

This monograph on the forecasting of long-range Air Force science began as an attempt to describe the five major scientific studies undertaken by the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF)/U.S. Air Force (USAF) since the end of World War II. These reports included *Toward New Horizons* (1945), the *Woods Hole Summer Studies* (1957-1958), *Project Forecast* (1964), *New Horizons II* (1975), and *Project Forecast II* (1986). They seemed at first to represent nothing more than isolated efforts to predict the technological future. But shortly after initiating research on the subject, it became clear that several themes linked the five reports. Rather than a collection of unrelated analyses, common threads were seen to run through them. The realization of this pattern was surprising. Taken at face value, the reports appeared to be entirely different. They were not produced in any one place; they were not directed by people with similar backgrounds or educations. Both in number and type of participants, they differed widely. Methodologies were not at all uniform. Their conclusions varied significantly. In fact, they did not even have the same purposes. *Toward New Horizons* was initiated to summarize the most advanced air power technologies of World War II and project them into the future. The *Woods Hole Summer Studies* organized hundreds of academic scientists to predict the short and long-term military uses of space. *Project Forecast* had the mandate of revitalizing Air Force thinking by linking national policy issues to scientific vistas and new weapon systems. *New Horizons II* endeavored to point the way toward technological improvements in a period of expected scarcity. Finally, *Project Forecast II* sought to infuse the Air Force laboratories with new avenues of basic science research. Thus, for a variety of internal and external reasons, at roughly ten year intervals since the Second World War, the Air Force launched major science and technology forecasts.

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