

ATLAS Special Intelligence Estimate (SIE)

SIE-001: *The Long War*

Version 1.0 — Official Publication

Classification: ATLAS Intelligence Estimate (Open Source)

Date: 24 July 2026

Executive Assessment

The international system has entered a **protracted era of strategic competition** rather than a temporary period of crises. This period—designated by ATLAS as **The Long War**—is unlikely to culminate in a single decisive conflict. Instead, it will consist of decades of overlapping military, economic, technological, cyber, intelligence, and informational contests between major powers and their proxies.

Unlike the Cold War, today's confrontation is **multi-domain, multipolar, and continuous**. Military operations occur simultaneously with sanctions, cyber operations, industrial competition, AI development, influence campaigns, maritime coercion, and proxy wars.

The principal danger is **strategic exhaustion rather than strategic surprise**.

ATLAS Definition

The Long War is the sustained global competition among major powers and transnational actors to reshape the international order through continuous pressure below, at, and occasionally above the threshold of conventional war.

Core Drivers

ATLAS identifies six structural drivers.

1. Revisionist Great Powers

China and Russia seek to revise elements of the post-1945 international order while the United States attempts to preserve strategic advantages.

2. Regional Powers

Iran, North Korea, Türkiye, India, Pakistan, Israel and others increasingly pursue independent strategic agendas that complicate great-power competition.

3. Technological Revolution

Artificial Intelligence

Autonomous weapons

Quantum technologies

Space systems

Cyber warfare

Biotechnology

Advanced manufacturing

These technologies increasingly determine national power.

4. Economic Weaponization

Sanctions

Energy leverage

Supply-chain control

Rare earth minerals

Financial systems

Shipping routes

Trade restrictions

Economics has become a battlefield.

5. Information Warfare

Narratives increasingly shape political outcomes.

The objective is often not persuasion but **erosion of trust**.

6. Fragmentation of International Institutions

Many international organizations remain active but possess declining coercive authority.

Power is shifting toward coalitions and regional arrangements.

Current Active Fronts

ATLAS presently identifies the following theaters as components of The Long War.

Tier One

- Ukraine
 - Middle East
 - Taiwan Strait
 - South China Sea
 - Arctic
 - Cyber Domain
 - Space Domain
-

Tier Two

- Sahel
 - Horn of Africa
 - Balkans
 - Caucasus
 - Korean Peninsula
 - Western Pacific Islands
-

Character of Conflict

Most future conflicts are assessed likely to remain:

- Limited
- Regional
- Economically disruptive
- Politically significant
- Militarily constrained

The objective for most actors is **strategic advantage without uncontrolled escalation.**

Strategic Indicators

ATLAS will monitor the following indicators continuously.

Military

Force mobilizations

Industrial production

Strategic logistics

Missile deployments

Naval concentrations

Political

Alliance changes

Government instability

Leadership succession

Domestic unrest

Economic

Energy prices

Shipping disruptions

Defense production

Critical mineral availability

Financial sanctions

Technology

AI deployment

Semiconductor access

Cyber campaigns

Satellite launches

Autonomous systems

Information

Major influence operations

State propaganda

Election interference

Narrative convergence

Principal Risks (2026–2031)

ATLAS assesses the highest-probability strategic risks as:

1. Continued Russia–Ukraine attritional conflict.
 2. Sustained Iran–Israel confrontation with intermittent U.S. involvement.
 3. Chinese coercive pressure on Taiwan below invasion threshold.
 4. Expansion of AI-enabled intelligence and military decision support.
 5. Persistent cyber campaigns against critical infrastructure.
 6. Maritime disruptions affecting global trade.
-

Low Probability — High Impact Events

ATLAS continuously watches for:

- Nuclear weapon employment
 - Taiwan invasion
 - Collapse of a major state
 - NATO–Russia direct conflict
 - Major financial system disruption
 - Space warfare causing loss of satellite networks
-

Intelligence Confidence

Overall Confidence: Moderate–High

Confidence is high regarding the existence of sustained strategic competition.

Confidence is lower regarding the timing of specific flashpoints, which remain contingent on political decisions and crisis dynamics.

Collection Priorities

Future ATLAS Daily Briefings will emphasize:

- Strategic warning
- Escalation indicators
- Military readiness
- Alliance cohesion
- Defense industrial capacity
- Technology competition
- Energy security
- Global shipping
- Information warfare
- Emerging intelligence signals

Implications for ATLAS

SIE-001 establishes the analytical framework for future ATLAS reporting.

Beginning with Version 1.0:

- Daily Briefings will reference this estimate when assessing major developments.
- Weekly Reviews will evaluate whether events strengthen, weaken, or modify its judgments.
- Future SIEs will refine specific theaters (for example, Strait of Hormuz, Taiwan, AI competition, or European security) while remaining consistent with this baseline unless evidence warrants revision.

This document is designated the foundational intelligence estimate for the ATLAS analytical series. It serves as the reference model against which subsequent intelligence estimates and daily reporting will be assessed and updated as the global strategic environment evolves.