Future of Intelligence Simulation

Project Title	Future of Intelligence Simulation
Project Summary	2020-2021 VSFS interns will refine “Influence 2040,” a card-based scenarios game developed by previous VSFS projects for IC Net Assessments. They will run simulations to test common assumptions about the future competition for influence and look for key factors for success and failure, technologica
Country	United States

Project Description

As Part 3 of an ongoing project involving separate classes of VSFS interns, in the 2020-2021 academic year VSFS interns will work with ODNI IC Net Assessments to refine a playable influence campaign simulation called “Influence 2040.” This narrative and card-based game simulates foreign influence strategies and capabilities in the future intelligence environment.

Games currently play out over the course of five rounds, with each team submitting a series of overt and covert actions (through Capabilities cards) each round that are scored by the Game Masters. The Challenger team seeks to capture a majority of four influence Field cards (Political, Social, Technological, and Economic) while the Target team seeks to strengthen its resilience and counter the Challenger team’s activities. The Game Masters score the actions and assess changes to each team’s pressure, vulnerability, and resources at the end of each round. If the Challenger team succeeds in capture a majority of Fields at any point, it wins the game. If the Challenger team fails to capture a majority of Fields by the end of the fifth round, the Target team is declared the winner.

In the game refinement phase, virtual interns will research gaming methods and influence capabilities, placing special emphasis on assessing the potential capabilities of China, Russia, and Iran to conduct influence operations in the future. They will study the game’s rules and scoring system, which combines statistical methods with narrative elements to create plausible simulations of future influence competitions. They will run a series of simulations to test the game’s mechanics and suggest refinements and expansions, testing anew to create a final, playable version.

In the strategic testing phase, virtual interns will research common assumptions and strategic ploys likely to be salient in the future competition for influence. They will test various strategies and record their findings, identifying key factors for success and failure, technological and societal investments that provide value in the competitions, and any recurring themes and strategies of strategic interest noted during the simulation iterations.

In the final phase, virtual interns will host at least one simulation for selected members of the Intelligence Community, with students playing either role of game master or strategic advisor to the member of the IC playing the game. They will deliver documentation showing of the results of their simulations, their refinements to the game itself, assessments of future influence capabilities incorporated into the game, and the final version

of the game (including revised country backgrounds and forecasts, rules, cards, and automated scoring spreadsheets). They will present their project via teleconference to IC Net Assessments and selected ODNI seniors.

Required Skills or Interests

Skill(s)
Analytical writing
Data analysis
Design thinking
Political Analysis
Research

Additional Information

Desired Skills and Interests: Knowledge of international relations theory and practice; statistical methods; country-specific backgrounds including but not limited to China, Russia, and Iran; proficiency with spreadsheets and other automated tools; simulation and gaming; forecasting and foresight; information technology; influence methods; game design.

Language Requirements: English.

Any Other Helpful Information: Students will collaborate extensively online using whichever tools work best for them. For each simulation, they will choose between the roles of Game Master, team lead, and strategic advisor. Extensive experience playing board, narrative, and card-based games is helpful, but not required – virtual interns will divide the project tasks according to ability and interest.

Language Requirements

None