



# Upcoming White Paper - The COA and “Time”

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## “Choices are the Hinges of Destiny”

The career of Edward Markham started in earnest on New Year’s Eve, 1898, when he read a poem for an editor of the San Francisco Examiner who published it two weeks later. Markham, who became a leading literary figure for decades, delivered “Lincoln, the Man of the People” on May 30, 1922 at a dedication ceremony in Washington, DC. Markham’s earlier famous quote surfaced just before the dawn of the “American Century.” His later words before a large crowd celebrated the life of perhaps the nation’s most significant citizen, from the prior century. The sitting president, that day, who listened to Markham before the grand memorial – the virgin white, open air marble edifice with his stately seated predecessor – was Warren G. Harding. The memory of Harding’s own brief but promising presidency would later be discolored by revelations of scandal within his administration, shortly after his death.

But what is the lesson of Markham’s earlier metaphor? Individual or collective destiny can turn on so many things beyond our control or knowledge, can’t it? Each of us makes choices or decisions, large and small, all the time. You can’t avoid them in your job or daily life, whether you are an entrusted executive, a project manager or just an individual addressing a personal matter, large or small. Which car to buy or what to have for breakfast have different consequences, no doubt, but they still involve calculations. Choices may say more about us than we even know – how prepared are we, the conscious or perhaps barely noticeable factors we consider, and, how might each result - or “destiny” – may be markedly different, viewed through a prism of overriding factors or constraints, like “Time”. You might evaluate “buy” vs. “lease” options on a new or used automobile. (You could weigh enjoying a new car’s latest gadgets and features vs. avoidance of

suffering those depreciation costs.) You might find yourself heeding a doctor's recent revelations on your cholesterol level when you reach for the sugarless cereal, instead of making your preferred fluffy scrambled eggs and bacon. Yes, you're older and wiser now, and, you'd like to on go as long as you can, as comfortably as you can.

Chronology is the dominant view of "Time." The longer you endure – as a person or an organization – the more decisions you will have to make. And emerging destiny may have you questioning, calibrating, if you are one given to reflection... but aren't we all? For more "significant" decisions that door ultimately swings open, pivoting on criteria and attributes. Once settling on a difficult choice, you might even welcome a creaking sound as a sort of justification for everything that had gone into it – your having walked towards that door, in anticipation of turning its handle and giving it that little, gentle push. Destiny, itself, on the other side, isn't always welcome or even immediately revealing. Hopefully, though, after that noisy hinge quiets down, "destiny" has prepared you for the next choice you'll likely have to make.

### **The Second Best Case Scenario:**

In 1956, R.G Lipsey, a Canadian economist, and Kelvin Lancaster, an Australian mathematician, published an analysis<sup>1</sup> which essentially stated that "first best" conditions would not necessarily raise welfare in a situation in which all first best conditions could not be satisfied. This was, in part, an observation of the Pareto optimum state of an economy – no changes can make one individual better off without making at least one other individual worse off. There are always variations to be considered, necessary reevaluations, in the pursuit of optimization. Their work has been applied to public policy. With the recent American Rescue Act, an unelected official – the Senate Parliamentarian – eliminated the federal \$15 Hour Minimum Wage from this historic \$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 bill. Senate Republicans had already been busy proclaiming that the impact of other "going big" provisions could not be easily measured which likely risked inflation with the national economy. Even less than progressive Senate Democrats had wanted this minimum wage hike but chose not to challenge the parliamentarian decision. Why not? In not doing so, they acknowledged a Republican point – "success" in this landmark legislation – as it had and now stood, without the minimum wage – could not be precisely defined. How could the Congress subsequently contend that not ensuring an approximate 50% increase in wages, for so many people, was not a fundamental feature – worth distinct measurement – in any sort of true "rescue"? What rationale, then, could the Democrat's give in not stridently challenging the parliamentarian's finding on the Senate floor?



Lipsey and Lancaster have been cited by policy makers who have tried to apply their paper, which largely addressed monopolies and tariffs. They wrote: "... given that one of the Paretian optimum conditions cannot be fulfilled, then an optimum situation can be achieved only by departing from all the other Paretian conditions. The optimum situation finally attained may be termed a second best optimum because it is achieved subject to a constraint which, by definition, prevents the attainment of a Paretian optimum." The balance of the aggressive Democratic agenda – Infrastructure, Climate Change, etc. – might be shrouded by uncertainty over allowable applications of budgetary reconciliation. Concerns over the coming 2022 mid-term elections likely prevented would have been time-consuming analysis of the impact of the \$15 Hour Minimum Wage, ensuring its dismissal from the landmark COVID-19 bill. All of the wage hike's benefits would be difficult to quantify and agree upon, anyway, no doubt. The Rescue Act – "finally attained" – from a purely economic and public policy standpoint, despite the kudos and angst and our hopes that it would realize its intended benefits, could be initially rendered "Second Best" legislation, regardless of whether you are a conservative or a liberal. Then again, focusing too much on all carefully discernible criteria might have also have hindered, before the ultimate vote, the Social Security Act of 1935 and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. As you watch telegenic faces streaming from MSNBC, CNN and Fox News, regretfully, there's nothing too surprising uttered, based on whatever channel you have chosen. You never hear the phrase – "the loyal opposition" – as you had, so often in your youth, during the crafting of the bills that comprised the Great Society of the mid-1960s.

No, doors themselves are far apart. Many small, tidy choices that seem to demand action just don't seem to be in play, nowadays. They may be viewable, beckoning in a hallway of common sense or human necessity. But any consensus on who gets credit for opening, and letting another through, leaves them closed and the building, itself, so often unapproachable. Only the bombastic large legislations – the 2017 tax cut, the pending "infrastructure" bill – lacking in easy validation now are worthy of Congressional attention. One may wonder if that could have been part of any Project Change Request (PCR) plan back in 1787 or have we just devolved to some dangerous precipice due to size and complexity? Political parties were never addressed in that governance document in 1787. There were no stipulations made to the volume of laws to be drafted and enacted. Amendments were meant to be methodical, never replacing the defined legislative process, unless absolutely necessary.



We accept that politicians, just like the rest of us, are compelled to use negotiation and pragmatism to cope with constraints in decision making. The Lipsey / Lancaster paper does suggest hope – if an effort is pursued – in analyzing the effects of constraints, at different levels: “There seems reason to suppose, however, that there may well be cases in which a breaking of the Paretian rules at lower levels of the process... may enable a higher level of welfare to be obtained than if the scope of policy is confined to one level only.” Best intentions can forever be a defense against unforeseen future conditions. Lack of more precise analysis and planning could be forgiven in the face of challenging circumstances. But... still...you have to be agile enough and willing enough to walk towards that door.

### Courses of Action (COAs) – On Premise vs. Cloud for Computer Security

Recently, a military service branch of the US Department of Defense (DOD) had to consider a new contract with a strategic supplier of network software for end point security. The software serves warfighter computers at bases – and remote sites, given COVID – around the country. The original contract was expiring, in its last option year. Complicating matters was the news that network software servers, in the field, were soon reaching “End of Service Life” (EOSL) – a point in time when IT components no longer qualify for vendor support or “maintenance.” Decisions needed to be made soon on a new infrastructure to support this network software. This required an approved “Course of Action” (COA) leading to a Statement of Work (SOW). The SOW would then become the basis for a broader team to account for a “Technology Refresh” to support the licensed software. The existing network software vendor had won the contract six years earlier with a sophisticated enterprise architecture – a peer to peer linear chain methodology providing network and security services faster and more efficiently than more traditional “hub and spoke” practices. The software soon became popular with national Network Operation Centers for various core services. It was also used to correct, in hours, certain ad hoc problems that had previously taken much longer than other leading software of its type. But the network software was costly; the program became the most expensive in the division – by far – with many eyes on it. The assigned government Program Manager (PM) was new to the military; her Project Lead (PL), a contractor, had just moved over from another division. The program’s Engineering team (EN) was well regarded and highly specialized, but small. They dealt daily with the demands of the software while working with the vendor and the system’s stakeholders across the select military networks. A further complication for the PM was that a separate contract with the EN’s company was expiring as well.



The cost of any solution had to maintain the scope of the mission. (How could softening of IT security requirements be accepted during ongoing review of the impact of SolarWinds?) Emerging soon as the most vexing, the most complicating of the three constraining project management legs was Time, as it so often is. Aging servers relayed packets of data, humming through aging network equipment, requiring daily operational and engineering attention.

The “optimum condition,” the initial recommended “Course of Action” (COA) by Engineering, was to deploy new, on site field hardware servers – manufactured by the network software company – and new network equipment across the branch’s bases. Engineering would not be involved in negotiations for a new licensing agreement. That was left to “Program Management” – the PM – with assistance from the PL and support from multiple groups – who had to follow strict DOD Acquisition guidelines and procedures.

Engineering’s original recommendation had missed the mark somewhat with management in December. “Did you consider the Cloud?” was the response received to their proposed solution. Any “cloud” option had many attractive features but replacement of field servers seemed most logical. Since the possibility of the cloud hadn’t been factored into the presentation, any plan to refresh the infrastructure to support the network software was halted. Suddenly, without approval of an EN proposal, the team had a problem. It would take additional time to document, compare and contrast different cloud vs. “on premise” (field server and network) solutions to get management buy-in, to keep things moving.

For it all starts with the COA – you need to know what you plan to do – to drive everything else. The government would likely require a competitive bid process with RFIs, Market Research, RFPs, etc. for sourcing a supplier with a new contract to manage the network software vendor.

In the military, programs and contracts are most often administered centrally, in a fashion not too dissimilar to the private sector. The PM needs to rely on core groups responsible for the contract and financial aspects of the “Acquisition” as well as various functional organizations, ranging from Engineering to Testing and Logistics. The PM is then responsible from Contract Award through the “Life Cycle” – i.e., implementation and ongoing performance against the contract. This role mandates government certifications and proficiency with DOD regulations and guidelines to navigate successfully through a heavy matrix, the management process. The PL has been amazed at the dedication of the Government PMs that he has worked for. They don’t make a lot of money, a small fraction of their private enterprise counterparts. A few throughout history like Max Weber might celebrate them, these faceless bureaucrats. The PL contractor is there to assist and guide but





the PM has all the stress and responsibility. If only the warfighters and the American public could see what they go through. The immediate challenge – now – for this team, Program Management and Engineering, – was to contrast various “Cloud” vs. “On Premise” options for senior management. The PM’s challenge was to get division management’s buy in on a “COA” prior to reengaging the military’s formal EN approval process, if needed. Their result had to be quick enough to have a new contract in place in time to eventually meet equipment EOSL hardware conditions in production to accompany rollout of a new licensing agreement. The Hardware Refresh criteria for each option would be based on their own defined attributes – Operational Impact, Deployment Costs, and Sustainment Costs on the life of a new licensing contract.

What the team went through over several weeks, amidst the PM’s regular, strident was challenging. The PM and the PL had met briefly, on base, but neither had met anyone in EN, due to COVID-19. E-mails, pointed direct phone calls, remote teleconferences, MS Team sessions to discuss and review multiple artifacts, were the modes of communication. EN would respond and write a “white paper” on various “Cloud Computing” options, available to the division. The PL created a tool he had learned through the Project Management Institute (PMI), and had used in private enterprise that was briefly followed. The team had one official meeting a week, which it shared with another security program that the PM also managed. The PM and PL spoke semi-daily. There were less than a handful of ad hoc meetings with EN leading to a meeting the PM would eventually call with division Program and Engineering Management, in early March.

Voice inflections and other subtleties in communication would be everything. The PM and PL sensed disappointment with EN over reception of their original “on premise” proposal. But they all worked together to accomplish their objective. They understood that the PM needed to get a COA in place... fast. Eventually, an infrastructure Tech Refresh solution was agreed upon. Management approved a new direction. This would then allow Program Management to focus on a new license renewal contract.

But it was the various aspects of “Time”, itself, in how the team developed its “second best case” solution that interested the PL during the effort. The team dealt with Time in various, interesting ways while evaluating the COAs.

### **Physical and Psychological Time and the COA Recommendation:**

A lot of literature focuses on the effects of Time in various aspects of general and project management – prioritization affecting “Time Management” is one, for example. Anyone who works for a living is far too familiar with deadlines and



interdependencies involved with delivering and managing a good or service. Time is said to be always “of the essence.” Time, as well, is considered the “most controversial concept in physics.”<sup>ii</sup> Pagans watched the movement of the sun during the day and the stars at night and carefully sensed environmental changes that demanded plans for harvest and protection from winter. St. Augustine felt he understood what Time was but knew he couldn’t easily explain it. Newton felt it was “absolute;” Einstein said it as “relative,” amid motion, light and space while Hawking concluded that – no matter whatever else could be said about it - Time didn’t exist, at all, before the “Big Bang.” And it has been more than a mystery, ever since<sup>iii</sup>.

In recent decades, many scientists have settled on recognizing a definition to “physical time.” Twice a year, due to GPS, we may be grateful we don’t have to apply an update to our cell phones – like many of the other clocks in our lives. We also might take a moment to appreciate all the careful assumptions and experiments that have gone before us that render Time an aspect of life that we at least feel we can wrap our minds around.

Other interpretations of Time have emerged in recent decades worth noting before we try to plan or execute actions... with others, especially. Cognitive and Behavioral science speaks more to the personal side of decision-making, reinforcing “psychological time” as a product of the mind as well as a reflection of natural “chronometric” (science of time measurement) order. “Temporal” (relating to time) dimensions such as duration, pace and the order of perceived and internal events differ from the “physical time.”

<sup>iv</sup> In a 2008 study, Florian Klapproth of Germany demonstrated how mental representations of Time affected decision making. “It is shown that psychological time is often neglected in human decision making but seems to play an important role in the making of choices.” Klapproth detailed previous work, and, not surprisingly, justified further research. She demonstrated “psychological time” impact by evaluating the following decidedly human considerations:

1. Duration of options;
2. Temporal decision making;
3. Time between having made a decision and experiencing the consequences of that decision
4. Temporal perspective of decision makers, and
5. Duration of the decision process.



In developing “COA Comparison – Cloud vs. On Premise Solutions,” the team, due to physical separation and isolation came to appreciate individual and collective nuances of psychological time – along with the challenge of physical (chronological) time - while preparing their Tech Refresh recommendation to the military division’s management.

### 1.) Duration of Options

**Klapproth:** “...people ignore or severely underweight the duration of consequences (“ duration neglect”) ...evaluation of experience (based primarily on the intensities of the experiences, rather than on the durations of the experiences...” events into classes of desirable and nondesirable objects, and their duration is often a separate factor that can be considered later (at the choice stage). In the case of making choices, however, the role of duration should be very different. When choosing, it would be a mistake not to take duration into account, since this could cause a wrong allocation of time to different activities...”

**COA Team Behavior:** “We have to account for how much time and effort each of these infra Tech Refresh COAs would ultimately take, especially since they would have to be implemented while we are negotiating and deploying licensing.” That was the goal of the PM. As requested, EN delivered their initial review of the known military branch Cloud offerings and what they felt could be leveraged, from an Engineering and Cybersecurity perspective. Two of the COAs were specific to the larger “general” network; another COA would, through a propriety cloud, address end points on a developing “secure” network. Their “white paper” was sent to the PM, copying the PL, on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

The PL felt the approximately 15 page document had many interesting observations. It wasn’t nearly as bad as a paper returned to him in college, with scribbled notes from the professor: “Lots’s of details here, Mr. PL. Too many, in fact, of an unstructured nature. Themes underdeveloped and conclusions barely listed or explained. You are lucky to receive this grade. I suggest in the future, you don’t waste any more of my time. See me during office hours... if you must.” The PM supported the idea of the PL developing a weighted Options Comparison Matrix. At the next weekly meeting in early January, together, the team discussed the criteria and agreed on the standard comparative attributes at the next weekly staff meeting. He reviewed the spreadsheet separately with the PM. They planned to review the format with limited available content with EN as soon as possible.





The PM was steadfast that she needed something soon to show senior management.

## 2.) Temporal Decision Making

**Klapproth:** "... a special case of choices made between alternatives differing in duration... the best alternative is usually one that is evaluated as being most pleasant or as having the highest utility. However, decisions are conceivable where people do not care about the pleasantness or the utility... but on duration as the only relevant attribute..."

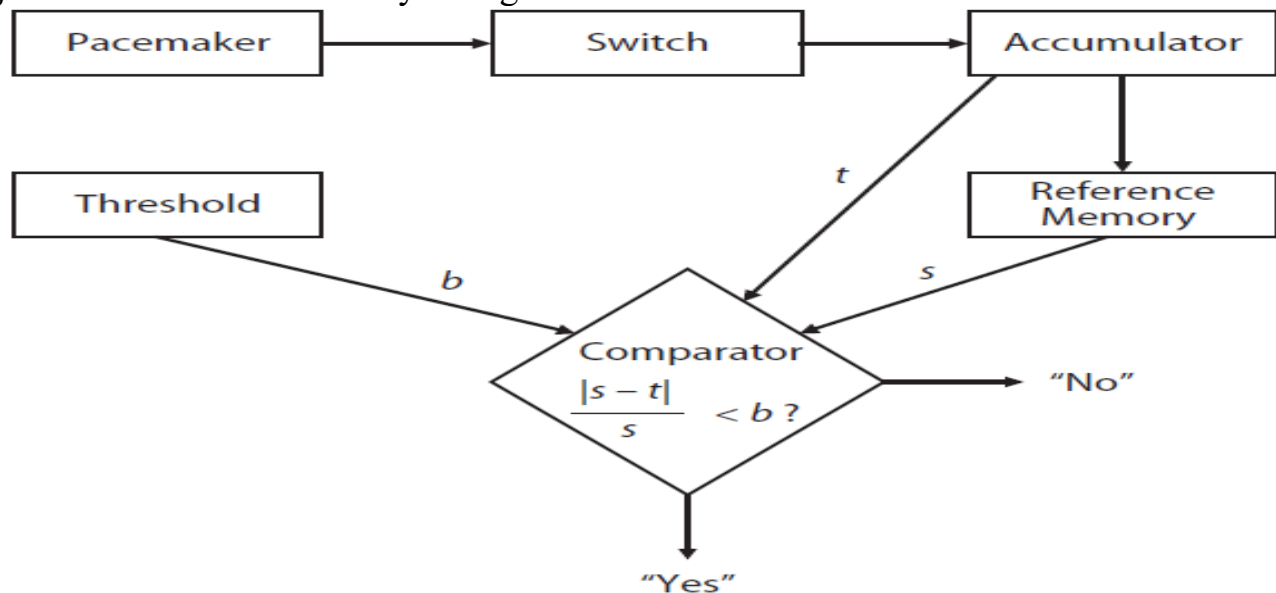
**COA Team Behavior:** The PL continually advised the PM: "You should have something in hand that you can explain and build on. Your boss could call or tap you on the shoulder at any time and ask, "So, what's going on with my request to look at Cloud Options for End Point Security Tech Refresh?""

A trust issue had been operating between the new Program Management and Engineering but, with the PM's leadership, was quickly dissipating. For about two years the EN lead had been working on the data to support the eventual December 9<sup>th</sup> proposal with a previous PL (who had recently transferred). The new civilian PM was taking over for a military PM, a network professional who had successfully shepherded the program. "The Captain" had shielded EN, preferring they direct their attention strictly to Engineering. The previous PL, worked closely with EN on operational details while helping EN list costs that they had used for their original proposal. The Captain was moving to active duty soon after the previous PL had already transferred to a new contracting position. EN had originally projected a sense to the new PM and PL that they might not be in this position under the old Program Management regime. The new PL, in particular, sensed that the prior PL had engendered such support within EN it would be hard for him to be accepted or productive. But given the new time constraint, none of these emotions could be allowed to matter. They managed to band together to get the job done; they all needed the approved COA, for different reasons.

**Klapproth:** "Scalar Timing Theory... assumes 1) Estimates of real duration are, on average, accurate, and 2) Deviations grow proportionately with the mean time of estimate..." Three levels for the processing of temporal information: Highest level is the *Clock* level, consisting of a pacemaker / accumulator device; the *Pacemaker* generates pulses that are recorded, added by the accumulator, and transferred into memory; and the *Decision Level* where <comparisons are> made between a sample of the standard drawn from memory and the duration of a comparison stimulus represented in the accumulator."



**COA Team Behavior:** Unwittingly, it seemed later to the PL – the team followed this model in process in their evaluations. What was interesting, too, was that the Scalar Timing Theory, itself, resembled commercial Information Processing in the treatment of memory. Computer programs, developed by humans, often store reference data to optimize processing. This – apparently – is consistent with animal behavior, conducted in the rats and pigeons with previous analysis of this kind. This relationship is seen below in F. Klapproth’s adaptation of a 1994 study in a journal of the American Psychological Association:



**Figure 2. An information-processing model of scalar timing. The clock consists of a pacemaker, a switch, and an accumulator. The value in the accumulator ( $t$ ) is compared with a sample of a value in the reference memory ( $s$ ) according to a ratio rule on the basis of a sampled threshold value ( $b$ ). The output of the comparison is a decision indicating either perceived sameness (“yes”) or difference (“no”) of two presented intervals. From “Application of Scalar Timing Theory to Individual Trials,” by R. M. Church, W. H. Meck, and J. Gibbon, 1994, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*, 20, p. 136. Copyright 1994 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted**

3.) Time between having made a decision and experiencing the consequences of that decision

**Klapproth:** “Delay discounting means that rewards that will be delivered in the far future will be devalued more than rewards that will be delivered in the near future.”

**COA Team Behavior:** Only the team’s PM had direct contact to Division Program Management. It was difficult to know just how “strategic” a long term decision going to the Cloud might be perceived. Would the division heads of



PM – or EN – invest more money, or assume more risk, for the perceived benefits of having a single, comprehensive contract to manage? Operations could be centralized, characterized more by general over technical management replacing all of those iterative decisions involved in managing IT on one’s own. The PL had managed outsourcing contracts before and had witnessed, firsthand, all of the endless managerial discussions – cost reduction vs. flexibility – being the most prevalent topic, the ultimate fixation point. EN would likely argue for control and emphasize the “hidden” long term costs, having to write more and more checks just to keep things running right or to accomplish almost anything new. The PL thought about this when designing the matrix, that he shared first with the PM before daring to share with EN. He knew they would have to get their buy-in on the criteria, in the left column, and the attributes, pointed at 90 degrees to save visual space but suggesting an ease of escape – it could be made to jump or be pulled, vertically, right off the page if enough reviewers said – “Nah, that’s not worth comparing.”

The PL, using Excel, before getting to the meat of the matter, listed the “Requirements” on the 1<sup>st</sup> sheet - the number of end point computers to be served (at least 750,000) and dates when all those devices would no longer be “sustained.” The dates, at 1<sup>st</sup> glance, seemed far enough off but you had to consider the approval process, the procurement and delivery cycle, lab testing, scheduled phasing in of new machines to run on base network equipment that might fail soon at certain sites in production. EN, of course, would be responsible for doing all that work once the “Tech Refresh” was approved. They were already asking the PM for the dollars to fix those problematic switches and routers. She was looking through maintenance budgets to find the money. So, the PL had that in mind when he listed “Assumptions” which included these lead times. He felt that EN had already wanted to be moving on their “on premise” solution; instead, they were now waiting on a new evaluation of weighted criteria designed to support flexible options with a management presentation.

The meat of the matrix was in the next “Data” sheet. The previous PL had provided server and network equipment costs by site which was fine for supporting the original proposal. But since the “White Paper” broke down Cloud options by Network – General and Secret – the current PL had to extract and sort the site data to have it roll-up properly across succeeding sheets for comparison purposes. There were placeholders added for the team, EN basically, to provide “Operational Impact” and Security observations that



might serve as basis for scoring one solutions impact vs. another. The resulting “Data Summary” sheet was what could be the basis for the PM’s eventual Power Point presentation. The criteria were summarized on the left.” On the top were each of the possible COAs – the existing Production Server platform, the Network Supplier’s Proprietary Server platform (the subject of the December proposal), then individual Cloud Options – the 1<sup>st</sup> two were for the “General” Network, the network vendors server as a hosted Platform as a Service, another having it run through a Cloud Program developed and managed by the military branch. The third Cloud option – for the Secret network – involved vitalizing the Network provider’s hardware platform on another government cloud platform.

Each COA had only two attributes – “General” and “Secret” - underneath it. The PM had wanted it this way. It supported a “Chinese menu” approach – if management ultimately wanted to mix and match any cloud with either of the two on premise solutions – by military branch network – than the costs of the sub-criteria could be more easily seen. It would demonstrate differences in “Deployment and Sustainment Costs” by an individual COA or hybrid approach. She felt that short term costs would be most important factor. The PL, again, had no idea whether any strategic value of investing in the Cloud would be a factor, but, the PM, in her many dealings with senior managers on so many other matters, certainly did. The cost of the COA would likely be the key driver. It was why other COAs would be added, in the weeks ahead. The Matrix had two more sheets that ultimately were never referenced. On a separate sheet, the PL had wanted to have the COA Comparison Team weigh the COAs and allow management to override the score by providing whatever percentage of importance they might consider each of the main criteria. This lead to another sheet where the final weighted scores would be displayed and a recommendation could be described.

But that would not be necessary. Over the few weeks the matrix was developed, a bias, in discussion, had emerged. It would be less about the long term utility of a strategic platform and more about arriving at a decision on which solution was most practical, given other immediate constraints. This became more evident when the PM and the PL presented the Matrix to EN for discussion as EN really hadn’t had an opportunity to agree on the criteria, yet. That conference call had crickets looming over the voice switch, as the PM tried to describe the PL’s spreadsheet. Finally, one of the EN’s said, “Ya know, I hope you can appreciate... We’re just not used to looking at this kind of... tool.” After the meeting, the PM and the PL debriefed and concluded that they had



been a bit unfair in presentation. EN, after all, had day jobs supporting the engineering of servers and networks for two government programs. The PL said “let the Engineers be Engineers.” The PM said EN should focus on their existing methods. The WP and subsequent input had already helped the PM and PL focus on what they believed would be needed to get a decision from management. The PL sent EN a detailed questionnaire to extract expertise which they promptly responded to. The PM could use this input in the presentation, if she chose to.

The PM’s focus turned to costing each of the COAs. The December presentation had been based on 2019 data. It was all right for comparative purposes, but, it, ultimately, would require updated cost estimates for the Acquisition Process, anyway. The PM directed the PL to contact the division’s Financial Management (FM) group. Maybe they could help to model these COAs against each other. That wasn’t necessarily their job. Like the rest of the core groups, they usually got involved *after* the COA had been determined. But, maybe, they’d get lucky. Maybe FM would step up.

#### 4.) Temporal perspective of decision makers

**Klapproth:** “I furthermore suggest assessing the subject’s time perspective through the evaluation of personal events that they expect to occur in several successive years. Evaluation can be done regarding the vividness and richness of reported events.”

**COA Team Behavior:** The PL contacted the FM who immediately took an interest in evaluating the different COAs. The FM was a senior member of the group who assigned herself because the previous assignee to the program had transitioned away. She seemed to genuinely like the challenge of comparing all of these options. The PM and the PL were fortunate... and they freely took advantage. Over several weeks, the PM and PL reviewed new pricing for each of the equipment items as well as the Cloud contracts. FM had a new analyst who immediately helped with the daily back and forth. What FM brought to the analysis was something a PL couldn’t provide by looking up pricing on GSA or in coming up with a fancy spreadsheet. They had built in algorithms in their models that revealed Sustainment costs – the “successive years.” That immediately aided in devaluing many of the options.

They also got lucky by weekly meetings that the PL privately thought of as the “Brett and Vick Show.” The division head of Program Management had offered up





senior staffers who “had some cycles” to help a new PM and PL who were new to the division as well as important details of the Acquisition process. (This sudden availability was, of course, probably news to Brett and Vick, but, they seemed genuinely interested in helping the PM.) They would sit and listen to the PM who was relaying what was going on in pursuit of the new license contract as well as getting a presentation ready to senior PM and EN management on the Tech Refresh COAs. The PL was quiet during these meetings. He occasionally had minor actions to follow-up on, of course, but mostly he just marveled at how Brett and Vick so deftly put the PM’s mind at ease. After each meeting, Vick, a senior scheduler, would fire off a PDF with a new MS Project Gantt chart. Each new line with bold milestone diamonds seemed to say, “See, this is no big deal – we do this all the time.” And Brett – he was amazing. To the PL, he sounded like he had sprung forth from a Merle Haggard song, spewing decades of folksy familiarity with all flavors of acquisition. “Well, ya know, Ms. PM, this kinda reminds me of the time back in 2007 when I had to do x, y and z in situation a, b or c!” The PL imagined Brett, whittling on his back porch, during these calls. But, Brett clearly demonstrated some important factors – the PM should separate the licensing from the Tech Refresh, in her mind. Most importantly, depending on the selected COA, you might not have to revisit the government’s lengthy EN approval process. You might just be able to get by with the original SOW from years earlier, depending on what had to change in production. Hearing the possibility of that simpler result hit the PL right between the eyes.

The PM had referred to these “Weekly Acquisition Process Meetings” as “Surge Support,” a phrase she had apparently lifted from her boss. The PL laughed to himself when he first heard this, given his decades of work in the private sector. He was learning a key difference, though. When something is important enough, the government will do everything it can to prevent you from failing. When he first learned of these meetings he had been disappointed, thinking, like his early dealings with EN, he wasn’t being trusted somehow. But he also remembered times, at demanding companies in different unfair positions, holding his cardboard box with empty “Sorrys” in his ears. The only “surge” to worry about then was the velocity of the screen door hitting his backside. In contrast, if the government knows you are “all in” they just might look out for you. The PL was grateful but he knew these meetings might not last. If so, he’d miss the “Brett and Vick Show.” The PM was ready. She set the date of March 4<sup>th</sup> for the COA Comparison presentation to the Division PM Lead and the Head of EN. She did what you have to do. Even though you know you’re not 100% on top of every detail, you have to set the date. The PM started to work on the PowerPoint presentation and reviewed it daily with the PL, getting his feedback. Soon, they shared and refined it with EN while all reviewed aspects of each COA. These management presentations are





usually all the same. Sort of like lawyers in open court, you have to be ready to react to each and every possible question.

### 5.) Duration of the decision process

**Klapproth:** “The effect of time pressure on decision making is ambivalent, leading to both negative and positive consequences, depending on how many cognitive resources are still available for making “good” decisions. The instant at which a decision is finally made is determined by both the amount of information gathered during the decision-making process and an internal timing mechanism that triggers the response.”

**COA Team Behavior:** After the date for the management presentation was set, the PL was becoming uneasy. It wasn't the idea of the presentation. He'd given many before. The PM was giving this one herself. Everyone else's job was just to get her ready for it. There were two main issues – the Cloud Options had uncertainty. Because of the nature of the networks, they relied on high security levels that most could not meet, just yet. The PL was watching the e-mails and seeing that the PM was having EN look at variations of even new Cloud options. That went entirely against the PL's instincts: we instead should be locking in on the Cloud options we have already, he thought, defending and explaining each against the other.

And the “on premise” server options had blemishes. The server option from the network software company was a sort of “closed appliance.” Their option was to have the government modify its risk management process to get their appliance to run with its software. That seemed crazy to the PL. All government programs have to follow strict Security guidelines. Each program has highly skilled people just to deal with these central requirements. After sitting through a few of these security meetings, the PL asked the PM, “Why are we jumping through hoops for these guys? Despite the events of January 6<sup>th</sup>, we are still the cash cow, best game in town! Why are we letting them lower their Total Cost of Ownership at our expense?” But the PM had so many things to consider. Excusing herself to attend another meeting, she agreed with a lot of what he was saying, but, still, this COA had a similarity with all the others, as they got closer to the presentation – it wasn't a clear winner, and, it wasn't a clear loser. And the services through the network software company were outstanding, while expensive. The PM had been in so many meetings that the PL wasn't even invited to. Without EN experience herself, she believed she might soon be justifying Mozart against a Salieri or two for military branch leadership. She'd have to deal with all of this during licensing discussions. But first, she needed this Tech Refresh COA in hand.



The other “on premise” server option was Dell Computers, who, along with Cisco, represented the infrastructure platform for the program from the beginning. But Dell, and its EOSL, was the principle reason for the Tech Refresh in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, wasn’t it? As hardware ages, the vendors usually can’t guarantee support. They generally keep track of this life cycle by the “Shipping Date,” the computers birthday with the customer. This makes sense, of course. Nothing physical lasts forever... but do you need it to?

One option that the PL and EN had brought up with the PM, later discussed at the Brett and Vick Show, was combining a new maintenance agreement on the Dell Servers with field upgrades to the Cisco equipment. The network equipment needed to be replaced soon, regardless. It was a long shot. The assumption had always been that Dell would never go for it. You could never justify any solution, particularly on networks as significant as these, without knowing you could continue to get hot fixes and firmware upgrades to servers with the same SLAs you currently had in place. But it became the seventh (the list had grown) and least likely COA. “New Server Maintenance and Network Equipment Upgrade / Replacement” held a quiet place on different slides in the PowerPoint presentation as the PM and EN continued to review technical details on the Cloud options.

Why was the combination of server maintenance / network upgrade an important consideration? It would allow the various Cloud options to evolve; they were in the oven but they weren’t quite ready. Yes... it would buy Time. The PL had learned the strategic planning lesson, years earlier – doing nothing or just keeping the current course – if at all possible – was always a viable option. So he spent days before the presentation on e-mail and on the phone with the program’s assigned Logistics and Asset Management contact, going over the shipping dates on the server inventory. The PL asked for a quote from Dell. When it came back, it reflected reduced maintenance at a low price. That wouldn’t do. So, the PL and Logistics discussed it. “Ronny, please go back and ask Dell for an extension of current support on existing servers for whatever term they possibly can.”

The PM reviewed the PowerPoint presentation with the team at the general weekly meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. She was hoping to get a recommendation she could use. The PL got that sinking feeling again; it just hadn’t come together. Neither On Premise COA looked good. Dell maintenance to date had fallen short. Integration issues with the network provider’s “appliance” had emerged after the December proposal. It hadn’t been EN’s fault; the security complications revealed later on had proven to be a blessing in that they hadn’t already committed. But that didn’t matter. Each of the Cloud options had issues ranging from exorbitant cost,



excessive time to implement and inability to guarantee minimum security levels required for a broad installation of that type. “Due Diligence” was mentioned. “Due Diligence” wouldn’t have worked at places the PL had worked. Within 48 hours he expected to possibly hear– “You people had two and a half months, and *this* is the best you came up with?” The PL had learned long ago that the closer you got to C-level, the less reasonable managers were likely to be. Knowing that was what gave you that edge, that healthy smell of fear that keeps you ever looping back for something better.

What was worse is that he knew they had let the PM down. It didn’t matter that it was difficult. It was what he had signed up for. Leaving the team meeting with EN where everyone acknowledged they had done their best, the PL wondered what he could possibly say to the PM the next time she called. They were leaving her exposed... But he had felt that way before.

Earlier in his career, before he became a project manager, he was in charge of Applications Release and Change Management for a Wall Street firm. In those days, “Chaos and Complexity Theory” as it applied to business was becoming all the rage. Simple systems can become complex, suddenly rendering dangerous interdependencies. A popular analogy was of a butterfly flapping its wings in California possibly adding to a hurricane in the Gulf. One day at the data center in Princeton, NJ, the Managing Director (MD) was screaming, “PL! PL! Get into my office... Now!” Arriving from his cubicle, he found the manager, standing, leaning against his desk. “I just spoke with the head of Fixed Income. He says their core trading app crapped out and he’s been on the phone with customers all day, pleading, to make sure they just don’t cross the street to Goldman Sacks! What the hell happened?”

The PL explained that, on the surface, Fixed Income developers had overlooked results from regression testing before unilaterally releasing their own code to production. What he didn’t say, which would have sounded like an excuse, was that the MD had sent the PL to midtown months earlier to try to get Fixed Income under control. The MD would look good if the same controls the data center had successfully set-up and enjoyed on the IBM mainframe could be realized back up in NYC. The PL had designed the chain of approvals and accountability through customizable COTS software and had applied it to mostly high volume back office applications. What the MD and the PL both knew was that the Equities and Fixed Income teams had abandoned the mainframe for “more flexibility” with Sun Microsystems. There was “unexpected order” that would arise unless both theories worked in a framework, which they were far from adopting. The PL didn’t say that though, he didn’t say he felt that objectives to date had been, at best,



“aspirational.” Instead he rattled off some statistics on success with releases increasing on the Sun Platform since he had been asked to commute to midtown twice a week to manage meetings. The PL fell short of apologizing. The MD said, “Well, part of your job is to make sure I don’t get a phone call like that again.”

“Yes, sir,” the PL said, leaving the glass corner office, muttering “Damn butterflies,” under his breath. The PL had never spoken to the military division’s Program or EN leads but, given where they suddenly found themselves, he was expecting the worse. Just then, the PL’s cell phone rang.

#### Agreement on COA Recommendation:

**Klapproth:** *“Intertemporal choices are decisions in everyday life that involve selecting between outcomes available at different times in the future... It requires the integration of information about reward size and time delay...”*

**COA Team Behavior:** “PL, this is Ronny... you had said you wanted me to call you as soon as I got the new quote from Dell...” The mood of all at the weekly team meeting would eventually be lifted after the PL called the PM and merged in Ronny. They quickly reviewed the One Year Renewal and the Option Years. It all seemed to line up. The back end options were terrible, systems would drop, but they wouldn’t need that much time to phase in any one of the developing Cloud Options or even deploy new servers, eventually, as a contingency.

“This is a game changer,” the PM said. She e-mailed the team’s EN lead. After a few e-mails, back and forth, it was settled. Maintenance and Cisco Equipment went from the 7<sup>th</sup> best option – an afterthought – to the recommended solution, saving around two million dollars, considering labor, in the short term over the next, least expensive COA. And the Cloud could remain as a longer term strategic direction. The PM finished the revised PowerPoint slide deck and mailed it out to everyone – the senior managers and the team – the next morning for the presentation, the following afternoon. The EN lead, via e-mail, copying everyone, even thanked the PL for following through with Dell and Logistics. That shocked but certainly gratified the PL.

#### Presentation and Management Decision:

It didn’t start well. The Division Head for EN couldn’t make the meeting which meant that to get what she wanted – firm direction on a COA – the PM had to “wow” the Division Program Manager. She’d much prefer to get all of the questions – including senior EN – answered right then and there. When she started speaking during the Teams session, her screen froze during perfunctory lead in comments. The PL thought of texting her but didn’t want to distract her. Finally,



the Division lead said, “Maybe it’s just me but I’m only seeing the 1<sup>st</sup> slide.” Then others chimed in, in downplaying fashion, “Yes, that’s the case with me, too, Ms. PM, maybe if you detach the PowerPoint you might... ah, great, now I see the next slide!”

The PM adroitly went from slide to slide. The PL, who had never been in a meeting with the Division Lead before, was really only taking notes on what was saying. He noticed that the Division Lead asked about the network vendor’s hardware “appliance” integration issues. The PM built to the key slide – a detailed colored mapping of features against each COA. The only COAs that were entirely green were Dell Maintenance / Cisco Replacement, or, Dell Replacement / Cisco Replacement. All others had either some yellow or red. The “Dell Maintenance” COA was the least expensive and the servers already worked in Production. Moving to any future solution down the line would create the least resistance. It won the day. The Division Lead thanked the team for the thorough analysis and he personally would follow up with EN leadership. The PM said it had been a team effort, thanking all graciously. The EN team lead – doing his job - pointed out to the Division Lead that his team was well positioned to support any future Cloud COAs because many had been certified in this technology at a nearby branch of the state university. The PL smiled for he was sitting – alone – in his loft on the oldest street in that same university town that the EN lead was referring to. It occurred to the PL that no one, except the PM, would have known that.

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, after following up on necessary details with the PL and many others, the PM officially requested the money to support “COA #1” through a “Funding Document Request” (an Acquisitions term). The “Die Were Cast,” to quote the ancient General, just before he crossed that river.

### Lessons Learned

#### **Project Manager’s Observations:** Courses of Action (COAs) – On Premise vs. Cloud for Computer Security

This effort demonstrated aspects of portfolio and project management. COA selection could be viewed strictly as a portfolio management concern. Externally, the COA is required to determine whether one distinct project – deployment using on premise devices should be pursued vs. another distinct project – deployment using the Cloud. The technology, in this view, determines its nature thereby labeling it an “infrastructure project.” This is pursued because the methods of planning and execution (utilizing either Agile or Waterfall methodology), the features for providing the eventual product – end point security – are so different that organizations often prefer to classify them separately. A technology consideration, EOSL, had been the driver, however, the differences in the possible





approaches – and different evolving features which had preoccupied the team – often eclipsed the original reason.

Others would say that's not true. COAs are merely a demonstration of the translation from Requirements to Design, once the Scope of the effort has been agreed upon. In this sense, "End Point Security Modernization" is the project. The COA selection, then, is merely an activity or phase with this particular infrastructure or "modernization" Project within a Program.

The key consideration may be is the effort voidable, subject to elimination, as one of many possible projects the PMO for the program – or the Division – could chose to do. For a program, a "Matrix" could be used to determine if a given project should be done at all. That was not the case here. A "matrix" was intended to help determine *how* to complete the work. End Point Security would always foundational objective, to help support the military branch's mission.

This distinction is important because if the effort is in fact a project then it's continually viewed within the context of the triple constraint – Scope, Cost and Time Management. Cost became more of a consideration when the Scope of the effort narrowed. Essentially, achieving clear cut minimization of Cost allowed Scope to exit gracefully in significance; the Cloud would be a future initiative. How that future project would be classified and managed would be left for another day and maybe an entirely new team or hierarchy to plan and execute.

But this team had done its job.

Given the assumptions and the perceived constraints, at early stages, and, especially due to conditions "Time" became the most interesting aspect, for this PL. Negative conditions – a new PM and PL, a perceived inability by EN to secure completion of a key phase in the Acquisition process, approval of direction, overall dissatisfaction with the cost of the program hanging over their efforts – suggested the need for a heightened awareness of interpersonal communications, attention to responsiveness and behavior. The team had to spend time acquiring knowledge about each other as they tried to understand new ways of looking at the challenge. Their thoughts and senses were affected. They had to imagine, for example what each other even looked like. A slight remark under stress might be misunderstood as disparaging. They would take mental images of each other, try to imagine who the person speaking reminded them of from their past. Most importantly, unfamiliarity might deteriorate into distrust as they tried to weigh and discuss different details, important things they absolutely needed each other for in order to achieve mutual success.

With COVID-19, "Time" melded as everyone worked remotely in completing the COA selection. But they succeeded largely as a series of conditioned responses; each had worked on matters far more difficult than this in their respective careers... It just didn't always seem that way.





They succeeded almost via muscle memory and exhibited professionalism. But it was all just for the opportunity – perhaps – to do it again, one day, once those maintenance agreements started to run out and different opportunities for “modernization” came to challenge again. Maybe it will be easier once they all meet. Then someone is bound to say “it seemed to last so long.” To the PL, at least, it was different, more like one of the physicist’s experiments –Once isolated, to the individual, “Time” can expand or contract... all on its own.

### **The President, the Poet and the Great Man**

When the PL thinks of that ceremony on May 30, 1922, based on his recent experience, the first person he thinks of is Warren G. Harding. Young students, who can recite that he was the 29<sup>th</sup> president, between Wilson and Coolidge, may get credit without knowing too much about him. They probably won’t realize that he and his “return to normalcy” were quite popular before his sudden passing. What’s significant is that no person achieves a station of importance, like the nation’s highest political office, without having made many bold choices along the way. Before many dignitaries, including the Great Man’s son, the President accepted the completed memorial on behalf of the American people. A thought could have crossed Harding’s mind while listening to Markham’s eloquent words about the 16<sup>th</sup> president. Maybe, just maybe, the nation might honor his memory someday in some way, too. It didn’t work out that way to that degree. But that might just reinforce that we are all just agents of consequence, reacting and behaving, always adjusting as best we can. But along the way, Mr. Harding was certainly not timid about walking towards countless doors. If he were he would not have even been there so ready, as he was, to heap praise upon the former leader who “rose to colossal stature in a day of imperiled union.”

On that spring day, Edward Markham read his poem from a collection he had actually written several years earlier, in 1901. His famous observation on choices also came towards the middle of his life as did “The Man with the Hoe,” likely his most famous work published in 1899. Mr. Markham was the youngest of 10 children and traveled extensively. He was named one of the most important artists, of his time, on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. His chronological life almost equally spanned two centuries, having been born in Oregon in 1852 and passing away in 1940, in New York City. But his recitation before the new Memorial was timeless, many said.

And what of the object of all the attention that day? When the PL thinks of Abraham Lincoln he remembers a verse from the poem that he had learned in grade school. The poet’s words came from 1838 when Lincoln, shortly after passing the bar and moving to Springfield, had just started a second of four terms in the Illinois legislature:



“Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;”

“Psalm of Life” is by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Mr. Longfellow while at Harvard had been studying the work of a giant in western thought, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Longfellow, it is said, wrote this poem, partially, to snap himself out of depression at having just lost his first wife. It was published anonymously.

So, what do poets from either end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – and a particular celebration, a later point in time – have to do with Security in the US Military? Perhaps nothing. Perhaps everything.

To understand the theme of this paper – a specific attempt to evaluate choices influenced by different interpretations of Time – the PL asks that you consider Mr. Lincoln, and, what his indelible image, one that many of us have been fortunate enough to visit, might suggest.

The PL imagines if the architect and the sculptor had chosen differently, Mr. Lincoln’s chin would have been lifted so that he could more easily see the pool before him. In difficult times, he might be able to sense the sound and fury. With not the slightest breeze in his temple or a single pebble dropped, he could witness the slightest trace of movement in the water. It is best for us – and for him – that his countenance, instead, is pointed down. He looks upon us, his face displaying wisdom born of profound responsibility and pain, demanding not just our respect but our accountability, as well.

Mr. Lincoln seemed to already know that all great empires so often fall for two reasons – internal degeneration and decay, and, external threat. He personally had experienced the nightmare, the walking shadows of the former, but his self study and his courage had emboldened him to realize that the United States would forever be well armed in its soul to combat the latter. Abraham Lincoln could attest that, despite our many problems, our essential gifts, due to the nature of our origin, was we would be a nation to be heard from, always. The PL believes that Mr. Lincoln understood the continuum. He had read of educated predecessors like Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Franklin and Adams who would not let the Atlantic Ocean separate them from Locke, Hume, Rosseau, Kant, Smith and so many others. Lincoln studied himself what these colonists and early founders of the republic had learned.



Mr. Lincoln knew of the deal struck by the great first Secretaries – one who brilliantly translated the Age of Reason into a foundational document; the other who defended our central governance while creating an economic framework that survived him and become the envy of the civilized world. . The Secretaries, themselves, never truly agreed on the new country’s Mission Statement, but they compromised anyway. The deal they struck – whether it was in a room or in an eye ball to eye ball discussion on a street corner in lower Manhattan – led to the formation of a city where compromise now seems to be absent. Mr. Lincoln, now nested deep in the continuum would likely make note of this irony, this greatest of internal threats.

But the PL suspects that Mr. Lincoln knew how difficult it could ever be for America to ever really become a tragedy. The recorder of that last syllable should be feared, no doubt, making us ever mindful not to take compassion and mercy for granted; we should always have an keen eye on judgment, even if it is entirely our own. Mr. Lincoln knew that, over “Time”, as an emerging nation – still – America has demonstrated that it can always and will always learn more. Those from the Old and New in the Western World would be forever joined, never separated by a mere body of water. Other bodies of water, too, would be crossed soon and would be invited as well. Mr. Lincoln fought so hard for the idea, the dream of democracy and self government. America would always have within its power to be a beacon, a testament to strength through diversity, an idea as well as place. If we just keep moving our individual and collective hearts can and will relinquish our fears, the festering hatred, we can stop fretting and strutting, shake the chains we once placed upon others and remain upon us all. Yes, Mr. Lincoln, as he gazes down upon us, from his perch in that temple, is pleading with us to please, please – stop the madness, not only tolerate... but inspire one another! Use the government to continually plan, implement, and improve upon iterative choices, avoiding discord in defending large untraceable monolithic barriers. The government should work as hard and strive to be as good as its people, eager in the process of life to seize each and every day.

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

Members of the US Military have to respect “the hinge.” Their training often requires they not be reflective in execution. Their choices are instantaneous; an immediate result – a destiny – can exact loss of life. We need them to be this way and they accept the enormity of this responsibility in order to protect us. Brave young men and women lift all those weights and run all those miles to prepare. They tolerate listening to orders from superiors whose faces they might privately prefer to reach out and squish with one able warrior’s hand. But they don’t; they know their mission. And, what is the conditioned response from the rest us in



return? What is our behavior? The humble opinion of this PL is that each of us has to make a commitment to improve in whatever we endeavor to do. That's all. As the warriors serve to repel any extremes of external threat, we have the ability to see our internal problems, our shortcomings. We need to respond, to try to meet them halfway. It's only fair that we commit ourselves to this Course of Action – this critical COA, isn't it?

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

Every system has byproducts and what we now see around us is the excruciating result of conflict, as old as our republic, between individual liberty and a desire to promote “general welfare.” Lipsey and Lancaster might say either side of this equation is historically hard to define. Klapproth would likely contribute that anything ambitious we might try to do is so fraught with nuances of human development that it, too, is hard to build any kind of collective consensus as to what to do. We are compelled to always look inward, to find the wires of our impulses.

So, what can we possibly do amidst our pain and inability to agree? We hear of “possibilities” and they ring hollow. We know we have institutional sins but the horrors of them continue. We sense that we as individuals and we as a society might do so much better but we are frustrated as to take a productive next step. The ice caps are melting, you still are still hesitant to drink the public water, and, the head of our public safety is “scared” for us because we just won't listen.

So what might we do? Compete, America, says this PL. We compete... and we commit to winning. Because the process of competing vets out unwanted features that might corrupt or derail us. We should welcome this challenge, as we always have before. It doesn't matter whether you shower before your daily work or afterwards if you keep in your mind that that there is someone somewhere in one distant autocratic corner of this planet who thinks he or she is better than you at the exact same thing as you. Are you settling for that? This PL didn't think so.

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

In Anchorage, Alaska, recently, a gauntlet of sorts was thrown down. A milestone – a project management convention – of 2035 for a global economic change in leadership was suggested. Another world power has suggested this because they feel American ways, methods, our resolve may be weakening.

Maybe they are right. In the last century we already saw what happens when autocracies deteriorate into totalitarianism. Poor Snowball had to scamper into isolation, far from Napoleon and the farm. But what of democracies, especially the



planet's leading one? What are the markers of internal deterioration? Is that what we are seeing before our eyes in the news? Is our currently inefficient and ineffectual central government unable to respond in time to the horrors that persist unabated on the horizon? Is it our time to fail, collapse upon ourselves, spiral into decline?

No, says this PL, no. We reject that notion! We respond and prepare to say before the world: We are the United States of America. We still believe *our* options are limitless and *our* destiny is forever manifest. Why? Because we believe freedom combined with talent and resolve always prevails. What's more we acknowledge that we are prepared not only to participate in this competition but to lead, if allowed.

It's nothing personal. Thanks to the US Military which has our backs for any egregious external threats we can circle our internal wagons and respond. We might even learn some things in this competition with other global players who have a far different view on governance. In the process we might remember that the mother's of Napoleon and Snowball loved them too. However, we have to maintain global economic leadership by 2035 to validate democracy over autocracy and to set the tone of discourse going forward.

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

We acknowledge our failings and chart individual and collective paths towards salvation. We stop the puerile nonsense in our personal and collective chambers, establish careful measures for each step, and, remain accountable. Measure and optimize, always sharing with a calculating and honest and introspective eye...Why? Because if don't we may risk all that has been built and much of what we hold dear.

Carpe Diem, America. Carpe Diem.

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

We will remember that we are just people, prone to mistakes. It does not matter if a favorite past or present leader was or is on one political side or the other. We recognize that we are all complex beings, we often succeed or fail to the degree that we have been nurtured. We look to ever child and ask what will they say of this, our behavior that we can control, if we miss this calling? What patience will we show for what has been hidden under the surface so long with ourselves and with others? We should stop criticizing unfortunate systemic output, however, painful, directed against each other – internally and on the world stage. We will seek to grow and understand, always, that we share the human condition, good and



bad. We will endeavor to forgive each other and resolve to improve and move forward in carefully planned and measured fashion... always.  
Carpe Diem, America. Carpe Diem.

### **Carpe Diem, America!**

We incorporate everything we have learned and resolve that we are always willing to learn more. We are willing to bend the wave, lengthen the day, the continuum to a new age of Enlightenment – one that combines not only our reason but the fruits of science, technology and the arts. We will recognize every positive output, and, shed, with disdain, any residual, anything that keeps us from our goal of celebrating that freedom is the dominant force in this world and we will never, ever yield. Instead, we will seek to share. For we have already learned, that it is not just our government that had been the envy of this world, but, everything that it has helped to bring us. That is what we defend and will forever prosper from. And we are grateful and assume responsibility in recognizing that the products of our freedom is precisely what we will never, ever, ever allow to “perish from the earth.”

Carpe Diem, America. Carpe Diem.

### **May 30, 2022**

By this date, we may not have a “Five Year Plan.” But, if we react soon, we may not need one because of what Madison, after years of exhaustive study, wrote, Hamilton and Jay helped defend... and Abraham Lincoln preserved. On the hundred year anniversary of the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, this PL knows what he will be doing. He will be driving to Washington, DC. He may say “Carpe Diem” to everyone he speaks to, while getting gas or something to eat. He’ll deal with whatever funny looks that he may get him. Depending on how many others have joined in this secular pilgrimage, he may have to ditch his car, walk the rest of way, and stand in line as long as it takes. When the PL finally stands before that statue he hopes he will say, “Thank you, Mr. Lincoln, for everything you did but for saving our nation and our government, too. Everything else we enjoy, have or can achieve together flows from that. We lose our way at times but we strive to come back to the example you had set for us. Thank you, sir. When you have a chance in the still of night, when no one is around, may you be able to lift that chin and witness still water before you.”

Our freedom and future come at a price. Scope is ever changing but Americans can manage it. The Cost is often more than just our resolve. And soon we will emerge from our latest crises, the water will have receded, and the caked sand will await our steps, daring us to be sublime. Will we walk towards each and every door? Will we? If we chose to open them, will we have the courage to deal with whatever





is on the other side of each... together? Will we be honest with ourselves as to the prejudices and trends in our behavior that have led us to whatever point we arrive at... and resolve to improve? Will we collectively pursue second, third or whatever necessary options – large or small – that are needed to get things just right? Will we make changes, again and again, after we have committed to a structure for agreeing on whatever doors continually need to be opened? This PL has faith but is not sure. However, he does know:

Only “Time” will tell.

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<sup>i</sup> Lipsey, R.G.; Lancaster, Kelvin, “The General Theory of Second Best,” *Review of Economic Studies*, 1956, Vol 24, Issue1: 11-32, DOI:10.2307/22962233, JSTOR, 2296233

<sup>ii</sup> Sasso, Danielle, “Physical Time and Time Clock,” *ResearchGate*, November 2018, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.34432.28163

<sup>iii</sup> Anderson Institute, “Physical Definition of Time,” <https://www.andersoninstitute.com/physical-definition-of-time.html>

<sup>iv</sup> Klapproth, Florian, “Time and decision making in humans,” *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience*, Berlin Institute of Technology, 2008, 8 (4), 509-524, DOI:10.3758/CABN.8.4.509

