ATLAS PROTOCOL / STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

GEO 06 / 08
Geopolitical Foresight

Which alternative futures are plausible, and what signals would change our assessment?

22 OCTOBER 2026 | EDITION 1.0 | ANALYTICAL DRAFT FOR REVIEW

Executive strategic assessment

Foresight is a disciplined comparison of pathways, not a claim to predict a single future. It links observable changes to assumptions, actor choices and decision-relevant indicators.

Atlas position: this dossier is an independent analytic framework, not an operational mandate or a statement issued by the United Nations or any government.

Analytical architecture

Horizon design

Separate near term 2027–2030 from medium term 2030–2035. Record publication date, scenario assumptions and update triggers.

Baseline uncertainty

Specify enduring forces: strategic competition, technology concentration, energy transitions, climate exposure, demographic shifts and contested governance.

Scenario A — Fragmented rivalry

Increased blocs, coercive geoeconomics and crisis misperception impair trade and diplomatic coordination.

Scenario B — Competitive coexistence

Rivals preserve deterrence but maintain hotlines, sectoral standards and selective economic integration.

Scenario C — Negotiated pluralism

Middle-power coalitions and institutional adaptation reduce the costs of rivalry through pragmatic agreements.

Scenario D — Cascading systemic shock

Multiple concurrent disruptions overwhelm regional and global buffers; recovery depends on cooperation and contingency capacity.

Early indicators and signposts

For each scenario identify observable triggers, disconfirming evidence and policy choices that could redirect the pathway.

Decision application

Translate alternative worlds into robust actions: preserve optionality, protect civilian services, diversify dependencies and maintain diplomatic channels.

Observed reality / strategic interpretation / forward outlook

Observed reality

Use documented primary sources and dated data; an official statement establishes that a claim was made, not that the claim is true.

Strategic interpretation

State assumptions, alternative explanations and actor incentives; distinguish competing narratives and corroborated observations.

Forward outlook

Use conditional pathways and clear signposts, not deterministic forecasts or unsupported numerical probabilities.

Geopolitical Actor Matrix — common standard

DIMENSION	ASSESSMENT RULE
Strategic objectives	Identify declared priorities and inferred red lines separately.
Capabilities	Compare economic, military, financial, technological and institutional leverage.
Dependencies	Map imports, security guarantees, trade routes, compute, energy and critical inputs.
Alliances	Distinguish treaty obligations, partnerships, issue coalitions and tactical alignment.
Constraints	Test domestic politics, fiscal exposure, legitimacy, law and time horizons.
Escalation behaviour	Record signals, deployments, thresholds and crisis communications.
Cooperation potential	Identify verifiable shared interests and reciprocal concessions.
Strategic outlook	Present assumptions, alternatives, indicators and confidence.

Escalation and opportunity pathways

- Two unrelated shocks converge into a systemic event.
- A large actor changes alliance commitments.
- Verification mechanisms succeed despite continued political rivalry.

Monitoring indicators

- Alliance and voting shifts
- Trade and financial fragmentation
- Crisis hotline and confidence-building status
- Regional conflict transmission
- AI/space and infrastructure dependencies

Scenario framework — conditional, not predictive

2027–2030 stress test

Short-term choices govern whether rivalry can remain bounded.

2030–2035 adaptation

Long-run institutional, demographic and technological change reshapes bargaining power.

Adaptive decision cycle

Monthly signal reviews and triggered scenario revisions replace fixed predictions.

Decision questions

- What has changed since the previous assessment, with what verified evidence?
- Which actor has gained or lost bargaining alternatives, and why?
- Which dependency, alliance or institutional constraint is most decisive?
- What evidence would contradict the leading interpretation?
- Which de-escalatory or cooperative pathway remains available?

Connections within Atlas Intelligence Core

STR 05 provides analysis of strategic systems (financial, maritime, defence, AI and space); GEO 06 evaluates actors, interests and relational power; OBS 07 tracks signals and evidence. PLN 01, SPE 02, CIV 03 and HUM 04 add physical, species, institutional and human-decision perspectives.

Selected references and source discipline

WEF Global Risks Report 2026 — https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2026

SIPRI Trends in World Military Expenditure 2025 (April 2026) — https://www.sipri.org/publications/2026/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2025

IMF World Economic Outlook October 2026 — https://www.imf.org/en/publications/weo/issues/2026/10/13/world-economic-outlook-october-2026

United Nations Charter — https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text

Method note: cited figures require matching vintage, definitions and verification before web publication. WEF 2026 risk survey (18% cite geoeconomic confrontation as highest potential crisis trigger; 68% anticipate a

multipolar/fragmented order) is perception data. SIPRI reports military spending of US$2,887 billion in 2025. IMF October 2026 WEO forecasts 3.1% global growth in 2026 and 3.4% in 2027; these are projections, not confirmed outcomes.

Editorial control: Draft v1.0 — scholarly and institutional fact-check, owner review and publication approval required; no claimed live monitoring, applied scores or state endorsements.

DEEPENED ANALYTICAL ANNEX · v1.1

22 OCTOBER 2026 | GEO 06 | ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS FOR OWNER REVIEW

Method: grounded background is distinguished from Atlas analysis and conditional outlook. Profile and monitoring items below are assessment frameworks, not claims that particular future events have occurred. All proposed triggers are editorial watchlist thresholds, not empirically calibrated forecasts.

Scenario stress tests: pathways and falsification

A · Fragmented rivalry

Conditional pathway: 2027–2030: rival groupings harden through trade controls, weak consultation and recurring crises.

Leading evidence: Trade restriction breadth; blocked diplomatic channels; regional conflict spillovers.

What would disconfirm it: Sustained cross-bloc agreements and verified crisis coordination would weaken this pathway.

Robust decision option: Maintain supply redundancy, protect humanitarian operations and test escalation lines.

B · Competitive coexistence

Conditional pathway: 2027–2030: strategic rivalry persists, but selective guardrails and economic transactions remain operational.

Leading evidence: Hotline use; sectoral technical agreements; stable access to critical maritime services.

What would disconfirm it: Breakdown of practical mechanisms across multiple theatres would weaken this pathway.

Robust decision option: Invest in verification and resilient channels; do not presume alignment.

C · Negotiated pluralism

Conditional pathway: 2030–2035: major and middle powers institutionalize issue-based cooperation while retaining distinct interests.

Leading evidence: Implemented multilateral agreements; repeated independent verification; broader middle-power inclusion.

What would disconfirm it: Failure to implement agreements or recurrent unilateral abandonment weakens this pathway.

Robust decision option: Build modular agreements and measurable compliance practices.

D · Cascading systemic shock

Conditional pathway: 2027–2035: multiple coincident security, energy, digital or climate shocks exceed ordinary buffers.

Leading evidence: Correlated cross-region shipping disruption; sustained payments outages; displacement and acute price shocks.

What would disconfirm it: Rapid service restoration and independent evidence of localized rather than interconnected damage weaken this pathway.

Robust decision option: Stress-test civilian essentials and cross-border contingency coordination.

Scenario indicator register — testable rules

INDICATOR	OBSERVATION / UNIT	SOURCE	CADENCE	PROPOSED REVIEW TRIGGER
Diplomatic channels	Count verified high-level crisis contacts and publicly confirmed outcomes per quarter; count outcomes separately from meetings.	Foreign ministries / UN releases	Quarterly	No contact across an active high-tension theatre for 90 days (watchlist; not proof of escalation).
Trade fragmentation	Share of new, enacted cross-border restrictions affecting designated critical categories; record legal effective date.	WTO / official customs and trade notices	Quarterly	Two consecutive quarters of increase vs trailing four-quarter baseline.
Maritime disruption	Confirmed incidents or reroutings at named corridors; distinguish event counts from vessel-volume changes.	IMO / port authorities / corroborated shipping data	Monthly	Incident count doubles vs preceding 12-month monthly median, subject to minimum sample rule.
Security signalling	Changes in officially announced exercise area/duration and independent corroboration of notable deployments.	Defence ministries + independent corroboration	Monthly	Persistent multi-actor change over 60 days rather than one exercise.
Financial transmission	Observed sovereign-spread, FX and liquidity movement versus local historical variation, with cross-market co-movement.	IMF / central banks / BIS data	Monthly	At least three tracked jurisdictions breach their own 90th-percentile stress threshold in the same month.
Human security	New verified displacement and access restrictions; document geography and reporting lags.	UNHCR / OCHA	Monthly	Two consecutive reporting periods of deterioration, adjusted for revisions.
AI / space dependence	Verified outage or disruption of communications, satellite navigation, AI compute or digital public infrastructure.	Sector regulators, operators, incident investigations	Event-led	Cross-border critical-service interruption confirmed in two independent sources.

Cooperation resilience	Number of agreements implemented and verified, not only announced; retain sector and actor scope.	Treaties, monitors, implementing agencies	Quarterly	No implementation against time-bound commitments after two reporting cycles.

Evidence-to-scenario protocol

- A single threshold breach opens a review; it never automatically establishes a new scenario.
- Require dated primary evidence and, for disputed events, independent corroboration before upgrading confidence.
- Log baseline period, missing observations, reporting delays, source revisions and rival explanations.
- Track both deteriorating and improving indicators; diplomacy and institutional repair have equal analytical status.
- Assess 2027–2030 at monthly/quarterly cadence and 2030–2035 annually; avoid assigning precise probabilities without calibration.
- Retain previous scenario judgments and a change log for auditability.

Illustrative review decision

If maritime incidents rise but crisis hotlines remain active and trade continues through alternate corridors, the finding is “elevated corridor stress with bounded transmission”, not proof of generalized geopolitical escalation. If independent financial, humanitarian and digital disruptions then co-occur, examine a cascading-shock hypothesis against local, unrelated causes.

Source check: consult dated SIPRI April 2026, IMF October 2026, UN Charter and relevant regional authorities; bibliography and URL anchors retained in the main dossier.

Editorial note: v1.1 expands only dossiers 02, 04 and 08. Existing v1.0 chapters remain unchanged. Actor descriptions are analytical lenses, not official statements by those actors. Review immediately before publication for time-sensitive incidents and policy changes.