

Two scenarios should be thoroughly tested and exercised now as part of the 2028 election, so that contingency planning is ready should the current trajectory continue, with alternatives developed if a reversal is sought.

	Scenario A: Managed Multipolarity	Scenario B: Fragment Orders
Posture	This scenario is about a more limited U.S. engagement with narrower priorities, continued transactional behavior, and expectations of greater burden-sharing. • U.S. maintains some level of participation in international defense organizations but reduces its large-scale military interventions. • Maintains a presence in major, world institutions like the U.N., World Bank, etc. • Builds in greater U.S. economic competitiveness and invests in long-term technology leadership.	This scenario assumes a rapid retreat from alliances, institutions, and international engagement for crisis management. • The U.S. greatly reduces commitments to allies and ends some, either way, our support is clearly conditional and transactional. • Similarly, the U.S. ends most of its participation in international institutions and any remaining development funding is conditioned on the benefit to us. • Greater inward focus on domestic priorities
Power Gap	There is a risk that China will increase its economic influence through engagement and setting advanced technology pace and standards. The EU may continue moving away from the U.S. but will still face challenges unifying in this new order. Second-tier powers will likely play great powers against each other and regional blocs will find it more effective to deal with crises in climate, displaced populations, and resource shortages.	The rapid power vacuum allows China to rapidly increase its influence in areas where it is already gaining, like Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Russia gains ground and exploits its bordering and near zones. Regional actors now have oversized influence, like Brazil, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others. This creates a messy, complicated geopolitical landscape to navigate. Non-state actors fill in permissive environments where governance collapses or is weak, including criminal networks and terrorists.
Stability Prospects	The international power system becomes more crowded and chaotic but may be adaptive enough to continue functioning.	The rapidly shifting, fragmented, and uneven power dynamics may cause miscalculation, WMD proliferation, economic instability, and humanitarian crises in unexpected places.