What is Strategic Foresight?
- Anticipatory thinking to support decision-making
- Understanding and anticipating change in society

How does this apply to National Security? The Intelligence Community?
Is This Different than Trend Analysis and Intelligence Analysis?

- Trend analysis shows us what to expect if the present continues.
- Intelligence assessments give us likely adversary courses of action based on established patterns of behavior.
- Strategic foresight requires imaginative approaches to design often at odds with organizational cultures requiring high levels of cohesion.
- Capacity to develop and maintain intellectual capital for new thinking enables us to take the high ground when our security environment is turned upside down.
Strategic Foresight / How Does It Work?

- Strategic Foresight uses data to:
  - Identify emerging signals and trends
  - Map the trajectory of change
  - Develop scenarios for aspirational futures

- Industry uses strategic foresight to answer questions such as:
  - Where should ExxonMobil make strategic investments over the next 20 years given the rise of electric vehicles?
  - How can UPS take advantage of blockchains to gain a competitive advantage over Amazon during the next 5 years?
Strategic Foresight / How Does It Work?

- Most organizations struggle with anticipating change and crafting preferred futures—why?
  - They lack an analytical way of evaluating new ideas and possible trends
  - They live in budget cycles that reward short-term returns

- So—if firms/businesses struggle to implement strategic foresight, how much more difficult is it for governments and public sector agencies?
A Need for Change…
Driving Factors in Competition and during Conflict

We face a complex security environment marked by rapid technological change and an evolving character of war

Cross domain dominance challenged at all levels

New age of technological discovery and advancement

Peer adversaries have studied our playbook and adapted

Space and Cyberspace have become potent weapons

Increased lethality designed to negate advantages

The ability to Compete, Deter and Win requires an All-Domain Approach, All-Domain Capabilities, and All-Domain Operations
Global Futures Report Sections

Strategic Foresight and Futures Studies: A Methodological Approach
Lt Col Jake Sotiriadis, USAF, Ph.D. and Jairus V. Grove, Ph.D.

Four Global Scenarios for a Post-COVID-19 World
Lt Col Jake Sotiriadis, USAF, Ph.D. and Jairus V. Grove, Ph.D.

The Future of Geopolitical Competition in Space
Kara Cunzeman
Lead Futurist, Center for Space Policy and Strategy, the Aerospace Corporation

The Future of Competition and Autonomous Systems
Major Laura Hunstock, USAF
Strategic Foresight and Futures Branch, AFWIC

The Future Nexus of Supply Chains and National Security
Jason Schenker
Chairman, The Futurist Institute

The Future of Malign Influence Campaigns
Vera Zakem
Senior Technology and Policy Advisor, Technology for Global Security

The Future of China’s Belt and Road Initiative
Shannon McGurk
Strategic Foresight and Futures Branch, AFWIC

The Future of Geopolitical Competition in the Middle East
Marwa Maziad, Ph.D.
Visiting Scholar in-residence, Jackson School of International Relations, University of Washington

The Future of the European Union and Implications for Transatlantic Relations
Lt Col Jake Sotiriadis, USAF, Ph.D.
Chief, Strategic Foresight and Futures Branch, AFWIC
The Four Futures Framework

- Generic images of the future that recur throughout history, public debates, and popular culture
- *Stretch the limits* of what we think of as logically possible

Graphical representation of the Manoa School "Four Futures" Method

"These four futures are 'generic' in the sense that varieties of specific images characteristic of them all share common theoretical, methodological and data bases which distinguish them from the bases of the other three futures, and yet each generic form has a myriad of specific variations reflective of their common basis" (Dator 2009).
Disruption Happens … Now What?

Mapping Disruptive Shifts (Sourced from Richard K. Lum, “Four Steps to the Future”)

A sudden, disruptive shift?

A continuation of things?

Rapid growth or decay?

Integrity - Service - Excellence
2035 – The new “Great Powers” are those states that have achieved superior levels of bio-resiliency vis-à-vis their peer competitors.

National bio-data stockpiles, coupled with new blend of capabilities in artificial intelligence, satellite-based imagery, and unprecedented global connectivity, raise premium on fielding networked military forces.

States that possess bio-resiliency, along with capability to instantly make information ubiquitous across their security apparatuses, dominate the new competition.
2035 – Scholars label the 2030s as the new “warring states” period—referring to ancient Chinese conflict era as well as the outbreak of the 21st century’s first continental-scale civil war in China

This marks China’s second civil war in less than 100 years

Most dramatic factor contributing to new, global instability is legitimacy crisis wrought by COVID-19—additionally, a second legitimacy crisis emerges around the “truth narrative” itself
2035 – Severe strains on social order drive liberal and authoritarian regimes towards highly centralized and restrictive measures

Surveillance regimes no longer voluntary

Access to basic necessities requires consent and cooperation with real-time bio-surveillance as well as unannounced health checks at home or work

National militaries (particularly national air forces) augment commercial supply chains and oversight of production/local distribution of goods to prevent riots and hoarding
Global Future #4 – Continued Growth
“Endemic Disruption”

- 2035 – States that can maintain data profiles of their populations and their competitors’ population can map and predict the intensity and timeline of each new disease outbreak

- Results in a kind of stochastic hegemony; can determine when the populations and the armed forces of their competitors will be disrupted and how long they will be vulnerable to attack
High ground of ‘rhythmic readiness’ creates instability and enabled territorial incursions, as states know they have a locked in advantage for weeks or even months.

U.S. Air Force benefits significantly from the necessity of a new offset strategy to limit the reliance on troop levels.

Less civilian air traffic and greater access to the skies is limited by the proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and long term, low-orbit surveillance systems.
Take away thoughts

- Geopolitical competition and disinformation not limited exclusively to Russia, China, Iran, or violent extremist organizations
- Congruence of these actors—jointly or independently—can wage simultaneous, multi-faceted influence campaigns on targeted populations at global scale
- Campaigns will continue to target all facets of our society
- Cannot lose sight of new, emerging fault lines in the Middle East or complex crises on Europe’s periphery
- Global pandemic accelerates export of China’s worst characteristics, also prompting delays and disruptions to Belt and Road Initiative
Take away thoughts

- In US homeland, overly thin levels of inventory as well as long supply chains present risks to our national security.

- Effects of COVID-19 also present opportunity for shift in accepting more surveillance and automation in the name of public health:
  - Much like terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, did for airport security procedures.
Questions?

- Find the report online: [https://www.afwic.af.mil/](https://www.afwic.af.mil/)
- E-mail: [jacob.s.sotiriadis.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jacob.s.sotiriadis.mil@mail.mil)
- Linkedin: [linkedin.com/in/jakesotiriadis/](https://linkedin.com/in/jakesotiriadis/)