xenophobia crept into the country and into politics, and legislation brought invasive, beyond-USAPATRIOT Act measures to attempt to halt the spread of disease. Technology fostered the constant surveillance thought necessary to keep America safe from disease.

Routine air travel was more or less wiped out by the first wave of sickness. The second wave proved even more devastating, even if the death toll was lower. In 2012, a new and virulent strain of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis spread to the general population, and previous overuse of antibiotics guaranteed that its worst impact, paradoxically, would be felt among those segments of the population that had enjoyed the best access to health care previously. Globally, MDRTB became known as "the rich man's disease," since it replicated its pattern of attacking those portions of the population that had been most medicated.

In America, xenophobia, directed mainly outside the United States during SARS 2, now turned against fellow citizens. Towns "battened down the hatches," unfamiliar faces became most unwelcome, and yet at the same time local and neighborhood solidarity also increased. "Living in the bubble" became the only way most people could feel safe.

Code Quebec

The "new world order" is a far cry from that envisioned just after the end of the Cold War. It is still based on U.S. power, but the power of the U.S. to fund cures and to certify health – and therefore economic opportunity – has gained in importance relative to its raw military might. The world of 2025 is one of strict border controls, quarantines, and a two-track global economy, with those certified disease-free in the more privileged, but still suffering, camp, and the majority of the world in the other.

The United States government, under constant pressure from its beleaguered citizenry to revert to isolationism, has decided that its best chance of avoiding further outbreaks is to "push the borders out" by sending well-trained people overseas to ensure that other countries do not become the breeding ground of further contagion, at the same time maintaining rigorous control of its borders.

The Foreign Medical Corps spearheads this effort to keep disease out of the United States by curing it at its sources. Like the "war on poverty," the "war on drugs," and the "war on terror," the "war on disease" is essentially unwinnable, endless, and short on positive headlines. But older organizations such as Medecins sans Frontieres and the Red Cross have developed close working relationships with the FMC. The FMC has also offered an outlet to young Americans eager for a mission and anxious to escape the highly localized, intrusive society that the U.S. has become.

This, along with new medicines, treatment regimens and government action, seems to be finally beating back this latest attack. But the outcome, in 2025, still remains in doubt. And for a generation expecting a world of ever-expanding opportunity, the first quarter of the 21st century has produced, instead, a series of massive psychological jolts, a sense of extreme vulnerability, and a blighted economy.

Illustrative Challenges and Opportunities for the Coast Guard in Code Quebec

Challenges	Opportunities
➲ Ensuring health of Coast Guard personnel	➲ More funding and attention (like 9/11)
➲ Zero tolerance for immigration – closed U.S. borders	➲ Opportunity to build small assets
➲ Refocus on disease, over traditional missions	➲ International humanitarian mission – Coast Guard well positioned to deliver
➲ New migration routes, created by health crisis. Cuba, with its developed public health infrastructure, is a much desired destination.	➲ Coast Guard experience in foreign negotiations and nation building activities
	➲ Coast Guard attractive career option – good work, health benefits

Left Behind

Rate of Globalization	U.S. Economy	Perception of Threat to Security and Quality of Life	U.S. Concept of Sovereignty
Increasing	Weak	Low	Traditional

The U.S. in the year 2025 is feeling old and weary. Fifteen years of muscular foreign policy and aggressive forward deployment have taken their toll, and now America has pulled back.

The American people no longer want to be the world's cop. They certainly do not want to be going it alone – and that is essentially what the nation had been doing, at tremendous cost, for more than a decade. A failed U.S. anti-terror intervention in Indonesia in 2010 was the start of a series of setbacks that has led to military, economic and diplomatic retrenchment. By any estimation, the billions spent on conventional overseas deployment have become a huge drain on the U.S. economy – and the source of growing anti-Americanism abroad.

The good news is that by 2016 the war on terror was effectively won – mostly through globally coordinated special operations and intelligence. But up to that time, the nation spent heavily (and some say wastefully) on creating a massive domestic security infrastructure. Civil liberties have unquestionably been compromised along the way, but Americans by and large accept this as the price of attaining a reasonably high level of security.

The wind-down of foreign entanglements has only made more pressing the domestic problems of the country. The U.S. economy is in a seemingly permanent state of malaise. This is certainly not a depression, but Americans are experiencing a prolonged period of economic difficulty not seen in decades. Households are forced to work longer and harder just to get by. Few families are fortunate enough to make ends meet on a single salary. Only a handful of sectors — industrial agriculture, entertainment, biotechnology and select high-tech sectors — are still global leaders and therefore creating good jobs.

Politicians nibble on the edges of big, hard problems such as Social Security and entitlements, but fail to forge consensus on long-term solutions in an ugly and contentious political climate. Billions have been spent supporting foreign military commitments and creating a huge domestic security infrastructure. But the industrial and transportation systems (including roads, rail and ports) are deteriorating. Similarly, the "soft" infrastructure of hospitals, schools and social services is in marked decline. Local budgets for police, fire and emergency personnel have been cut to the bone. On the West Coast, this fact is causing huge concern and challenges at a time of rising volcanic and seismic activity in the Pacific "Ring of Fire."

Left Behind

Much of the rest of the world is doing well economically. Europe, with its aggressive push into global markets, has surpassed US in per capita income. But the big stories are the growth and development of China, India and the emerging "little tigers" of Southeast Asia. China, having peacefully achieved *de facto* control over Taiwan, is exerting worrisome economic and diplomatic influence across Asia and the Middle East and Africa as well. Latin America is a mixed bag. The US is accepting large numbers of temporary workers from Mexico to take unwanted jobs in agriculture and hospitality services. Cuba in the post-Fidel era is muddling through economically, but no better.

With science and technology investments seriously lagging, many of our best and brightest in the U.S. are leaving to pursue their dreams abroad, and especially in the new high-tech corridors of China, India and South Asia. In all but a handful of technical fields, U.S. universities are considered first tier. But there is a feeling that the U.S. has its best days behind it, even though in absolute terms the country is still large and capable. The action taking place is elsewhere. In this and in many other ways, America feels as though it is being left behind.

Illustrative Challenges and Opportunities for the Coast Guard in Left Behind

Challenges	Opportunities
➲ Transition to post-terror world ➲ "Get our white hat back" – asserting a positive U.S. presence in world ➲ Intense competition for domestic funding ➲ Harshly conflicted U.S. domestic political situation, making change and growth difficult ➲ Crumbling port and industrial infrastructure, with negative implications for safety and the environment	➲ Poor economy makes Coast Guard careers appear attractive ➲ International engagement: Coast Guard has maintained high profile and good representation abroad ➲ Retain and grow non-terror roles and missions at time of frequent volcanoes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters

The Project Evergreen Strategy Workshop

The most critical step of any scenario planning exercise is the strategy workshop. These are typically four-day offsite affairs that are intended to remove participants from day-to-day distractions in order to get full immersion in the process. In October 2003, the Project Evergreen workshop was held at a government conference center in Virginia. The objective of the workshops was to have each of the five scenario world teams immerse itself in the details of a single scenario. The teams were each composed of some ten Coast Guard Service members and civilian employees, under the leadership of a flag officer or Senior Executive Service member. Great efforts were made to create diverse teams balanced by rank, technical or functional background, race and gender.

For most of the four-day workshop, participants had knowledge only of their own team's scenario. The team's objective was to develop, on the basis of the challenges and opportunities presented by that scenario, a set of strategies to guide the Coast Guard in anticipation of that particular world – under the strict working assumption that that world is, in fact, going to take place.

A common workbook guided the groups along a path from general discussion of daily life in the scenario on the first day, gradually through more focused discussion, ultimately leading to the essential strategy question: given what we now know about the challenges and opportunities in this scenario world, and given what we know today about the Coast Guard's strengths and weaknesses, what does the Service need to begin doing right away to better position itself for future success?

On the final day of the workshop, the five scenario world teams presented their strategies to the entire 56-person workshop group. The bulk of that day was spent stress-testing scenario-specific strategies within each of the other four teams' scenarios, to determine which of all the strategies were "robust" or workable across all five scenario futures. Core team members and facilitators captured key observations and comments so that all workshop strategies could be systematically evaluated and ranked in the next phase of the process.

Forging "Robust" Strategies

The scenario workshop produced a total of 49 draft strategies. Over the course of the following week, the project core team dissected and evaluated each of the strategies, with critical commentary and guidance provided by team members who had been present in workshop discussions. In a scenario innovation, the project team also employed risk analysis techniques to explore downside effects of specific strategy implementation options.

Sixteen core strategies were proposed that would allow the Coast Guard to succeed in a variety of potential futures. The strategies were presented at the November 2003 Flag Conference, where senior Coast Guard officers and civilians critiqued the strategies and discussed potential obstacles to implementation.

Based on feedback from the Commandant, the Leadership Council and other senior Coast Guard leaders, the Evergreen strategies underwent another round of review. Several strategies were dropped, refocused, or merged; a few were re-designated as implementation initiatives. The strategy statements themselves continued to be refined as new insights emerged from risk analyses and other evaluations conducted by the Working Group, facilitators and other contributors.

In the end, Project Evergreen produced eleven strategies. These strategies serve the following four high-level strategic imperatives:

1. **Shape** the global maritime setting to promote U.S. national interests.
2. **Know** maritime conditions, anomalies, and threats to prevent, protect and respond.
3. **Create and manage** an integrated U.S. Maritime Domain to preserve and promote the national interest.
4. **Position** the Coast Guard to act with strategic intent in a complex and uncertain environment.

The final set of Project Evergreen strategies is detailed over the following pages.

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U.S.C.G. Project Evergreen Core Strategies

The U.S. Coast Guard's future operating environment will be marked by traditional and unfamiliar security threats as well as challenges to national borders, marine resources, safe and efficient commerce, and conventional concepts of sovereignty. In the face of this accelerating complexity and the responsibilities of being a "plank owner" in the new Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard will enhance its capabilities and competencies in four enduring mission areas:

- Defending national and homeland security interests
- Enforcing laws and treaties in the U.S. Maritime Domain[2]
- Promoting safe and efficient maritime activities, and
- Protecting the marine environment.

To these ends, the Coast Guard will implement the following strategies.

[2] The U.S. Maritime Domain (surface, subsurface, and air) "encompasses all U.S. ports, inland waterways, harbors, navigable waters, Great Lakes, territorial seas, contiguous waters, customs waters, coastal seas, littoral areas, the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, and oceanic regions of U.S. national interest, as well as the sea lanes to the United States, U.S. maritime approaches, and the high seas surrounding America."

Strategic Imperatives[3]	Core Action Strategies[4]	End States[5]
Shape the global maritime setting to promote U.S. national interests.	1. Execute a robust international engagement effort within the framework of national strategies to advance global maritime safety and security and facilitate commerce, through multilateral agreements, multinational operations, international training efforts and diplomatic missions in support of national interests. 2. Act as the lead U.S. agency for negotiating international maritime standards, as national interests dictate. 3. Establish a tiered maritime safety and security regime to detect, identify, track, and eliminate threats to safety, commerce, and homeland security.	1. The CG is recognized globally as the vital U.S. ambassador for maritime safety and security. 2. All international maritime standards relating to the maritime domain are negotiated through either the leadership or advice/support of the U.S. Coast Guard. 3. Threats to life, commerce, and homeland security in the maritime domain are optimally addressed as quickly and as far from our shores as is necessary with overlapping, tiered response or deterrence.
Know maritime conditions, anomalies, and threats to prevent, protect, and respond.	4.a Lead the inter-agency establishment of requirements for maritime-relevant intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, navigation and observation systems that support homeland security, maritime safety and mobility, and natural resources protection. 4.b Lead government and private sector maritime stakeholders in development of maritime safety and security strategies. 5. Lead a partnership of maritime stakeholders to ensure appropriate access to integrated systems, sensors, intelligence, information and analysis of maritime activities and conditions to gain a complete operating picture of the U.S. Maritime Domain.	4.a No maritime-relevant intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, navigation, and observation system is designed and deployed without U.S. Coast Guard requirements included. 4.b All levels of government and the private sector will recognize the U.S. Coast Guard as the lead federal agency for establishing standards and competencies for maritime safety and security prevention and response. 5. U.S. Coast Guard coordinates the definition of complete operating picture requirements and ensures all source information is received from and disseminated to pertinent maritime partners.
Create and manage an integrated U.S. Maritime Domain, as an expansive border region, to preserve and promote the national interest.	6. Implement risk management doctrine and systems to support effective decision-making in the U.S. Maritime Domain. 7. Create a national network of integrated DHS-aligned regional command and control centers to achieve seamless interoperability and coordination among all DHS agencies, state and local authorities. 8. Control and respond to air, surface, and subsurface activities from the inland waterways to the seaward boundary of the EEZ to protect and enhance the safe and legitimate use of the U.S. Maritime Domain.	6. A nationally integrated risk management system that is consistent with U.S. Coast Guard authorities and responsibilities supports effective decision-making in the U.S. Maritime Domain. 7. U.S. Coast Guard, state, local and other DHS assets are optimally employed and coordinated through a unified command authority using a common operating picture. 8. The United States is able to exert positive control over all activities of interest occurring in the U.S. Maritime Domain.
Position the Coast Guard to act with strategic intent in a complex and uncertain environment.	9. Institutionalize strategic thinking to link all activities and investments to broader organizational objectives. 10. Develop a requirements-driven human resources system to ensure continuous alignment of competencies (skill, knowledge, and aptitude) with organizational needs. 11. Employ an acquisition and logistics process that supports the continuous assessment of all requirements to optimize the availability of appropriate resources and capabilities.	9. All U.S. Coast Guard planning, budgeting, and execution are driven by continuous assessment and understanding of future constituency needs and missions requirements. 10. Technical and leadership competency requirements are based on current and future work and workloads, and we have systems in place that continually develop, allocate, and transform human capital accordingly. 11. Readiness standards are balanced between current and future mission needs, while acquisition and logistics systems continuously meet readiness standards.

[3] Strategic Imperatives: The guiding imperatives that are necessary to anticipate and meet the challenges of the future with strategic intent and maximum flexibility.
[4] Core Action Strategies: The organizational courses of action that proved to be effective in optimizing the Coast Guard's service to the nation across all the future operating environments described in the Evergreen scenarios. Taking these actions will enable the Coast Guard to fulfill the strategic imperatives.
[5] End States: The desired results of implementing the Core Action Strategies.

From Evergreen Strategy to Evergreen Action

The Long View Review team noted the dangers of "too much planning and too little action." So what have been the hard results of all this meeting and talking and writing?

The final eleven Project Evergreen strategies are informing Coast Guard activities across a wide range of settings, from headquarters to field commands. The rich and diverse pool of Coast Guard personnel that participated in the strategy development process have helped to plant the seeds of Evergreen learning throughout the organization. A testament to the power of its ideas is that Project Evergreen has expanded well beyond the original participants in the scenario workshop. Evidence of the translation of Project Evergreen ideas into vital actions can be seen across the entire Service:

- In the budgeting and planning area, Project Evergreen strategies have been used to stress-test the long-term viability of specific new expenditures.

- An Area commander has adopted Project Evergreen as the format for submitting the Area budget (and direct reports are exhorted to devote 10 percent of every working day to strategic thinking).

- The senior Coast Guard officer overseeing the management of the massive Deepwater capital acquisition project makes a point of keeping the Project Evergreen strategies posted on his desk, where they can inform his decision-making.

- The output of Project Evergreen is already helping to shape and inform national Homeland Security strategies.

- Human resource planners not only used the strategies as the foundation of their own planning, but also used the scenarios themselves to better understand potential labor markets, the dynamics of turnover, and the competencies that would be necessary in the workforce in order to achieve the strategies.

- Personnel from the Office of Strategic Analysis (G-CCX) have applied Project Evergreen learning to project work on Haiti and on Maritime Domain Awareness.

- Evergreen is beginning to be infused into the Coast Guard's Baldrige quality evaluation process.

- An informal community of Evergreen veterans shares e-mails and perspectives on breaking news events related to scenario themes or related strategies, thus keeping both scenarios and related Project Evergreen strategies fresh and vital.

Of course, the examples above, and their informal, seemingly *ad hoc* nature, show just how early we are in the Evergreen process. Evergreen has only begun to affect the way the Coast Guard does its business.

But these examples also are quite consistent with the Coast Guard's image of Evergreen as a process that goes well beyond formal strategy development. In fact, the individual initiatives of Coast Guard members and employees to creatively apply the lessons to their everyday work – not just carrying out Project Evergreen strategies but incorporating its thinking – will be critical to sustaining the impact on the enterprise. It is only through the work of committed, passionate, informed people that the broader strategic vision of the organization can be brought to bear on the everyday work of the Coast Guard, which is, in the end, the only outcome that matters. In the words of one Flag officer, "We want to do our daily business with strategic intent."

The bottom line is this: Effective strategy execution requires a culture of strategic thinking. At the same time, sustaining a culture of strategic thinking and intent is predicated upon faithful and credible strategy execution. Addressing both of these challenges simultaneously will be the major challenge in energizing and sustaining Evergreen.

As the Service proceeds through the "cycle of strategic renewal," the effects of Evergreen will be felt in more obvious, formal, and dramatic ways. It is to that cycle that we must now turn.

III. Institutionalizing the Evergreen Process

Building Strategic Intent

The Evergreen process is the result of over seven years of Coast Guard work with scenario-based strategic planning, incorporating the insights and experience of more than 300 officers, senior enlisted personnel, civilians, and contractors. The scenario planning technique has been adapted to fit Coast Guard needs, and the strategies that have emerged from the process have been shown by subsequent events to be both appropriate and resilient. An emerging doctrine of Coast Guard strategic planning, based on Evergreen, will provide the foundation for a service that acts with strategic intent and is truly prepared for all eventualities.

Acting with strategic intent – what does that mean to the Coast Guard?

Strategic intent consists of:

- Adopting a *systems view*
- Focusing on *intent*
- Thinking *across time*
- Creating and testing *hypotheses*
- Being *intelligently opportunistic*.

Strategic intent means that the Service knows where it is going, as well as where it has been. It means that strategies are accompanied by a "vision of success" – clear pictures of what the Service looks like if the strategies succeed. It means that near-term decisions are made within a framework that includes long-term goals and aspirations.

Just how does this work in practice? If there are three different ways to solve a near-term requirement, then the solution chosen is the one that most closely reflects Evergreen strategies. Acting with strategic intent means that the budget and planning process represents both strategic priorities and near-term exigencies. Critically, it means that strategy shapes the budget, not the other way around.

The Elements of Strategic Renewal

How is strategic intent inculcated within the Service?

First, the Evergreen cycle of strategic renewal is made a formal part of the Commandant's command cycle. Acting with strategic intent is thus interwoven into the Commandants' tenures.

Second, while long-range strategy fixes the Service's navigation point, the operational realities of the current setting are not ignored. Contingency strategies, with trigger events and trends, are established along with constant scanning and updating activities. Changes in current events may suggest that a contingent strategy now be considered for inclusion in the formal set of core "robust" strategies. Thus the process remains "evergreen" in both the strategic and operational sense.

Third, and arguably the most important element in the long run, Evergreen scenario planning informs budgeting and planning, management practices, and the education and training systems of the Coast Guard. This means that Evergreen strategies contribute to resource allocation decisions. It means that the Evergreen scenario planning is introduced or taught at all appropriate levels of military and civilian education and training. Further, it means that the Evergreen process and resultant strategies are used as a strategic planning module of the Coast Guard performance evaluation and management system.

Fourth, the Evergreen process is used as a framework for *ad hoc* decisions that require a long-term and strategic perspective. The Evergreen process provides a tool for "futures due diligence" as critical decisions are made. For example, Evergreen is used to bridge the inevitable gap between longer-term support and logistics decisions and the exigencies of mission planning, by using the scenarios as a framework for coordinated operational and support planning.

The Cycle of Strategic Renewal

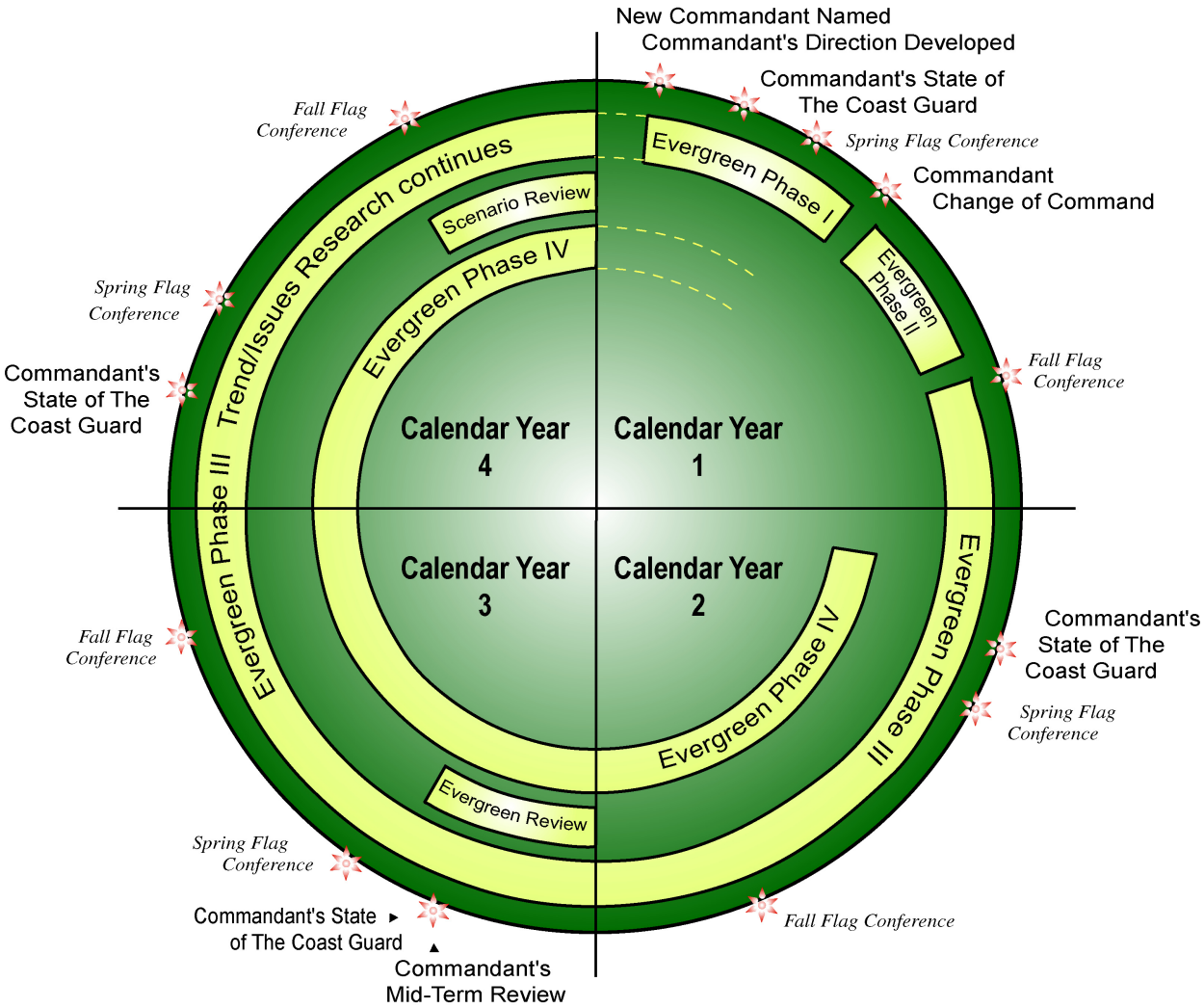
The Evergreen process is intimately linked to the Commandants' four-year command cycle. A new Commandant inherits the strategic planning and budgeting legacy of his or her predecessor. During the Commandant's first two years, he or she can only affect many large Coast Guard issues on the margins. The Evergreen process acknowledges that reality of government service. The first year of a Commandant's tenure (June to June) begins with an in-depth reassessment of the strategic context of the Coast Guard, an evaluation of new strategic priorities, a synthesis of previous strategic initiatives with the new priorities, and early implementation initiatives.

This process does not assume significant changes in strategic priorities passing from one Commandant's command to another. But at each new command, the process does begin with a clean strategic slate as a form of risk management – nothing critical should be assumed or overlooked. The Evergreen process operates under the assumption of continuity. However, it also operates under the belief that few things are more damaging to an organization than strategy based upon either momentum ("we have always done it this way") or the tyranny of the present ("today's trends and issues should drive our strategic thinking").

The Coast Guard strategic cycle begins with the development of the incoming *Commandant's Direction*. Historically, the Commandant's Direction is the personal statement of critical priorities and agenda items that the incoming Commandant intends to pursue during the next four years. It is not usually intended to be a list of strategies, though its priorities certainly have strategic impact. These items form the core of the Commandant's initial management agenda. The sources of the Commandant's Direction include personal experiences, priorities, goals and interests; the strategic and operational context of the Coast Guard; and broader Department of Homeland Security strategy. Evergreen complements the Commandant's Direction well, since it provides the new Commandant with an analysis of the broader strategic context within which he or she will have to lead.

The cycle of strategic renewal begins with the Commandant's Direction and proceeds through the Commandant's tenure as shown on the following page.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cycle of Strategic Renewal



Definition of Terms and Processes

Commandant's Direction

- The official near- and medium-term agenda of the newly selected Commandant.
- Sources of this document include:
  - Department of Homeland Security strategy,
  - The strategic context,
  - The operational context,
  - The newly selected Commandant's personal goals and priorities.

Core Team

The internal scenario team, typically working with a specialty contractor. The Core Team is 8 to 12 people including civilians, senior enlisted personnel, and officers ranging from O4 to O6. They contribute to every stage of the scenario process, and in the Coast Guard experience remain engaged through all Evergreen Phases.

Coast Guard Leadership Council (CGLC)

The Commandant, Vice Commandant, Chief of Staff, Atlantic Area Commander, Pacific Area Commander, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard and an appointed Senior Executive service officer (senior civilian).

Evergreen Phase I: Develop multiple strategic planning scenarios

- Compile the list of mission drivers from research and interviews (Core Team)
- Develop the dimensions that will form the boundaries of the planning space (Core Team and incoming Leadership Council)
- Select Scenarios (Leadership Council)
- Develop Scenarios (Core Team)

Evergreen Phase II: Develop strategies using the multiple scenarios

- Set strategy workshop goals (Core Team and Leadership Council)
- Design strategy workshop (Core Team)
- Conduct strategy workshop(s) (Core Team, Leadership Council, officers, senior civilians, and senior enlisted personnel)
- Synthesize core strategies (Core Team)
- Perform a continuity analysis and a risk analysis (Core Team)
- Accept Strategies (The Leadership Council, the Flag Corps

Evergreen Phase III: Strategy implementation initiatives and relevance analysis

- Perform gap analysis between current state and strategies (Leadership Council, Core Team and all appropriate offices and programs across the Service)
- Develop strategy implementation initiatives (Leadership Council, Core Team and all appropriate offices and programs across the Service)
- Develop contingency strategies and trigger events (Core Team)
- Initiate trend and issues research (G-CCX)

Evergreen Phase IV: Operationalize and implement strategies

- Develop implementation roadmaps (Leadership Council, Core Team and all appropriate offices and programs across the Service)
- Assign responsibilities (Leadership Council)
- Coordinate with the budget and planning office (Leadership Council and all appropriate offices and programs across the Service)
- Coordinate activities with the proposed Office of Performance Management and Decision Support (G-CPD), the Chief Knowledge Officer (CG-6) and all appropriate offices and programs across the Service

Evergreen Review

- Mid-course look at successes, failures, additions, or corrections in the Evergreen output and process as a result of experience and current events (G-CCX and all involved program, projects and offices).

Commandant's Mid-Term Review

- The Commandant's review of his first two years and course corrections for the balance of his term. This review may result in a re-issuance or adjustment of the Commandant's Direction.

Establishing Evergreen within the Coast Guard

Making Evergreen a defining part of the Coast Guard way of doing business is the final phase of the process, and arguably the most important. The mere development of plans on paper will not accomplish this goal; nor will a scenario planning process confined to a limited number of officers or Headquarters planning units.

Critical actions to ingrain Evergreen in Coast Guard culture are driven by four key reinforcing principles:

• Decision-making processes up and down the organization are driven by a common and coherent understanding of long-term Coast Guard strategic priorities – *strategic intent*.

• Rigorous and continuous *tracking* of external conditions contributes to reevaluation of strategic direction in light of these inevitable and potentially destabilizing changes.

• A *culture* of strategic awareness evolves that touches all Coast Guard personnel and that takes *Semper Paratus* to the next level, beyond response, to enable superior awareness and anticipation.

• Evergreen awareness and learning are proactively *shared* throughout the Department of Homeland Security and among all other stakeholders, locally, nationally and globally.

On a more individual level, the goal of Evergreen cannot simply be to change processes, or even to develop strategies. The broader and perhaps far more important aim of the effort is to change how people think – to develop strategic thinking as a matter of cultural habit in Coast Guard men and women. This includes:

• an ability to think of problems in terms of systems, rather than just in mechanical or linear fashion;

• an ability to think not just by reference to the past, but with anticipation of what the future might bring;

• an ability to think outside the Coast Guard, in terms of partnerships;

• an ability to think not just in terms of the necessary optimization of operational subroutines or unit performance, but beyond that to a holistic appreciation of the requirements for sustained organizational excellence across the entire Service.

One of the most difficult challenges facing the Service as it tries to instill strategic intent in its people arises from its very multi-mission nature. The Coast Guard must be highly efficient and effective at a large variety of tasks. That has forced a certain level of specialization onto the Service, which has historically led to a natural pride in the particular specialty to which one has often devoted one's career. Pride in one's specialty, much like pride in one's military service branch, leads in turn to group loyalties and specialized focus that sometimes can get in the way of what is best for the Service – and the nation – as a whole.

Evergreen is all about finding the common strategic objectives that bind the Service together, despite apparent division and incompatibility. What follow are action steps that are helping to make the overarching strategic vision embedded in these four objectives a reality, while maintaining within the Service the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions.

Use of Contingent Strategies to Instill Strategic Intent

"Contingent strategies" are those strategies that are only effective – or acceptable – under certain future conditions. This is in contrast to the eleven "robust" Evergreen strategies that were judged likely to be effective under a broad range of future conditions.

Since some of these contingent strategies are not simply effective, but absolutely necessary, under certain plausible future conditions, the Coast Guard will take actions to ensure that it identifies contingent strategies and recognizes when conditions are emerging that require execution of each contingent strategy. Fortunately, the steps needed to ensure that the strategies are put in place at the right time will also serve to involve a broader group of Coast Guard personnel in the Evergreen process.

Those steps are as follows:

- Identify leading indicators that would indicate that a contingent strategy must be executed.

- Set up and operate a monitoring system to keep track of leading indicators and provide early warning.

- Establish mechanisms to ensure that the results of monitoring are made part of decision-making processes at appropriate leadership levels.

Since contingent strategies can range from global and all-embracing to local and focused, their proper treatment will inevitably involve many different levels and types of Coast Guard personnel. Personnel will be oriented in the broader Evergreen process when they are tapped for involvement. This will ensure that they understand their vital role in carrying out the strategic objectives of the Service as a whole.

Broader External Events Monitoring and Internal Communication

The essence of strategy is combining an awareness of the operating environment with an ability to communicate strategic direction throughout the organization. Evergreen, in order to succeed, requires constant scanning and communication.

Aside from the more focused monitoring of indicators linked to specific strategies, a more general approach of using the scenarios to scan the news will benefit the Coast Guard. Participants in all three of the Coast Guard's scenario-based planning projects developed an informal network of future-oriented thinkers. Their identification with the "scenario worlds" that they "inhabited" during their projects, and their knowledge of some of the other "worlds," give them a ready framework with which to analyze the news. They often bring to the attention of their colleagues news items that would otherwise go unnoticed: an epidemic of drug-resistant TB in Russian prisons, say, or increased volcanic activity around the Ring of Fire, or an increase in the popularity of gated communities.

This informal "prairie fire" of interest in the future has altered and enriched the way these people apprehend the news, their world, and the future of the Coast Guard. By overlaying a bit of structure and technology on this natural offshoot of the Evergreen process, an interactive website or "blog" for recording these observations and insights, the Coast Guard will multiply the positive impact of Evergreen, involve more and more people in the ongoing strategic dialogue, and invest them in the never-ending process of strategic renewal.

Regular updates are also issued by G-CCX to keep leadership and Service members aware of the latest Evergreen activities and to enhance the knowledge of the Evergreen process and output across the Service.

The Interface between Evergreen and the Budgeting Process

Perhaps no element of the institutionalization of Evergreen is more critical than linking the Evergreen process into budgetary decisions, for both the increment and the base. Evergreen input will inform the budget process; Evergreen strategies will be translated into terms that staff and operational leaders can use; the risk management/due diligence function of Evergreen will be emphasized; and allocation of funds will be consistent with the strategic objectives of the organization as a whole, as expressed by the Evergreen process.

The budget process has evolved to include Evergreen both directly and indirectly. At the outset of the process, the Office of Budget and Programs (CG-82) issues strategy and budget guidance "themes," each with dollar limits that reflect prevailing overall budget constraints. The Department's official strategy and Evergreen are inputs at this stage, to assure that the themes contribute to the strategic direction of the Coast Guard. Later, when individual budgets are submitted, Project Evergreen is used explicitly to justify requests by showing that expenditures will support specific strategies.

This cannot be a one-way interaction, with budget processes and people bending to Evergreen norms. The output of Evergreen will be translated into terms that make sense from a budgetary perspective. Where possible, the budgetary impacts of strategies and contingencies identified in the course of the Evergreen process will be quantified. To achieve this,

intensive interaction between budgeting and strategy units, including prominent representation of budget personnel in the Evergreen process and close interaction of Evergreen process people at the front end of the budget cycle, will be the norm.

Taking Evergreen to the Coast Guard

The final category of actions necessary to institutionalize Evergreen into the Coast Guard involves embedding the Evergreen process throughout the entire Service.

Management and Performance Evaluation

For Evergreen to succeed, it must become a central feature of the management framework of the Service. Evergreen concepts and strategies should be part of the Coast Guard Commandant's Performance Challenge (CPC) process. The proposed Office of Performance Management and Decision Support (G-CPD) will be responsible for applying the Baldrige Award criteria (also known as the Commandant's Performance Excellence Criteria) across the Service as organizational standards of management excellence. Quality Performance Consultants help units to evaluate their performance and supply recommendations for management improvements. A voluntary Commandant's Quality Award system exists for more mature Coast Guard units and staffs. Evergreen should be included as the module of the strategic planning category. But more immediately, the CPC process will provide a regularized training and education link to Evergreen through its train-the-management team approach to improving managerial excellence. This approach can be used as a force multiplier to spread and reinforce knowledge of scenario planning, the Evergreen strategies, and upcoming Evergreen activities. Evergreen, as a cutting-edge management tool, is particularly appropriate for inclusion in the ongoing Baldrige activities of G-CPD.

Education

It is critical to refresh the cadre of people in the Coast Guard who are trained to think strategically and who understand the Evergreen cycle. The Evergreen process and scenario planning will be introduced or taught at all appropriate levels of enlisted, civilian and officer education and training. The Coast Guard Academy, OCS, and the Leadership Schools will be fruitful venues for Evergreen training and awareness activities.

It is crucial that the future leadership be grounded in the logic of Evergreen, be fully apprised of the Evergreen strategies and how they were developed, and accustom themselves to thinking with strategic intent. A segment on Evergreen, and the scenario planning process, can be inserted into the Academy and other leadership curricula either in a course format or as Spotlight Lectures. The Management and Leadership Department is a logical place to center these activities.

It is also vital that future Evergreen strategy exercises include emerging leadership in separate scenario workshops as a check on, and complement to, the strategic ideas of their elders. The experience of Long View, in which a workshop at the Academy was included, demonstrated the value of getting a look at strategy through the eyes of people who will have to live with the long-term decisions of current leadership, and whose youth provides needed diversity.

Taking Evergreen to the Field Commanders

All good ideas, needless to say, do not emerge from Headquarters. It is important that Evergreen extend its reach to the Areas, and perhaps to some Districts. As mentioned above, this is already occurring during the annual budgeting process. It will eventually be embedded in the thinking process of the Area and District leadership.

The Areas will engage in something as close as possible to the "full-out" scenario workshop experience. These workshops could examine particular issues of importance to the Area across a spread of different scenarios. Alternatively, the Areas could examine "wild card events," such as terrorist attacks, environmental disasters, mass migrations, and other events that could conceivably occur no matter how the future unfolds.

Outreach: DHS, Broader Government, Congress, the Public

Evergreen is a vitally important part of the Coast Guard's never-ending effort to provide the greatest possible service to the American public as efficiently as possible. By allowing the Service to avoid future hazards and grasp future opportunities, Evergreen acts as the fulcrum for complementing the Coast Guard's status as the world's greatest first responders and world-class fast reaction team with a new skill set of strategic intent and the ability to anticipate possible massive changes on the horizon.

But it is not enough to know that ourselves. For Evergreen to succeed, we will make certain that our constituencies – departmental, Congressional, and the general public – understand what it is, why it is so important, and how it can serve their needs as well. As an example, Evergreen is already helping the Chief of Naval Operation's Strategic Studies Group at the Naval War College, which is using Evergreen scenarios to good effect to help their participants think more expansively about the future.

Our constituencies should know that Evergreen is a necessary, cutting-edge risk management and due-diligence activity that is consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act, and a superb mechanism for avoiding expensive failures of imagination. The Coast Guard has a particular duty to articulate how its current efforts are going to prepare for the relatively distant future, because its current acquisitions will often be in use three or four decades down the line. Evergreen is a process that better ensures that Coast Guard acquisitions are going to be capable of fulfilling vital national needs in that distant future. Regular adjustment to the Evergreen scenarios and strategies, on a schedule corresponding to the tenure of the Commandant and top leadership, is the best way to guarantee that these vital acquisitions are wise ones.

The Coast Guard will also fulfill its duty as a good departmental citizen through continued outreach upwards to DHS management, and, to the extent possible and appropriate, use of Evergreen output and process to enhance DHS strategy, budget and decision processes.

Finally, outreach to the general public via communications and continuing two-way dialogue will always be a critical way for the Coast Guard to accomplish its duties. That is as true of Evergreen as of any other Coast Guard initiative. Regular communication with the public will be an integral part of the Evergreen process as we move forward.

This book is just the first step in that important endeavor.

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