C.O.R.E. FILE

STRATEGIC REALITY FRAMEWORK

Version 2.0 · Institutional Analytical Baseline · October 2026

PEOPLE BEFORE POWER.

Understanding power without becoming captive to its narratives

Multipolar in observation. Independent in analysis. Unambiguous in principle.

Document	C.O.R.E. FILE — Strategic Reality Framework
Version	2.0
Lineage	C.O.R.E. File v1 — Core Ontological Reality of the Earth (January 2026)
Baseline	October 2026
Classification	Strategic Analytical Reference Framework
Status	Living · Non-Prescriptive · Evidence-Governed
Scope	Global / Multipolar / Structural
Time horizon	Structural with current-cycle validation
Institutional parent	THE ATLAS PROTOCOL — System & Doctrine Master File v3.0
Core foundation	People Before Power · Atlas Compass · Intelligence Methodology
Owner	Atlas Protocol / Septem7

Continuity Statement

The original C.O.R.E. File was created to identify the core logics, existential drivers and structural fears of major actors shaping the international system. Its purpose was clarity rather than prescription: to understand why actors behave as they do before attempting to design non-escalatory architecture.

That purpose remains valid. The analytical form, however, requires revision. Atlas Protocol has evolved from a primarily conceptual peace and governance framework into a human-centred intelligence and decision-support architecture governed by explicit evidence standards, multipolar observation, reversible conclusions and continuous self-audit.

Version 2.0 therefore preserves the original insight while changing its epistemic status. Actor logics are no longer written as fixed 'Structural Truths'. They are treated as evidence-governed analytical hypotheses that must remain open to contradiction, internal variation, temporal change and alternative explanation.

C.O.R.E. v2 preserves the question behind the original file: WHAT DOES AN ACTOR OR SYSTEM BELIEVE IT MUST PROTECT, PRESERVE, RECOVER OR PREVENT — AND HOW DOES THAT SHAPE BEHAVIOUR?

Document purpose and authority

C.O.R.E. is the Atlas Protocol strategic reality reference framework. It provides a disciplined structure for understanding actors, systems and strategic cultures from within their own historical, institutional and security logic without adopting their narratives as Atlas conclusions.

C.O.R.E. does not replace the Atlas Protocol System & Doctrine Master File, the Intelligence Methodology, Daily Intelligence, Atlas Live, GSSCM, AIC or any subsystem Master File. It sits beneath the L0 constitutional layer and alongside the Intelligence Methodology and ATLAS Σ as part of the Institutional Core Package.

Institutional document	Primary question
System & Doctrine Master File	What is Atlas Protocol, what governs it, and how is the system organised?
Intelligence Methodology	How does Atlas know, test, qualify and revise what it believes?
C.O.R.E. File	How does Atlas understand strategic actors, systems, constraints and structural realities?
ATLAS Σ	How does Atlas understand dignity, coexistence and human-centred de-escalation?

1. Executive definition

C.O.R.E. is a multipolar strategic-actor and system-logic framework designed to make power understandable without reducing the world to a single geopolitical narrative.

It examines the historical drivers, expressed interests, structural constraints, security concerns, recurring behavioural patterns, internal contradictions and alternative interpretations that may shape an actor's choices. Its function is explanatory and anticipatory, not justificatory.

C.O.R.E. is therefore not a catalogue of permanent national characters. States change. Governments change. Institutions change. Coalitions change. Strategic cultures evolve. Domestic politics, leadership, technology, demography, economics and shocks can alter behaviour. The framework must remain capable of detecting those changes.

EXPLANATION IS NOT JUSTIFICATION. UNDERSTANDING AN ACTOR'S LOGIC DOES NOT REQUIRE ACCEPTING ITS CLAIMS, METHODS OR CONDUCT.

2. People Before Power

People Before Power is the constitutional principle above C.O.R.E. Power must be understood because its exercise has human consequences. C.O.R.E. therefore studies strategic behaviour without allowing state interest, prestige, deterrence, territorial ambition, institutional survival or geopolitical competition to erase the people living with their consequences.

The older Atlas formulation — From Escalation to Structured De-escalation — remains relevant as a strategic consequence of this principle. C.O.R.E. contributes to de-escalation by improving understanding of what actors perceive as existential, negotiable, humiliating, irreversible or necessary.

The objective is not to make power benign by description. It is to understand the conditions under which power may escalate, adapt, bargain, deter, withdraw, cooperate or miscalculate.

3. The C.O.R.E. doctrine

- Multipolar in observation — no actor, bloc, region or strategic culture defines the default frame.
- Independent in analysis — Atlas does not outsource its judgement to the actor being studied, its adversaries, allies or preferred commentators.
- Unambiguous in principle — understanding different logics does not require moral symmetry or false balance.
- Evidence before architecture — inherited models are tested against observable reality.
- Context before caricature — strategic behaviour is examined in historical, institutional, economic, security and human context.
- Internal plurality — no state, region, civilisation or society is treated as a single mind.
- Change over essence — recurring patterns may be identified, but they are not treated as immutable national characteristics.
- Human consequence — strategic logic is incomplete if the effects on people are omitted.
- Reversibility — every C.O.R.E. assessment remains open to revision.

4. Analytical integrity

Rule	C.O.R.E. application
Observation is not assessment	Observed behaviour, official claims and Atlas interpretation remain distinguishable.
Actor claim is not verified fact	Self-description is evidence about narrative and intent, not automatic proof of reality.
Explanation is not justification	Historical or security context can explain conduct without legitimising it.
Uncertainty is information	Competing explanations and unresolved evidence remain visible.
Confidence follows evidence	No actor profile may be stated more strongly than its evidence supports.
Contradictions are preserved	Behaviour inconsistent with the current profile triggers review rather than silent exclusion.
No fixed essence	Profiles describe current or recurring strategic logic, not immutable identity.
Human decisions remain human-owned	C.O.R.E. supports judgement; it does not automate political or ethical choice.

5. Unit of analysis

C.O.R.E. v1 mixed states, supranational structures, regional groupings and peoples within one list. Version 2.0 makes the unit of analysis explicit.

Unit	Examples of legitimate use	Caution
State actor	A sovereign state when state institutions and strategic behaviour are the relevant unit.	Do not erase internal political, social or institutional plurality.
Supranational / institutional actor	EU, AU, ASEAN, NATO, UN or other institutions when institutional behaviour is being analysed.	Institutional position is not identical to every member's position.
Regional strategic space	Gulf, Sahel, Indo-Pacific, Latin America or other spaces where interaction itself is the object.	A region is not a single actor.
People / national movement	Palestinian, Kurdish or other cases where recognition, representation and political agency require distinct treatment.	Do not collapse population, leadership, armed groups and institutions into one identity.
Non-state strategic actor	Armed groups, technology firms, financial networks or transnational systems where they materially shape strategic outcomes.	Use actor-specific evidence and avoid state analogies where they do not fit.
System / domain	Energy, finance, AI, cyber, maritime or other systems when constraints and dependencies shape behaviour.	System logic does not imply intentional agency.

6. The C.O.R.E. analytical profile

Every mature C.O.R.E. profile should use the same analytical skeleton. This creates comparability without forcing different actors into identical narratives.

Field	Question
Observed Strategic Logic	What recurring strategic objective or organising logic is supported by evidence?
Historical Drivers	Which historical experiences remain materially relevant to present strategic behaviour?
Expressed Interests	What does the actor publicly say it seeks, protects or rejects?
Structural Constraints	What geography, institutions, economy, demography, alliances, capabilities or dependencies constrain choice?
Security / Existential Concerns	What outcomes are treated as threatening to survival, continuity, autonomy, legitimacy, status or identity?
Recurring Behavioural Patterns	Which behaviours recur across sufficiently comparable situations?
Internal Contradictions	Where do stated principles, domestic pressures, capabilities and behaviour diverge?
Alternative Interpretations	What credible competing explanations could account for the same evidence?
Human Consequences	Who bears the consequences of the actor's strategic choices?
Current Evidence	Which observations currently strengthen or weaken the profile?
Confidence	How strongly does the evidence support the present assessment?
Forward Indicators	What observable developments would confirm, weaken or reverse the assessment?

7. Multipolar actor universe

C.O.R.E. v2 no longer defines a permanently closed list of principal actors. The actor universe is dynamic and must follow strategic relevance. The original seven profiles remain part of the lineage, but they are not the boundary of the contemporary framework.

Analytical field	Illustrative coverage
Major powers	United States · China · Russia · India and other states whose capabilities materially shape global systems
European strategic space	European Union · European states · NATO interface where relevant
Asian strategic spaces	Japan · Korean Peninsula · ASEAN / Southeast Asian actors · Indo-Pacific alignments
African strategic spaces	African Union · regional organisations · sovereign states · Sahel and other material theatres
Middle East / Gulf	Gulf states and institutions · Iran · Israel · Palestinian actors and institutions · other relevant regional actors
Latin America & Caribbean	Regional powers, institutions and strategic groupings where materially relevant
Oceania / Pacific	Australia · New Zealand · Pacific states and regional structures where relevant
Transnational / non-state	Technology platforms · armed groups · financial systems · strategic networks where their agency is material

Coverage does not imply equal weight. C.O.R.E. follows materiality. The framework is global in observation, not mechanically exhaustive in every analytical cycle.

8. Legacy C.O.R.E. v1 — preserved and reclassified

The original file contained seven concise actor propositions. Version 2.0 preserves them as historical baseline hypotheses because they document the evolution of Atlas thinking. They are not carried forward as current 'truths' without evidence validation.

Legacy profile	v1 organising proposition	v2 status
United States	Freedom of action within a stable global system.	Inherited hypothesis — validate against current evidence, internal variation and alternative explanations.

Legacy profile	v1 organising proposition	v2 status
China	Recognition, continuity and restoration of historical centrality.	Inherited hypothesis — validate; distinguish official narrative, structural constraints and observed behaviour.
Russia	Security, buffer and dignity after loss of status.	Inherited hypothesis — validate; do not allow historical explanation to dilute accountability or evidence.
European Union	Prevention of chaos through rules, institutions and consensus.	Inherited hypothesis — validate across EU institutions and divergent member-state behaviour.
Global South	Autonomy, dignity and freedom from manipulation.	Retain as a historical category only; replace actor-level treatment with differentiated states, regions and institutions.
Israel	Permanent self-reliance for survival.	Inherited hypothesis — validate across government, institutions, society, security doctrine and changing conditions.
Palestine	Recognition, existence and dignity.	Retain the concern but disaggregate people, representative institutions, governance structures and armed actors.

VERSION 2.0 REPLACES 'STRUCTURAL TRUTH' WITH 'CURRENT ASSESSMENT + CONFIDENCE + ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS + FORWARD INDICATORS'.

9. The Core Collision — revised

C.O.R.E. v1 described world disorder as a collision of existential needs: freedom, recognition, security and dignity, order, autonomy, survival and existence. That remains a useful conceptual insight, but v2 treats it as a collision model rather than a complete description of world politics.

Strategic collision occurs when actors perceive that the protection of one core interest requires the restriction, humiliation, exclusion or defeat of another actor's core interest. Escalation risk increases when those interests are framed as indivisible, when exit paths disappear, when time pressure rises, when domestic legitimacy becomes tied to confrontation, or when actors misread one another's thresholds.

Collision dimension	Analytical question
Interest collision	Which interests are genuinely incompatible and which are merely presented as such?
Threat perception	What does each actor believe the other can or intends to do?
Identity / dignity	Where does compromise become associated with humiliation, erasure or loss of status?
Capability	Which options are materially available, and which are only rhetorical?
Time pressure	Does the actor believe delay improves or worsens its position?
Domestic constraint	Which internal audiences, institutions or political incentives narrow room for manoeuvre?
Exit architecture	Is there a credible way to reduce confrontation without catastrophic loss of face or security?
Human consequence	What civilian, social and generational costs are already being produced by the collision?

10. C.O.R.E. and escalation

C.O.R.E. does not itself prescribe de-escalation. Its role is to identify the strategic realities that a credible de-escalation architecture must understand.

A proposal that ignores an actor's actual constraints, security concerns, domestic legitimacy, perceived humiliation, material capability or historical memory may be normatively attractive yet operationally unusable. Conversely, treating every claimed fear as legitimate would allow strategic narratives to become immunity from scrutiny.

C.O.R.E. therefore maps the problem space. ATLAS Σ provides the human-centred principles and mechanisms through which coexistence and de-escalation can be considered.

C.O.R.E. ASKS: WHY DOES THE COLLISION PERSIST? · ATLAS Σ ASKS: WHAT CONDITIONS MAY ALLOW DIFFERENCE TO COEXIST WITHOUT ESCALATION?

11. Interface with ATLAS Σ

C.O.R.E. finding	Σ relevance
Existential or identity threat	Shared existential ground · dignity before agreement
Humiliation / status loss	Exit without loss of face · respect without relativism
Compressed decision time	Time as a stabilising variable · de-escalation buffers
Binary enemy narratives	Narrative neutralisation
Leadership channel failure	Parallel dialogue layers
Externally forced transformation	Internal evolution cannot be imposed
Trauma / identity persistence	Human maturation and protected internal spaces
Civilian exposure	People Before Power · protection of children and human dignity

12. Interface with the Seven-Layer Intelligence Core

C.O.R.E. profiles are not limited to GEO 06. Strategic behaviour can originate or be constrained across the full Intelligence Core.

Layer	C.O.R.E. contribution
PLN 01 · Planetary Systems	Physical geography, climate, water, resources and environmental constraints that shape strategic choices.
SPE 02 · Species Level	Shared human vulnerabilities and coordination problems that transcend individual actors.
CIV 03 · Civilization	Historical memory, cultural identity, legitimacy and long-wave narratives.
HUM 04 · Human Interface	Leadership, perception, psychology, trust, cognition and decision behaviour.
STR 05 · Strategic Domains	Energy, infrastructure, finance, cyber, AI, space, logistics and dependencies.
GEO 06 · Geopolitics	State behaviour, alliances, coercion, diplomacy, deterrence and power balance.
OBS 07 · Observation	Evidence, pattern recognition, competing explanations, confidence and forward indicators.

13. Operational use across Atlas

Atlas system	Use of C.O.R.E.
Breaking Intelligence	Adds actor/system context after a material development is detected; never overrides event evidence.
Daily Intelligence	Supports doctrine–interest–action–contradiction–convergence analysis and disciplined multipolar interpretation.
Global Synthesis	Helps connect actor behaviour to structural system change without reducing synthesis to state narratives.
Atlas Live	Provides contextual logic behind observed spatial patterns while preserving observation ≠ intent.
GSSCM	Adds strategic context to capacity and responsibility without contaminating quantitative evidence.
AIC	Provides structured actor/system logic for comparison, scenario analysis and decision support.
AGE	Helps distinguish external strategic change from organisational claims and commercial interpretation.
Atlas Protocol Institute	Supports executive and institutional decision context, especially under pressure and uncertainty.

14. Evidence and confidence protocol

A C.O.R.E. profile is publishable or operationally usable only when the analyst can identify the evidence supporting its main propositions and the principal uncertainty surrounding them.

Confidence	Meaning
HIGH	Multiple independent and relevant evidence streams support the assessment; credible alternatives have been tested and do not materially overturn it.
MEDIUM	The assessment is supported but important uncertainty, internal variation or competing interpretation remains.
LOW	The assessment is provisional, dependent on limited evidence, contested interpretation or rapidly changing conditions.
INSUFFICIENT	Available evidence does not support a responsible actor/system-level conclusion.

Confidence applies to the assessment, not to the importance of the actor. A strategically important actor may still require LOW or INSUFFICIENT confidence on a specific proposition.

15. Update and review triggers

- Leadership or regime change that materially alters decision structures.
- War, ceasefire, alliance change or strategic shock.
- Major economic, technological, demographic or institutional transition.
- Material contradiction between the standing profile and observed behaviour.
- New primary evidence concerning doctrine, strategy, capability or internal constraint.
- Persistent divergence between official narrative and operational behaviour.
- Change in the actor's strategic environment that alters incentives or available options.
- Evidence that the unit of analysis itself is too broad, too narrow or internally incoherent.

C.O.R.E. profiles should not be rewritten merely because a news cycle changes. They should be revised when the structural assessment changes or when evidence reveals that the previous model no longer fits reality.

16. Prohibited interpretations

- C.O.R.E. is not a moral ranking of peoples, states, cultures or civilisations.
- It is not a deterministic theory of national behaviour.
- It is not a justification framework for aggression, repression, occupation, terrorism or violations of international law.
- It is not a claim that official doctrine equals actual intent.
- It is not a requirement to treat competing claims as equally credible.
- It is not a static list of seven actors.
- It is not a substitute for current evidence, country expertise or theatre-specific analysis.
- It is not a prediction engine.
- It is not ATLAS Σ; understanding strategic reality and designing de-escalatory conditions are distinct analytical functions.

17. Governance of change

C.O.R.E. is a living analytical framework. Its structure should remain stable enough to support comparison over time, while individual profiles and analytical categories remain revisable.

Change type	Governance
Actor-profile update	Revise when evidence materially changes the assessment; preserve prior version or changelog.
New actor / system	Add when strategic materiality justifies persistent coverage.
Category change	Doctrine-level review required because comparability and historical continuity may be affected.
Methodology change	Must remain compatible with the Atlas Intelligence Methodology and System & Doctrine Master File.
Normative change	C.O.R.E. may not override People Before Power or the Seven Core Principles.
Historical correction	Correct transparently; do not silently rewrite lineage.

18. Current institutional baseline

Element	v2.0 baseline
Document role	Strategic Reality Framework within the Atlas Institutional Core Package
Primary function	Understand actor/system logic, constraints, collisions and behavioural patterns
Core doctrine	Multipolar in observation · Independent in analysis · Unambiguous in principle
Constitutional foundation	People Before Power
Epistemic foundation	Evidence-governed · reversible · confidence-proportional
Actor universe	Dynamic; not limited to the original seven profiles
Legacy status	v1 preserved as historical analytical lineage
De-escalation interface	ATLAS Σ
Methodological authority	Atlas Intelligence Methodology
Highest institutional authority	THE ATLAS PROTOCOL — System & Doctrine Master File v3.0

19. Business continuity and handover

C.O.R.E. must remain usable without undocumented founder knowledge. A successor analyst should be able to understand why a profile exists, which evidence supports it, what alternatives were considered, how confident Atlas is, and what would trigger revision.

- Maintain a current profile register and version history.
- Retain evidence references for material propositions.
- Record alternative interpretations and unresolved contradictions.
- Separate structural baseline from current-cycle developments.
- Preserve archived v1 material as lineage, not as current doctrine.
- Document additions to the actor universe and the reason for inclusion.
- Ensure all C.O.R.E. outputs remain compatible with People Before Power, the Atlas Compass and the Intelligence Methodology.

20. Closing statement

The world is not composed of actors who experience reality in the same way. Power, history, security, dignity, identity, capability and fear interact differently across systems. Durable strategic understanding begins by recognising those differences without surrendering analytical independence.

C.O.R.E. exists to make those realities legible.

It does not ask Atlas to accept every narrative. It asks Atlas to understand why narratives, interests and constraints matter; to test them against evidence; to recognise contradiction; and to identify where collisions may become dangerous for people.

UNDERSTAND POWER. PRESERVE EVIDENCE. RECOGNISE DIFFERENCE. KEEP PEOPLE BEFORE POWER.

Appendix A — Standard C.O.R.E. Profile Template

Field	Required content
Profile identity	Actor / system · version · date · analyst / production source · status
Unit of analysis	State / institution / regional space / people or movement / non-state actor / system
Observed Strategic Logic	Concise evidence-governed organising assessment
Historical Drivers	Only historically relevant drivers with current analytical relevance
Expressed Interests	Attributed official or representative positions
Structural Constraints	Material constraints on available choices
Security / Existential Concerns	Perceived threats, clearly distinguished from Atlas validation
Recurring Behavioural Patterns	Patterns supported across multiple comparable observations
Internal Contradictions	Divergence between narrative, capability, domestic pressures and behaviour
Alternative Interpretations	Credible competing explanations
Human Consequences	Material impact on civilians, society and future generations
Current Evidence	Primary and corroborating evidence relevant to the present profile
Confidence	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW / INSUFFICIENT
Forward Indicators	Observable conditions that strengthen, weaken or reverse the assessment
Last structural review	Date and reason for latest structural revision

Appendix B — Legacy-to-v2 terminology map

C.O.R.E. v1	C.O.R.E. v2
Core Logic	Observed Strategic Logic
Historical Root	Historical Drivers
Existential Fear	Security / Existential Concerns
Behavioural Pattern	Recurring Behavioural Patterns
Structural Truth	Current Assessment + Confidence
Fixed actor list	Dynamic Multipolar Actor Universe
Global South as one actor	Differentiated states, institutions and regional strategic spaces
Implicit single explanation	Alternative Interpretations required
No explicit human-impact field	Human Consequences required
No explicit revision trigger	Forward Indicators + Review Triggers

Appendix C — Core C.O.R.E. production principles

- 01 People Before Power.
- 02 Understand power without adopting its narrative.
- 03 Multipolar in observation. Independent in analysis. Unambiguous in principle.
- 04 No geographic centre. No geopolitical ownership. One evidentiary standard.
- 05 Observation is not assessment.
- 06 Explanation is not justification.
- 07 Actor claim is not verified fact.
- 08 Evidence before architecture.
- 09 Internal plurality before national caricature.

- 10 Confidence shall never exceed the available evidence.
- 11 Contradictory evidence is preserved and tested.
- 12 Structural hypotheses remain reversible.
- 13 Human consequence is part of strategic reality.
- 14 C.O.R.E. maps the collision; ATLAS Σ frames de-escalatory conditions.
- 15 No current profile without a review path.

Appendix D — Source & lineage register

Source / artifact	Role in C.O.R.E. v2.0
C.O.R.E. File v1 — Core Ontological Reality of the Earth	Foundational January 2026 analytical concept; retained as historical lineage.
THE ATLAS PROTOCOL — System & Doctrine Master File v3.0	Highest institutional authority; People Before Power, Atlas Compass, multipolarity, system boundaries and governance.
Atlas Intelligence Methodology — Institutional Master File v1.0	Methodological authority for evidence, systems thinking, multiperspectivity, uncertainty, reversibility and self-audit.
ATLAS Σ — Principles & Mechanisms for Human-Centered De-Escalation	Companion framework for dignity, coexistence and de-escalation; scheduled for institutional alignment as v2.0.
Atlas subsystem Master Files and SOPs	Operational sources for current system behaviour, evidence governance and product-specific use of C.O.R.E.

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