

## Visioning, Strategic Planning, and Corporate Evolution

Since the mid-1990s, the United States Air Force has systematically engaged in a range of activities intended to shape its strategic planning to reflect its envisioned future. Two long-range planning processes stemmed from these activities. The most salient outputs of the first of these exercises included a 1996 vision document entitled *Global Engagement* and a 1997 Long-Range Plan, which outlined in detail the future Air Force envisioned for 2025. These documents communicated commitments on the part of the Air Force's senior leaders toward their service's emerging institutional identity and intended future technological capabilities. Together they specified the broad contours of thoroughgoing adjustment of the Air Force's strategic intent.

Soon after the first exercises were completed, nagging doubts arose that long-range visioning and planning would have little effect on the Air Force's actual matching of resources to programmatic commitments. These reservations subsided considerably, however, when the focus on visioning and planning survived the transition in leadership from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald Fogleman—the program's initial champion—to his successor, Gen. Michael Ryan. In the fall of 1998, General Ryan launched a second complete strategic review that resulted in the publication of the vision document *Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power* in June 2000. The U.S. Air Force has thus twice deployed considerable efforts toward corporate strategic planning within a six-year period. By so doing, it appears to have

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established robust visioning and planning as the basis for a stable, if evolving, pattern of decisionmaking. The Air Force has produced two successive waves of corporate strategic planning, both of which were exceptionally intense and sustained.

The long-range planning activities pursued since the mid-1990s represent a departure from the Air Force's routines for visioning and planning in two major respects. First, earlier planning usually focused on the development of technical systems, mostly connected with military operational issues and research and development, and downplayed other dimensions of the organization's technological capability, such as human knowledge and skills, managerial systems, and norms and values.<sup>1</sup> Second, the recent long-range planning activities have opened up issues that were previously regarded as settled matters, in particular whether the core technological capability of the Air Force should continue to be the application of military force by land-based fixed-wing aircraft flown by Air Force pilots.<sup>2</sup> Raising this question brought into open discussion what some participants called gut issues. These struck at the heart of how the Air Force defines itself and its core activities, and they prompted myriad questions associated with long-range adaptation to new opportunities and challenges.

A central facet of these gut issues was whether the Air Force would be abandoning its birthright if it broadened its core technological capability to include greater use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or space-based platforms for weapons and command-and-control systems. Taking the focus off the application of military force by fixed-wing piloted aircraft could conceivably intensify interservice rivalries over what has been the Air Force's turf since 1947. It might also weaken conventional arguments for maintaining four military services, including the Air Force, if space emerges as a separate domain of national defense.

Just as a shift in core technological capabilities could unsettle the division of labor among military services, so too could it upset the status quo within the Air Force itself. Since its creation, the Air Force has construed its core technological capability as applying military force using aircraft flown by highly trained pilots selected from the *crème de la crème* of a large pool of prospective candidates. The resulting bias toward aeronautical acuity reached the highest ranks in the service, such that few "nonrated" airmen become generals, much less gain four stars. Even among pilots, a pecking order operates on the basis of the type of aircraft flown. This reflects the old saw that brain surgeons are the fighter pilots of medicine. That is, pilots who fly fighter jets advance to the upper echelons of the Air Force's leadership

much more frequently than do those who fly bombers or transports. In light of these realities, redefining the core technological capabilities of the Air Force could easily transform career expectations and the internal power structure of the institution.

After deliberating on these matters in the initial round under General Fogleman's guidance, senior leaders agreed to alter the Air Force's technological capabilities. The ratification of this commitment took the form of a "vision" entitled *Global Engagement*. The document identified an array of core competencies, namely, air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority, and agile combat support. It also directly addressed the question of institutional identity: specifically, the document stated the intention to become an Air and Space Force en route to becoming a Space and Air Force.

The subsequent visioning process under General Ryan wrestled with three persistent issues: how to go about reconfiguring programmatic commitments and resources to coincide with intent; how to garner the resources for future programs while keeping personnel and equipment from breaking down as a result of the punishing tempo of activity necessary to meet demand for real-world operations; and whether the terminology of space and air, whatever the order of the words, simply perpetuates separatist views of the two domains.

The sections that follow in this chapter introduce five issues of central importance to this book. Does the Air Force approach to corporate strategic planning since the mid-1990s constitute a dramatic departure from previous efforts? To what degree did the Air Force investment stem from organizational characteristics peculiar to the culture of "bluesuiters"? Granted that other agencies might want to undertake a similar process, what might the case tell us about attempts at innovation in the seriously constricting framework of the U.S. policy arena? How do an agency's leaders go about expanding the horizons for strategic planning to encompass visioning? Finally, once an agency has stretched its planning ambitions toward futuristic projection, what are the steps for implementing strategic visioning in such a way that it actually brings about significant innovation within an organization?

### **The Degree of Departure from Previous Approaches**

Corporate strategic planning, as pursued by the Air Force since the mid-1990s, fits broadly within the spectrum of executive entrepreneurship.<sup>3</sup> It

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emerged at a time in which leaders in government agencies—both political appointees and career officials—had come under the influence of a spirit of reinvention. This movement, which originated in the private sector and was expanded to encompass public service management, sought to foster organizational excellence by encouraging innovation.<sup>4</sup> It received exceptionally strong backing during the Clinton administration through the leadership of the vice president, Al Gore. He masterminded and guided the National Performance Review (NPR) that became the umbrella for the administrative reform movement in the federal government.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding its kinship with the reinvention movement, the Air Force approach clearly went beyond entrepreneurship in a strictly managerial sense. Joel D. Aberbach and Bert A. Rockman assert that NPR focused on efficiency to the almost total exclusion of questions regarding programmatic effectiveness.<sup>6</sup> The distinction boils down to whether government entrepreneurship is limited to producing better goods and services more cheaply or whether it should consider how such goods and services contribute to public goals such as national security. The Air Force woke up one morning in the mid-1990s to the realization that it maintained a lot of programs that contributed little to national security, that things would get worse unless it dramatically shifted resources from activities with poor marginal utility to those showing great promise, and that in any case, it needed a bigger share of the federal budget to fulfill its growing obligations toward national security. This realization led to a process of reinvention that exploded the boundaries of managerial entrepreneurship and took the form of a very robust variant of policy entrepreneurship.<sup>7</sup>

Some readers might find themselves conjecturing that this book seeks primarily to tell the story of policy entrepreneurship on the part of General Fogleman and, perhaps, General Ryan. To be sure, General Fogleman led the ranks in the innovative movement of the mid-1990s. As chief, he enjoyed an excellent position from which to refine and advocate his view of the future. General Ryan is less a futurist by temperament than Fogleman, but he still considered the process of adaptation initiated by Fogleman as a key Air Force commitment. When he took over as chief of staff, he made a point of stating that he—along with the other four-star generals—had embraced the visioning process that resulted in the Air Force's new vision of its future. However, styling this case study as an examination of individual entrepreneurship—Fogleman's and Ryan's—would miss the point.

The case represents an instance in which an initiative pressed forcefully by a key player took on an organizational reality that transcended the

vagaries of personalities. One well-placed and highly regarded respondent whom we interviewed maintains that survival of strategic visioning through the Ryan years provides prima facie evidence of institutionalization on the grounds that “two points define a line.”<sup>8</sup> That statement might seem a bit facile, but we provide abundant evidence in this book that the Air Force’s approach to strategic planning embodies a cultural shift that bespeaks a commitment to vision-based organizational entrepreneurship, rather than just compliance with an order handed down by the person filling the top job at the time.

The Fogleman-led visioning process that culminated in the fall 1996 Corona conference—a session of the tri-annual meeting of all Air Force four-star generals—was based on having first conceptualized important questions of identity and technological capabilities. The process of strategic planning began with the identification of issues. The explicit subject matter even at this early stage was the future of the Air Force, not the future of its technical systems, which stood in marked contrast to past planning efforts. That the focus concerned broad service capabilities rather than narrow technical systems became clear when the sixteen issues were released: they included contentious and potentially intractable matters such as integrating air and space, future space operations, battle management and command-and-control operations, unmanned aerial vehicles, and career patterns. With respect to the latter issue, for example, the 1997 Long-Range Plan affirmed that in the future, “any military or civilian member experienced in the employment and doctrine of air and space power will be considered an operator,” whereas previously only pilots were considered “operators” and all others “support.”

Strictly speaking, the outcome of the Fogleman strategy-formulation process was a declaration of intent, rather than a plan. The 1997 Long-Range Plan defined the desired future in terms of forty-two “end states” to be attained within the time frame of the 2000–25 planning horizon. For instance, integrating air and space involved four end states: education and training in exploitation of air and space assets in an integrated manner, organization of the Air Force for integrated operations, harmonizing air and space assets in a seamless manner, and establishing the Air Force as the leader in stewardship of the space domain. The Long-Range Plan stopped short, however, of specifying the exact paths for reaching these end states.

Clark Murdock, a key civilian player in the planning process, pressed the view that an end state would prove “sufficiently granular to be actionable.” That is, it would make it possible to delineate more or less preferred actions

in the near and mid-term. It would also exert normative force in decision-making processes (such as programming and budgeting) that have a more direct impact on the evolution of the Air Force's technical systems than does long-range planning. Murdock frequently incanted the mantra of Air Force programmers regarding planning: "If it ain't in the program, it ain't." This pithy one-liner became very long-winded indeed in the implementation of the plan—growing more into a book than a single sentence. At the time, however, it captured the determination of many key players to improve the connection between planning and programming.

If one thinks of a plan in terms of a point of origin, a path, and a destination, the 1997 product proved more precise than most plans in its specification of destinations. It was relatively vague, however, on the paths to be traveled from the point of origin to those destinations, especially considering that it was developed by the armed services. Military planners typically thrive on laying out the details of a journey from point A to point B.

The issue of whether the 1997 document actually constitutes a plan may be debatable, but the interviews conducted for this project strongly suggest that the participants in the process believed that they were planning strategically. Rather than engage in a lengthy semantic diversion, we choose here to briefly outline a few of the terms that credibly describe what participants in the Air Force's corporate process thought they were doing. To begin, adjoining *strategic* to *planning* adds to the latter's difficulty. According to Webster's, a plan is "a detailed formulation of a program of action." The same source characterizes a strategy (and, by extension, strategic) as "an adaptation or complex of adaptations . . . that serves or appears to serve an important function in achieving evolutionary success." Striving for evolutionary success undoubtedly motivated the Air Force's substantial investment in long-range planning. We therefore see little room to contest the issue of whether the Air Force has been engaged in strategic planning.

A futuristic projection to the year 2025 served as the preamble for the first Long-Range Plan; this was an express departure from the service's convention for such exercises. Visioning, which is what the participants were encouraged to undertake, required vision. Webster's defines *vision* as "unusual discernment or foresight." These definitional bearings reveal a huge difference between visioning and vision. The former gazes boldly into the future, but the latter is ascribed only when events prove the futurist right. Strategic planning as pursued by the Air Force during both the Fogleman and Ryan eras involved quintessentially a pooling of the senior leadership's perceptions of the future. These participants devised agreed

visions of the opportunities and challenges that the Air Force would face over a long horizon. Only then did the Air Force leadership “backcast” from the visions to their current competencies and capabilities in order to assess the necessary adjustments for the service to prepare for the envisioned future. Third, the Air Force leadership then attempted to distill and gain consensus on the programmatic commitments required for achieving desired adaptations in a timely fashion.

We view this approach, above all, as positioning for opportunities. Writers such as Martha Derthick and Theda Skocpol identify a fairly robust specimen of the same practice in domestic agencies. They identify it most clearly in the maneuvers of the Social Security Administration (SSA) during the gradual expansion of the contributory social security system from its inception in 1935 to the inclusion of medical provision for the aged in 1965 and the indexation of Social Security pensions in 1972. Skocpol characterizes the SSA leadership as a spearhead for ending poverty among the aged; in particular, program coordinators seized auspicious contexts such as President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty as occasions “to institute long-planned extensions of universal provision for the elderly.”<sup>9</sup> Derthick attributes the SSA’s success over the years to a mix of restrained specificity in communicating its vision and pragmatism:

In explaining and appraising the executive planners’ success . . . it is important to keep the scope of their goals in perspective. They defined their objectives largely in instrumental terms. . . . They were successful in this. A big program exists today that conforms to the first principles laid down in the founding years. Had goals been defined in terms that stipulated ultimate social outcomes with some precision, success would surely have been much harder to achieve.<sup>10</sup>

The SSA track record stands in opposition to the permanent officials of an organization becoming so strongly associated with specific options that other players in the policy arena immediately discount the agency’s contribution to discourse.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the agency’s permanent officials must have already done the internal spadework if they are to influence deliberations once an issue comes to the fore.<sup>12</sup>

Major adaptations in political systems and governmental organizations often stem from an intuitive grasp of epochal shifts in challenges and opportunities. When such renderings of epochal shifts gain currency, leaders find fertile ground for relatively substantial policy innovation. Their actual progress will depend on their persuasive powers, the cogency of their case,

and, crucially, the degree to which unfolding events sustain or call into question their lines of argument. Fogleman's persuasive powers far exceeded Ryan's, but Ryan compensated through his reputation as a pragmatist—if he made the case, the Air Force leaders would more readily suspend their disbelief. Finally, events in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan added credibility to the Air Force's view of its future. For instance, the tremendous success of drones in the Afghanistan campaign certainly made a visionary out of General Fogleman, who had pressed the case for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) against some opposition during his stewardship of the Air Force.

In the mid-1980s Colin Campbell and Bert A. Rockman independently employed the term *metacycles* to describe epochal shifts that seem to call for departures from business as usual.<sup>13</sup> Both authors apply the term to the plight of chief executives in advanced democracies at that time. It seems, however, to pertain as readily to executives within government organizations—be they political appointees or career officials—who conclude that incremental approaches to evolutionary adaptation will fail to rise to new challenges and exploit new opportunities.

The political context for the U.S. Air Force in the mid-1990s similarly evoked a period of grappling with inchoate metacycles. These took the form of challenges that went far beyond the usual temporal horizons of Air Force planners. They spun off from a host of emergent issues. What was the role of the U.S. military going to be in the post-cold war era? How were the services going to adapt to the related expectation that they now contribute toward deficit reduction? And, most critically for the Air Force, what would happen if the U.S. military did considerably less of its fighting from fixed-wing aircraft with human pilots? The Air Force elected to address new challenges and canvass new opportunities by pursuing its future through strategic visioning. This evolved under General Fogleman into an effort to radically realign operations and programs on the basis of bold projections of what an envisioned Space and Air Force might look like in 2025. General Ryan's retreat to the more integrative concept of an Aerospace Force did not diminish the degree to which the Air Force engaged in strategic visioning of significantly stretched horizons.

As noted, we employ the term *positioning for opportunities* to describe the Air Force's investment in visioning. This nomenclature deliberately differentiates between what we have observed and opportunism. We agree with John Kingdon that the policy entrepreneur's connection to events often parallels the surfer in relation to the perfect wave. Surfers are “ready to pad-

dle, and their readiness combined with their sense for riding the wave and using the forces beyond their control contribute to success.”<sup>14</sup> However, two factors play heavily on the degree to which opportunities are successfully exploited. The first of these concerns the cogency of the policy entrepreneur’s case in relation to those of other claimants to resources. Theda Skocpol notes that one underpinning of the Social Security Administration’s success in gradually expanding its services was that the agency’s proposals would fit with what was “actuarially sound.”<sup>15</sup> An armed service can similarly trump other contenders by invoking the potential contribution of a proposed program to national security.

The second factor rests on the degree to which policy entrepreneurs in an organization extrapolate from experience to press their case and realize that garnering such evidence often requires up-front investments. Surfers do not have the time to discuss with their colleagues whether a wave presents a perfect opportunity (and challenge) and if so why. The policy entrepreneur, however, must justify the timeliness of committing. Furthermore, arguments extrapolated from agreed renderings of experience often tip the scale toward one programmatic investment over others. Consider, for example, the extra funds the second Bush administration sought for drones and satellite surveillance in the aftermath of their demonstrated effectiveness in Afghanistan. Marshalling such cases, to be sure, involves luck, but it also requires that an agency has adequately prepared the evidence in order to be able to present a plausible story line. The agency must also maintain links to others in the policy arena so that they will allow it to repeat and refine its case each time an opportunity presents itself.

More fundamentally, positioning for the wave often requires up-front commitments such as research and development and preliminary investments in hardware or infrastructure. We certainly can imagine policy sectors in which entrepreneurship remains cerebral. This condition, however, rarely pertains in an armed service. Such contexts confront us with the fact that even surfers require a state-of-the-art surfboard if they are to ride that perfect wave with optimal results.

Because this book covers two iterations of strategic visioning in the Air Force, namely, the 1996–97 and 1999–2000 exercises, it can assess the downstream effects of the long-range planning process. That is, the case considered in this book offers an exceptional opportunity to examine how visioning connects to the strategy-formulation phase and ultimately effects changes in programming and budgeting.<sup>16</sup> The focus is primarily on the way the Air Force created and used formalized processes to identify strategic

issues (including the so-called gut issues) and to work toward their resolution. The key policy events were authoritative declarations of strategic intent, including the 1996 vision, the 1997 Long-Range Plan, and the updated vision published in June 2000.

## The Role of Organizational Characteristics

We have personally met General Fogleman, who launched the Air Force on its prolonged episode of strategic visioning, and he did not strike us as being a Don Quixote. This raises the question of whether there is something peculiar about the Air Force that made it amenable to the process that we chronicle and analyze here. Alternatively, are there lessons that might apply to other organizations in the U.S. federal government? Are they missing something that the Air Force grasped?

In some respects, the Air Force is not a typical federal agency. One finds relatively few political appointees in its top positions, and Air Force personnel, rather than civilians, occupy most of the top positions in the service's executive leadership. To be sure, the generals who masterminded much of the process do not fit the image of a government of strangers—that is, the split in many agencies between political appointees and career officials—that Hugh Heclo evoked in his famous characterization of the divisions among key executives in most federal agencies.<sup>17</sup>

The so-called bluesuiters ultimately did have to contend with civilian supervision of their quest for evolutionary success. Indeed, civilian engagement seemed to rise exponentially as the blue-suit strategic visioning began to raise issues of major political significance, such as whether the weaponization of space was inevitable.

Even apart from such dynamics, the Air Force operates within the same political-governmental system as other federal agencies and, therefore, faces similar institutional constraints. Within the executive branch, bluesuiters must first win over the secretary of the Air Force, along with other political appointees vying for influence within the department. They must then make their case with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the other services, the secretary of defense, and the White House and the Executive Office of the President. The latter two include officials in the National Security Council and the Office of Management and Budget. These players ostensibly should take an interest in long-range issues, but in fact they tend to get caught up in fighting brush fires for the administration, to the extent that they can devote little time to strategic visioning—especially if it concerns matters far in the future.

As the bluesuiters work through this maze, they often find it difficult to get other players' attention. Paradoxically, when they do get a response, they often encounter deep antagonism both from close competitors who have followed their maneuvers too keenly and from relatively distant parties who are convinced that the bluesuiters' agenda clashes with their own.

The web of interconnections between parts of the executive branch and supporters and opponents in Congress further exacerbates the difficulty of devising and pressing a coherent strategic vision for any organization in the U.S. government, much less a highly visible one such as the Air Force. Issues such as how many C-130s a state's Air National Guard maintains, whether the Air Force should have more F-22s and fewer Joint Strike Fighters, and whether it can reduce the number of B-1s in service generate passionate debate in Congress.

Bluesuiters aspiring to bring a strategic vision to the national agenda must first learn how to keep their eye on the big picture. They must also develop ways of using specific instances of tension in Congress as opportunities to educate players about the costs of deferring investments in the future in order to serve interests vested in the status quo. The "uniformed patriot" culture of a military service perhaps explains why the Air Force remains persistent in bringing its perception of future needs to the public forum. After all, members of the military see not only matters of life and death embedded in responses to the future, but also questions of national survival.

Nonetheless, we can certainly conceive of civilian agencies—operating entirely in the realm of domestic policy—in which officials similarly see themselves as responsible for plotting the long-term consequences of the status quo and recommending changes in course on the grounds of public and national interest. However, they have to play much more of an inside game than do bluesuiters. Joel D. Aberbach and Bert A. Rockman, who compare executive-bureaucratic political gamesmanship during the Nixon, Reagan, and Bush Sr. administrations, find sharp drops in career officials' interactions with congressmen and Hill staffers from the former to the latter two administrations.<sup>18</sup> They attribute these to the Reagan administration's strategy of severely constricting direct contact between senior career officials and those outside the executive branch as a means of curtailing the policy entrepreneurship of the former. The study raises the question of whether closing career officials out of direct participation in decisionmaking might prove a self-denying ordinance: "Why staff a public service with highly qualified individuals if they will not be given some latitude in figuring out how to do

things and advising superiors as to the options?”<sup>19</sup> However, one of the respondents, whom the authors quote to support their claim that career officials view themselves as motivated by issues of public good, conveys a deep appreciation of the ambiguity surrounding such an assertion from the standpoint of executive-bureaucratic politics: “The one thing that keeps us still here . . . is that we do have a hell of a dedication to the mission of whatever it is that we are doing, and we seem to be willing to cope with all of these frustrations. We do it because we believe so deeply in these bigger things.”<sup>20</sup>

The respondent’s phraseology suggests an underlying skepticism about ultimately making a difference, which we did not encounter with our Air Force respondents. Aberbach and Rockman argue that the nation cannot expect creativity from its standing bureaucracy until it checks the competition between the political executive, Congress, and the federal judiciary over policy, which, in turn, has led to micromanagement of career officials. The scope of this problematic suggests the need to look more closely at just how encumbered agencies have become and what types of strategies they might pursue, in collaboration with their political leaders, to function more creatively with regard to evolutionary adaptation.

### **Contending with Constricted Latitude**

Institutional constraints have become increasingly important for federal agencies in the past thirty years. In the mid-1960s, conventional wisdom among political scientists accepted that changes under American-style “pol-yarchy” would occur almost exclusively in “incremental” forms.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the system—with, for instance, separation of powers, federalism, and the malleability of the state apparatus to special interests—would usually serve up relatively modest responses to policy challenges. The past thirty years have seen a deterioration even of the system’s capacity for incremental change. As described by Mancur Olson in the early 1980s, institutional stances have ossified to the point where change becomes ponderous, at best.<sup>22</sup> For example, deadlock between the White House and Congress used to be ascribed to divided government, that is, control of the former by one party and one or both chambers of the latter by another. However, the Herculean struggles faced by Jimmy Carter (1977–81) and Bill Clinton (1993–95) under a united government suggest that the separation of powers combined with the ossification of special-interest perspectives has transformed deadlock into gridlock, recurrent even when the same party controls both the executive and legislative branches.<sup>23</sup>

If we move away from Olson's ossification image into a different realm of anatomy, it would appear that the system has developed fairly significant arterial sclerosis. No matter how deeply committed they may be, those trying to pursue policies with greater strategic cogency will still face very constricted parameters. In cardiology, surgeons can achieve revascularization of blocked arteries through bypass surgery or, less invasively but potentially less successfully, angioplasty. The intractability faced by any reform-oriented federal agency usually precludes anything as dramatic and definitive as the institutional equivalent of bypass surgery. The Air Force's corporate strategic planning process might thus comport with revascularization through angioplasty. Alternatively, cardiorevascularization can also occur naturally through the formation of collateral vessels that give blood an alternate route to the heart. In the case at hand, this would mean that the Air Force, despite its institutional constraints, reinvented itself through internal resourcefulness and ingenuity. If so, any positive lessons learned from this study will find a ready audience among similarly limited federal agencies.

This book constitutes a case study of strategic planning in the federal government. All federal agencies are now required to undertake some form of strategic planning under the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). What constitutes strategic planning in the federal government has thus taken on new meaning.<sup>24</sup> The Air Force presents itself as an especially appealing research site for a case study in this emerging approach to achieving greater direction and coherence in federal agencies. The Air Force's strategic planning activities since the mid-1990s appear to be an exceptionally robust specimen of the generic practice.<sup>25</sup> This owes to the energy with which the Air Force based its approach to strategic planning on futuristic visioning about how it might best pursue evolutionary adaptation.

More important, perhaps, the type of visioning pursued in the Air Force takes us beyond the objectives of GPRA. It is one thing for the National Park Service to work more rigorously at establishing its medium-term objectives and then tracking performance toward fulfilling them. It is quite another for it to fast-forward to the year 2025, gaze at what National Parks will look like if current policies remain fundamentally unchanged, envision desirable alternatives to the status quo projected twenty-five years into the future, and then backcast to the present to see which course corrections suggest themselves as desirable and feasible.

This book therefore seeks primarily to explore a specific approach to strategic planning that evolved in the U.S. Air Force beginning in the mid-1990s. We also aim, however, to improve understanding and debate about

the practice of strategic planning generally in federal agencies. Roughly speaking, we classify this work as an instance of best practice research, even while recognizing that many in the academic community use this term as an expression of disapproval rather than as a neutral concept. We hope that the scope of this study—limited to one case, to be sure, but one with exceptionally broad potential implications—will expand the boundaries of best practice research. In this way, our effort comports more with what Eugene Bardach styles as smart practice analysis.<sup>26</sup> This approach, in comparison with best practice research, attempts to identify the causal mechanisms and processes that allow particular practices to counteract the tendency of political, technical, and organizational systems in the public sector to perform unsatisfactorily with respect to evolutionary adaptation. We now turn to the parameters along which such a discussion might occur in connection with strategic visioning in the federal government.

### **Expanding the Horizons for Strategic Planning**

Evolutionary adaptation proves exceptionally difficult for organizations within the U.S. federal government. When we look at other countries, we find higher capacities for longer-range thinking and action associated with evolutionary adaptation. Although significantly driven by the need to renew their mandates, governments in parliamentary systems frequently commit considerable energy to strategic thinking that goes beyond the current legislative calendar. In these systems, political appointees play only limited roles, so career civil servants often serve as the architects of innovative ways in which departments and agencies might face future challenges. Critically, two key elements of these systems are missing in the United States. First, the government-of-the-day often exerts sufficient control over the legislative branch to take initial steps toward a long-range strategic commitment once a consensus builds around it in the executive branch. This provides an incentive for career officials and a way for them to contribute to a legacy. Second, a strong, systemwide esprit de corps often prevails within these countries, which allows officials to detach themselves to some extent from the short-term interests within their units and departments.

Getting the innovative juices flowing among career officials within U.S. governmental organizations usually proves a much tougher sell. Officials seldom see that their political masters can deliver on commitments to take the first steps toward change. Moreover, units within agencies that float ideas for innovation can do a lot of damage to themselves by giving away hostages

to opponents. In the fragmented U.S. bureaucracy, these might belong to the same organization—even wear the same uniform—yet maintain competing loyalties. In this regard, R. Kent Weaver and Bert A. Rockman’s seminal inventory of the costs and benefits of the separation of powers offers pertinent guidance. Efforts to achieve innovation in the United States more frequently end in stalemate than is the case in other systems. However, in contrast to responsible party government as found in many parliamentary systems, the separation of powers can sometimes provide circumstances in which departments and agencies can play administration and congressional patrons off one another. Obviously, engaging key players in the policy domain requires promoting innovation as serving the national interest or fostering electoral approval. Under some circumstances, U.S. agencies can ride the crest of a bidding-up process to achieve relatively comprehensive policy change.<sup>27</sup>

Positioning for such opportunities—that is, being ready to spring forward with highly developed options when auspicious circumstances emerge—suggests itself here as a worthwhile strategy for innovators. In this regard, Martha Feldman’s work on the crazy-quilt world of energy policymaking under Carter and Reagan demonstrates that while the process may not be coherent, it provides for myriad opportunities in which highly trained specialists can thoroughly examine their options. In particular, bureaucratic analysts develop and maintain inventories of “policy positions and reports that policymakers may request when needed.”<sup>28</sup> In this regard, agencies play exceedingly important roles in what John Kingdon argues gets the innovative ball rolling—the predecisional process of alternative specification.<sup>29</sup>

The United States is not the only country in which engaging interest in corporate strategic planning faces serious difficulties; the conditions for the approach ebb and flow in other systems, as well. The United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, for instance, all made considerable efforts at comprehensive strategic direction in the mid-1970s that ran afoul of departmental intransigence.<sup>30</sup> Broadly, the initiatives sought to prioritize demands for continued expansion of the welfare state, notwithstanding the exceedingly daunting fiscal pressures associated with the economics of decline. Fiscal realities won out in the end, and a politics of constraint emerged in which bold images of the future gave way to narrow-gauged concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of existing government programs. The former focus spawned a very strong corporate—some call it managerial—mind-set in many non-American public services.

In the 1980s, many public sector organizations of English-speaking countries other than the United States guided themselves through management boards or direct contractual agreements between the heads of operational units and ministers. In both circumstances, the career executives of the principal “businesses” of government organizations would have to outline and justify their objectives and submit to reviews of their performance in terms of outputs and outcomes. Even with very substantial organizational commitments to such collective guidance, however, management boards and performance agreements inevitably encountered difficulty in installing and operating a feedback loop between corporate strategy and budgeting.<sup>31</sup>

The relation between the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and what the Air Force has pursued proves somewhat tenuous. The Air Force effort has far exceeded the legal requirements of the act, and in many respects it reflects its own leaders’ distillation of smart practices in the private sector. Despite its more limited scope, however, the GPRA has significantly increased discussion of strategic planning in the federal government. It attempts to graft onto the U.S. departments and agencies something roughly akin to the corporate approaches that emerged in the 1980s in other English-speaking systems.

Paul Light has correctly categorized GPRA as liberation management.<sup>32</sup> It seeks to improve performance through the carrot of increased managerial discretion over the use of resources and the stick of greater individual and organizational accountability to achieve specific goals. In this regard, GPRA fits within the general framework of new public management.<sup>33</sup> However, as Peter Aucoin pointed out very early on, new public management clashes with the overarching conception among politicians that government has grown too large and must be put under tighter scrutiny.<sup>34</sup> In 1997, the General Accounting Office (GAO) recognized the relevance of this dynamic for GPRA—especially given that departmental compliance with the act is a congressional mandate. The GAO noted that the legislative staffers who do the bulk of reviewing of GPRA reports concentrate on their “oversight roles and stress near-term performance,” whereas agency officials emphasize “long-term goals, adaptability to changing needs, and flexibility in execution.”<sup>35</sup>

In some respects, GPRA can trace its lineage to the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) that emerged in the Department of Defense under Robert McNamara and ultimately won the imprimatur of Lyndon Johnson for implementation throughout the U.S. government. The fact that the Pentagon still follows a PPBS approach makes this point espe-

cially pertinent to our case. However, GPRA's architecture concerns itself much more with the need for coordination between agencies and Congress on corporate strategy than with the primary focus of PPBS—namely, prioritization of long-range objectives so that decisionmakers might align budgetary commitments more cogently.<sup>36</sup>

The Air Force strategic visioning commitment thus fits the PPBS template more closely than the GPRA one—with the important caveat that planning, programming, and budgeting will never link sufficiently unless Congress grasps and supports how a service seeks to connect the three. Indeed, our analysis suggests that the Air Force encountered a sharp learning curve in this area, at first attempting to run an in-house process and eventually recognizing that it had to work much more intensively in educating Congress about the long-range consequences of budgetary choices.

This comports with Aaron Wildavsky's view of how PPBS might have worked had the proper conditions prevailed in the 1960s. He saw a strong analytic culture as the sine qua non for PPBS and, in fact, viewed this as a strength of the Pentagon not often shared by domestic agencies.<sup>37</sup> Wildavsky held a very high standard for policy analysis. He viewed it as a capacity to transcend "the fire-house environment of day-to-day administration" and trace out "the consequences of innovative ideas" rather than "projecting the status quo" into the future. In words that could easily apply to the principal rationale behind the Fogleman and Ryan planning efforts, Wildavsky noted that the originators of PPBS wanted to close the gap between planning and budgeting: "They wanted to stop blue-sky planning and integrate planning and budgeting. . . . They wanted to use the program budget to bridge the gap between military planners, who cared about requirements but not about resources, and budget people, who were narrowly concerned with financial costs but not necessarily with effective policies."

Since GPRA does not encompass strategic visioning in this sense, we find ourselves looking beyond agencies' efforts to comply with the act in order to relate our case to dialogue about smart practices for corporate strategic planning in the federal government. While the literature still has a considerable way to go, it can provide some guidance for the case at hand. For instance, Sandford Borins aims to distill best practices for innovators in bureaucratic agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. In particular, he concedes that the best innovation in large organizations most frequently arises "through the efforts of mavericks at 'skunkworks' far from central offices, operating without a clear mandate from above and using bootlegged resources."<sup>38</sup>

Borins's characterization of innovation might strike the reader as the furthest thing conceivable from the situation of the U.S. Air Force. Not only does the Air Force run an exceedingly diverse and complex bureaucratic system, but it gobbles up nearly 4 percent of the annual budget of the federal government. The U.S. Air Force case thus presents a daunting challenge, as the magnitude of corporate strategic planning in an organization of this size far exceeds the scale of any existing benchmarks. However, it provides a unique and timely opportunity to establish a benchmark for exercises of similar scale that other sizable agencies have begun to pursue under GPRA and other auspices.

### **Steps for Effective Implementation**

Notwithstanding the difference in scale between the Air Force's strategic visioning efforts and those undertaken in other public service organizations, the latter initiatives do bring important themes to the discussion. First, the agency must devise a feasible and convincing framework for visioning and planning that nonetheless establishes true "stretch goals" that challenge the organization profoundly. Second, processes focused on adaptation to possible events far in the future rely extensively on scenario building and war gaming. Third, the success of the process depends substantially on the personal qualities of the organization's leaders and the extent to which they involve themselves in the strategic visioning and planning. Fourth, collective processes will greatly enhance the cooperation of both the barons and the rank and file of an organization. Finally, factoring in the likely responses of stakeholders is crucial to both visioning and planning.

Devising stretch goals is one of the mechanisms through which strategic visioning takes an organization beyond planning in the classic sense. It can make the planning process even more difficult and elusive than it normally is. Public sector organizations must grapple with government's inherent limitations in reconciling the standards of a plan—namely, a detailed formulation of a program of action—with strategy. Bureaucratic strategy usually falls short of detailed prescription because of uncertainties in both the identification of the future public good and the degree to which stakeholders will support the stated goals. In this respect, our concept of strategic visioning perhaps fits government agencies even better than private sector organizations. Though difficult to pursue, it takes into account the degree to which corporate strategic planners in the public sector find themselves discerning and targeting inchoate futures whose value ultimately lies in the

extent to which they wrench stakeholders from incremental adaptations to the status quo.

Advocacy of strategic visioning implies two things. First, while organizations cannot discern their future with certitude, they can improve their performance by anticipating environmental changes that will require them to draw on capabilities that they would not develop by following the status quo. Second, incremental change based on piecemeal modifications of the status quo will inevitably result in the organization falling short of requirements sometime in the future, and this failure to adapt will endanger its institutional viability. In the case of a government organization, the failure to adapt could appreciably harm the public good—for the Air Force, national security—just as a similar lapse in a key industrial concern could erode a country's competitiveness in the global economy.

The available literature suggests that more often than not, organizations that have succeeded in corporate strategic planning were able to wean themselves off incrementalism and establish stretch goals. For instance, Sanford Borins analyzes submissions from 217 semifinalists for the Ford Foundation's state and local Innovations in American Government Awards program between 1990 and 1994. He finds that only seven percent of the innovations emerged from organizationwide strategic planning.<sup>39</sup> However, 59 percent of the reforms that were developed by discrete units of an umbrella organization emerged from comprehensive efforts at redesign. Only 30 percent of the initiatives evolved from "groping" or incremental efforts to adapt to change.<sup>40</sup> Borins also finds that comprehensive planning occurs most frequently among organizations that require large capital investments, programs that involve the coordination of a large number of organizations, and theory-driven programs.<sup>41</sup>

Borins's findings comport with those of a 1997 Federal Benchmarking Consortium (FBC) study of best practices in the private and public sectors that might be appropriate for large federal government organizations. The study promotes a view of corporate strategic planning that assumes a high degree of visioning—and even asserts that corporate strategic planning stands at the intersection of art and science.<sup>42</sup> However, the study also emphasizes that visioning and planning far into the future most frequently occur in organizations with either complex processes or very long-range programs (or both).<sup>43</sup> The report highlights the importance of future thinking for devising stretch goals and for enabling the organization "to recognize and capitalize on the events transpiring outside its span of control."

As already noted, our analysis of the Air Force experience takes this concept a step further by employing the notion of positioning for opportunities. The Air Force's visioning acknowledges the profound bias toward incrementalism of its real-world context but anticipates circumstances in which it might, if adequately prepared, seize opportunities for substantial evolutionary adaptation. Its approach to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) serves as an example of this phenomenon. Through what were initially relatively modest investments and deployments, the Air Force has, in just a few years, given life to a new concept—namely, that much of its work can be done with drones that do not endanger human resources. The increase in the role of UAVs from Kosovo (1999) to Iraq (2003) probably exceeds even General Fogleman's expectations for this approach to surveillance and attack, which in the mid-1990s prompted skepticism in the Air Force's pilot-dominated culture.

The FBC report also finds that scenario building and role playing can greatly assist an organization in identifying its desired path into the future.<sup>44</sup> Such approaches constitute the second key factor for connecting visioning and planning, as mentioned at the start of this section. The FBC study observes that private corporations use this approach extensively, often even employing the term *war games*. Obviously, the military brings to such a task immense experience with war games. Such exercises serve little purpose in visioning, however, if they consist in applying existing methods of operation to the status quo projected *x* years out. In other words, stretch goals will not emerge unless the game itself forces thinking beyond conventional parameters. In any case, role playing through scenarios that invite a realistic grasp of future challenges can have immense effects in organizations: the players develop an appreciation of the need to prepare for uncertain futures, and nonplayers similarly broaden their views of organizational challenges when the findings from the games are properly disseminated. War gaming not only adds cogency to organizational visions, but can also inject a sense of urgency into the process of planning for the future.

General Fogleman considered that visioning would be relevant only if the Air Force backcast, so that expectations for the future actually guided changes in current programmatic commitments. The FBC study finds that the private corporations that prove most successful at strategic planning have achieved a similar discipline: "After describing the vision of the future using standard techniques, the company leaders essentially move backward from the future state to identify how the company must look at a given point in time if the desired future is to materialize."<sup>45</sup>

The third key factor for strategic planning, leadership, depends on the personal qualities of those in charge and their full engagement in the process. Borins describes what he calls a trichotomy of innovation: politicians usually lead innovation when an organization faces a major crisis; agency heads normally assert themselves most clearly when they first assume their responsibilities; and middle-level and frontline officials most often probe creative options when faced with internal problems or technical opportunities.<sup>46</sup> In all three cases, the courage to lead agencies to innovation stems from the integrity of those in charge—meaning they have not allowed crises to arise or deepen through neglect of warning signs or paralysis in the face of gridlock. In Borins’s words, they bring to their work “the ability to recognize problems or opportunities in a proactive manner.”<sup>47</sup>

The FBC report highlights the important role of the chief executive in taking an active part in a strategic management group, together with the other top leaders of a corporation.<sup>48</sup> It also stresses the need for the chief executive to personally “explain and cascade” the resulting strategic vision throughout an organization. Public service organizations do present ambiguity, however, along the lines identified by Borins. Who is the chief executive? The former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher (1979–90), for instance, wanted her ministers to actively manage their departments. Some did. In fact, a few participated directly on their ministries’ management boards. Most ministers, however, remained aloof from managerial activities, notwithstanding Thatcher’s preferences. In such cases, either the head career civil servant was given or assumed the managerial mantle, or the department shunned the corporate approach completely. The best results with corporate approaches to management came from departments in which the ministers took a keen and direct interest in managing their departments.<sup>49</sup> The nature of these organizations’ activities played a role, as well. If they broke down relatively neatly into comparatively free-standing “businesses,” then the minister could gain a cogent view of each major unit’s objectives and gauge its civil-service head’s performance on the basis of whether the objectives were met. In other words, the department would operate as a conglomerate and the minister as chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

Ambiguity existed in the U.S. Air Force in three ways. In the first round, the political head of the Air Force—the secretary, Sheila Widnall—did not engage in the strategic planning process until issues with serious political dimensions emerged. General Fogleman was thus clear to act as a chief executive along the lines suggested by Borins and the FBC report. This fit the

preference for having bluesuiters run the business end of the Air Force. Ambiguity entered the equation, however, because governmental corporate strategic planning, by nature, takes an organization into a stratum of policy commitments that ultimately require authoritative sanction by the political leaders. As we discuss in chapter 4, Dr. Widnall's successor, F. Whitten Peters, assumed an active role in the second round, led by General Ryan. This introduced a dynamic whereby the private sector model of principal executive authority being clearly vested in one individual did not pertain. Although Peters essentially functioned as chief executive officer and Ryan as chief operating officer, the two often worked in tandem over matters pertaining to the former role. Even so, role ambiguity played a more important part during the first rather than second round. Restrained political leadership allowed General Fogleman to follow the prevailing stylistic preference of bluesuiters at the time, whereby secretaries played mainly symbolic and legitimizing roles while chiefs got on with the business of running the Air Force.

The second ambiguity lies in the entrenched cultural tensions of the U.S. executive-bureaucratic system, and it is amplified by the high stakes connected with what the Air Force does and the perpetual disputes over the resources it receives. The separation of powers makes it hard for federal government organizations to plan like private corporations. For the purposes of institutional survival, chief operating officers must weigh issues such as their departmental secretary's standing in the administration and the ability of the administration to get its positions through Congress. Even in a symbiotic arrangement such as that enjoyed by Peters and Ryan, the relationship between a secretary and a chief of staff proves much less hierarchical than that between a chairman of the board and a chief operating officer or even a British cabinet minister and the permanent civil servant who heads the department. If departmental secretaries in the United States choose to engage in corporate strategic planning, they must enter a dialogue with permanent officials. Officials will thus find it hard to bring about authoritative corporate change if their political appointees have not participated in the process. Similarly, political appointees, who can change policies against the will of their permanent officials so long as the president and Congress approve, cannot change the corporate ethos of their organizations unless they have worked through the dialogue.

The third ambiguity stems from the fact that the Air Force's core businesses do not lend themselves to the tidy divisions found in a conglomerate. Two large operations—the so-called shooting commands of Air Combat and Space—differ in that the latter draws on considerably fewer resources than

the former and faces huge political obstacles to developing space-based attack capabilities. In addition, much of its surveillance role operates in support of Air Combat operations. A much smaller shooting command, Special Operations, participates extensively in joint operations with other services. The Air Mobility, Air Force Materiel, and Air Education and Training commands support the shooters, and Air Mobility also performs substantial functions for other services, especially the Army and the Marines. Furthermore, Air Force Materiel and Air Education operate largely with pass-through funds expended in the service of other commands. Finally, the Air Force ultimately operates at the behest of five regional combatant commanders who are mandated to prepare for and preside over military operations in the European, Northern, Southern, Central, and Pacific geographic divisions established by the Pentagon. Coordinating plans and operations with combatant commanders greatly compounds the difficulty of corporate approaches to leadership in all of the services.

These three ambiguities make it exceedingly difficult to delineate businesses and their objectives within the Air Force or to achieve horizontal resolution of conflicts between the major corporate units. These and similar circumstances are commonplace in the federal bureaucracy. One might therefore expect to find a keen interest in collective mechanisms for developing strategies and coordinating units, but in fact convincing participants of the utility of such devices is a hard sell in the U.S. federal bureaucracy. The separation of powers sustains an incentive system that encourages units to work alone in the search for political mandates and budget resources. Likewise, experience teaches them that corporate strategic approaches often fail even to gain the attention of the political leaders, much less negotiate the treacherous waters of executive-legislative relations.

Notwithstanding these counterindications, the literature suggests that collective processes are key to obtaining a consensus among leaders regarding future directions and ensuring that the rank and file understand and support the objectives. The FBC report states emphatically that without a consensus, there is no plan.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, chief executives cannot devise visions and plans on their own, but rather must work closely with other corporate leaders.<sup>51</sup> Borins also makes a strong, empirically based case that holistic innovation in organizations most frequently takes place when the process has been supported by the central staff and the agency's leaders have interacted regularly through formal coordinative mechanisms.<sup>52</sup> Borins concludes that "collaboration across organizational boundaries does not happen naturally; it must be made to happen."<sup>53</sup>

General Fogleman did not stumble on this concept. He believed that the Air Force had functioned in a consultative way in other difficult phases of its development and that it should do so again when he became chief in 1994. It took some time to formalize the exact contours of the process, but they were eventually clarified through the critical roles of Corona—the council of four-star generals who developed the 1996 vision—and the board of directors—the group of three-star generals who prepared issues for the Corona conference. Fogleman subsequently created an Air Force Staff unit, XP, whose three-star head assumed responsibility for the integration of planning and programming. The two disciplines continued to operate independently, however, because XP served two separate sets of deliberative machinery, one for planning and another for programming. Moreover, the Corona council and, in particular, the board of directors did not function in the same way under General Ryan’s visioning round as they had under Fogleman’s. These considerations present a number of issues surrounding the question of where exactly the Air Force’s corporate persona is lodged. For instance, should the Staff control the programming process despite inroads made by the major commands in the visioning and planning processes? The debate spawned an initiative focused on revamping the planning, programming, and budgeting systems along more inclusive corporate lines—namely, the Air Force Resource Allocation Process (AFRAP).

Finally, the literature strongly prescribes external consultation with stakeholders as a key ingredient to successful corporate strategic planning. While this presents problems for any federal government agency, the secrecy surrounding many of the weapons systems and concepts of operations envisioned for the future seriously limits the Air Force’s ability to pursue external consultations. Space, for example, was a central concern in General Fogleman’s planning process, but most of the related issues were classified as top secret throughout the period in which he was chief.

The adversarial politics associated with the separation of powers discourages the planner from cooperating with congressmen, congressional staff, and contractors, who are likely to betray confidences if they feel that their agendas and priorities will not prevail. The FBC report makes a strong plea for external consultation, although it frequently refers to the marketplace and customers, which suggests that it is mainly oriented to agencies that provide goods and services to specific individuals and groups.<sup>54</sup> Such commercial analogies do not apply to the Air Force because the market, even including other military services, does not offer substitutes for much of

what it provides. Furthermore, it generally cannot discriminate among the citizens who receive its benefits.

Liaison with Congress would certainly constitute the most important form of external consultation for the Air Force. The two organizations are not likely to work in tandem, however, as indicated by the General Accounting Office's assessment of the likely dynamics for dialogue between agencies and Congress on strategic plans produced in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act. The cultural divide leaves agency heads "skeptical that consensus on strategic goals could be reached, especially given the often conflicting views among agencies' multiple congressional stakeholders."<sup>55</sup>

The Air Force ultimately developed a successful approach for bringing the results of its visioning and planning to bear on congressional budgeting decisions. Rather than pressing a comprehensive transformation package, the Air Force chose a more gradual approach of focusing on fork-in-the-road issues: if Congress made the wrong choice on one of these critical decisions, the chance that it would be able to purchase a critical capability within the desired time frame would shrink to dangerous proportions from the standpoint of national security.

Such smart practice fits recent research on historical institutional adaptation in the federal government. For instance, Patrick J. Wolf, who analyzes 170 cases of federal agency reform from 1890 to the present time, finds that organizations operating with a relatively high degree of autonomy from direct political control are the most innovative.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the Air Force was wise to incorporate administration appointees in its visioning and planning processes and to become increasingly judicious in the types of pleas it makes to Congress. Daniel P. Carpenter's study of innovation in executive-branch agencies between 1862 and 1928 finds that the most effective organizations partook of state building by seizing opportunities to demonstrate to Congress and the public how they could make a difference in areas of great national concern.<sup>57</sup> They gained relevance not by articulating grand designs, but by establishing symbiosis with sympathetic parties in the policy marketplace.

This section has shown how the available literature reveals certain standards with which to assess how the Air Force has proceeded with relatively far-reaching efforts at corporate strategic visioning and planning. By the nature of its business, the Air Force's planning must go far into the future in order to evoke significant stretch goals. Scenario building and war gaming should position the leadership for realistic consideration of what will be

required of the Air Force in the future. The chief must guide the process personally and cogently, despite the ambiguities in the division of corporate direction between himself and the secretary. A collective dynamic encompassing the rest of the senior leadership is crucial for garnering support and, perhaps most significantly, helping generalize the Air Force's grasp of likely challenges. External consultation, however, will most likely remain subdued as the nature of the Air Force's business exposes it to a type of stakeholder scrutiny whereby a dialogic approach might prove counter-productive.

### **The Plan for This Book**

The rest of this book is divided into eight chapters. The first of these examines the circumstances faced by the Air Force in the early 1990s that set the stage for the Fogleman visioning and planning initiatives. Chapter 3 focuses on how the Fogleman round developed, while chapter 4 charts the continuation of the Fogleman approach under Secretary Peters and General Ryan and underscores ways in which the second round followed on or departed from the philosophy and rubrics of its predecessor. Chapter 5 assesses the operation of the two rounds from the standpoint of smart practices. Chapter 6 probes the consequences of the Air Force's investment in visioning and planning for its governance and programming and budgeting systems. Chapter 7 focuses on the case of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as a specific instance in which institutional commitments accelerated and coalesced as a result of the visioning and planning regimen. Chapter 8 analyzes three substantial initiatives that deeply engaged the Air Force in efforts to go beyond a linear implementation agenda to thoroughgoing reassessments of key elements of its vision. Finally, Chapter 9 distills the key findings of this book and examines their relevance for other public sector organizations attempting to prepare for the future.