

# SAIS Crisis Simulation



# 2027

## State of the World

This document is your guide to the world's relevant political, economic, social, and military developments up to December 28, 2027. The State of the World is not speculative, nor is it meant to perfectly capture the “real world” – rather, it provides background relevant to this year's crisis scenario.

Use the information provided here as a starting point for your country team's decision-making. This document can be used as a helpful reference during the sim to understand the dynamics going on in each country involved and can help shape your team's strategic thinking.

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# Bulgaria

**Year 2027 | Prime Minister Kostadin Kostadinov | Population 6,260,000**

## **Political Affairs**

In 2024, Mariya Gabriel ascended to the Prime Minister position, promising to institute constitutional and judicial reforms. Gabriel's goals, however, were left unrealized due to government corruption, the unpopularity of the GERB/PP-DB coalition, and the rising far-right pro-Russian "Revival" party.

In 2025, Bulgarian officials known to support Ukraine began dying under unusual circumstances. Former Prime Minister and PP-DB party leader, Kiril Petkov, was fatally thrown out of a window by an unknown assailant in what is now known as the Defenestration of Sofia. Defense Minister, Todor Tagarev, perished from a horse-trampling. International media suspected Russian involvement in the Bulgarian officials' mysterious deaths. Russia's potential connection to these mysterious deaths, however, did not slow Revival's increase in popularity, as it continued to gain seats in local elections. Public allegations of corruption got stronger, though Gabriel's administration did not substantively address these concerns. Further deaths among Bulgarian officials, economic decline, and mounting concerns of corruption caused PP-DB to dissolve its coalition with GERB. President Radev called a snap election in hopes of creating a government. An anti-corruption coalition led by PP-DB barely defeated the Revival-led opposition group.

In mid 2026, worsening economic conditions prompted a government collapse, and the opposition successfully passed a vote of no-confidence. In another snap election, neither the PP-DB, nor Revival could form a government. President Radev temporarily tasked the PP-DB party to lead an interim government until the 2026 election. In late 2026, Revival's leader Kostadin Kostadinov defeated Radev. Revival Vice Chairman Tsoncho Ganev won the Prime Minister position. Reports from French Intelligence suggest that Russia was involved in Bulgarian election interference.

The Vasill Levski Military Union, a pro-Russian paramilitary group, gained prominence in conjunction with Revival's rise. The paramilitary group shares Revival's mission of "One People," referring to a shared history and people with Russia, though it operates independently. Moreover, Vasill Levski has been outspoken in advocating against the EU and NATO.

## **Economic Affairs**

Bulgaria's GDP grew by an average annual rate of 3.5% from 2024-2026, which was driven by its international trade and services sector. In accordance with his anti-Western platform,

Kostadinov reduced trade with EU members by 30%, seeking stronger economic ties with Russia. In 2027, Kostadinov reached an agreement with Russia to remove protectionist economic policy and expand bilateral trade. Reduced trade with the EU, however, contributed to lower overall net exports and reduced GDP growth to 2% in 2027.

Gabriel's economic policy centered around integration into the Eurozone. Bulgaria failed integration conditions on two separate attempts during her administration, primarily due to inflation rates of 5-6%, which were well above the 2% maximum inflation standard. Kostadinov has since dropped aspirations to join the Eurozone.

### **Social Affairs**

Under Kostadinov's leadership, support for Western policies has been significantly repressed, and support for a referendum on leaving NATO has been growing. Bulgarian media has condemned the EU, NATO, and other Western influences, claiming that they had taken advantage of Bulgaria. Many of Revival's political opponents were arrested for corruption, while others fled Bulgaria, fearing harsh persecution. Kostadinov initiated plans to reshape Bulgarian education. The new curriculum is more critical of Western ideas and offers a Russian perspective on global events since the Russian Revolution.

Kostadinov's government has delegated Vasill Levski to implement greater policing against political opponents and Bulgarian ethnic minorities. Kostadinov's propaganda has emphasized a homogenous Bulgarian society as a critical pillar of its political future. Bulgarian ethnic minorities have been subject to an increasing number of violent incidents. Many Bulgarian minorities and political opponents have sought asylum in Western countries, though very few have successfully fled Bulgaria, due to strict visa restrictions. 50,000 Bulgarian minorities have been internally displaced, with that number rapidly growing.

### **Military Affairs**

Kostadinov has shifted Bulgaria away from being a Western partner and has distanced it from its NATO/EU allies. Kostadinov has instead improved Bulgaria's security relations with Russia. Kostadinov signed a security agreement with Russia in 2027 to boost cooperative measures between the two countries. He also expanded Bulgaria's defense expenditure to 2.5% of its GDP. Kostadinov's defense strategy includes a goal to reach a standing army of 50,000 troops by 2030.



# China

**Year 2027 | President Xi Jinping | Population 1,406,940,000**

## **Political Affairs**

President Xi Jinping's popularity rose as China's global position increased. The breakthrough in Taiwanese reunification and China's unchallenged diplomatic position boosted Xi's status within the CCP and among the public. Xi, however, still faces considerable domestic challenges to continue China's momentum in fulfilling its vision. China's aging and stagnant population, the mounting economic pressure on Belt and Road Initiative project financing, and food security's impact on China's trade slowed down China's economic growth. China's 15th five-year plan sought to address these concerns and put China back on track to realizing its hegemonic destiny. The plan contained an even stronger emphasis on science and technology, like AI, to boost productivity and economic growth. Increased and strengthened maritime assets were partially designed to alleviate food security concerns and limit food imports.

Further, Xi highlighted the importance of foreign relations, even with the West, to expand investment opportunities and strengthen Chinese diplomacy. A renewed focus on foreign relations allows China to gain outside economic sponsorship on BRI projects. This aims to reduce the pressure on China to finance such projects.

## **Economic Affairs**

In 2026, China's population reached an annual growth rate of -1.0%. Its median age has continued to rise, indicating a reduced workforce. Low housing demand has continued to limit China's economic activity. As recently as 2026, China's economy slowed to 1.5% GDP growth. Despite strong output in the manufacturing, agriculture, and service sectors, decreased consumer spending has prevented higher economic growth. Furthermore, while the Belt and Road initiative has generated increased trade patterns between China and BRI member states, many developing countries have rejected China's investment offers, fearing crippling levels of debt.

## **Social Affairs**

Chinese public opinion has generally remained skeptical of Western countries' intentions with China. With Japan's rise, Chinese media have increasingly framed Japan as a significant threat to China's security, and favorability of Japan among Chinese citizens has plummeted to 5%.

Overall support for Xi's leadership has limited the activity of social disturbances. Nonetheless, China continues to face several social challenges, in addition to international criticism. Western critics continue to condemn China for its treatment of the Uyghur minorities. The United Nations

published a series of stories detailing the human rights abuses against the Uyghurs, though they have found little traction in deterring China's response.

Following China's inroads in advancing reunification with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Taiwanese activists fled to Western nations, where they continued to advocate for self-determination. Though many Western nations are nominally sympathetic to the activists' causes, most people do not expect a significant international response, as they believe that taking action against China became impractical after Taiwan's capitulation to China's reunification demands. Some CCP officials have feared growing discontent in the younger generations. Unemployment for Chinese people aged 24-35 in urban settings reached a staggering 25% in 2026. Cultural expectations surrounding marriage have increased social pressure on Chinese youth. Nearly 45% of women aged 25-29 were single in 2026, up from about 9% in 2000. China's economic inequality has worsened, leaving many young individuals feeling left behind.

### **Military Affairs**

In early 2025, China began a series of military exercises off the coast of Kinmen. China privately notified Taiwanese leadership that Taiwan would need to recognize PRC authority over Taiwan lest China reunify with Taiwan using non-peaceful means. From early- to mid-2025, seeing no other way to avoid confrontation with China, Taiwan reluctantly acknowledged PRC rule and entered negotiations over a peaceful transition of power over to Beijing. On October 16, 2025, China agreed to a ten-year regime transition. In order to maintain peace during the transition, China recognized the Taiwanese government's role in assisting with the regime change. The Taiwanese government agreed to help the PRC oversee the transition, stifle political opposition, and quell domestic unrest within Taiwan. In exchange, As a result of peace talks, China vowed not to leverage Taiwan's strategic military advantages during the transition period.

China's maritime focus has pivoted to the East China Sea and Yellow Sea. Japan increased its freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in the region, prompting China to respond by mobilizing naval and coast guard presence in areas with Japanese FONOP activity. China also increased its coast guard and naval activity in the region, citing foreign vessels' passage near China's EEZ as a "risk to China's national security." Moreover, China's fishing and research vessels have ventured closer to Japan and South Korea. China's presence in the East China Sea, even more than Taiwan's cross-strait regime transition, has alarmed rival states, such as Japan and South Korea. China has seen fewer challenges to its maritime power in the South China Sea. As such, China does not consider the South China Sea to be a military priority.

# France

**Year 2027 | President Marine Le Pen | Population 66,570,000**

## **Political Affairs**

Marine Le Pen won the 2027 Presidential Election in April, ushering in a far-right government. Her campaign stressed nationalist, nativist, and anti-globalist beliefs. President Marine Le Pen has, so far, pursued an assertive nationalistic agenda. Her administration has focused on policies aimed at strengthening border controls, limiting immigration, and renegotiating France's role within the European Union. Le Pen's presidency faces both domestic and international scrutiny, with debates intensifying over the direction of French foreign policy and its implications for the broader European landscape.

During the last years of his term, Macron continued to clash with Erdogan over Macron's views on Islamic extremists; despite political differences, the two countries maintained strong economic ties.

## **Economic Affairs**

France continues to have one of the strongest economies in the European Union. Despite economic reforms which have largely targeted non-French workers, the unemployment rate is below 7% and GDP is set to increase by .2% by the end of the year. Social turmoil is moderate as Le Pen continues pushing nationalistic-based reforms, but protests against these nationalistic, "French-first" reforms are confined to minority groups.

France has also intensified efforts to transition to a greener economy. This involves increased investments in renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and eco-friendly technologies, along with a joint venture (undertaken with Italy) to increase nuclear energy production.

The EastMed pipeline, set to break ground in 2028, will channel massive volumes of natural gas from reserves located in Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt to the EU through Italy. France has openly supported the nations' UNCLOS-based maritime territorial claims, by deploying its naval forces alongside them, while refuting Turkey's competing claims as baseless.

## **Social Affairs**

The social landscape in France has witnessed notable shifts under President Marine Le Pen's administration. Le Pen's emphasis on nationalism and nativism has influenced discussions around national identity. The government has implemented policies aimed at promoting a distinct French identity, with efforts to limit cultural influences perceived as divergent from traditional French values. Debates on assimilation and integration have gained prominence, stirring discussions about the definition of Frenchness in a multicultural context.

The nationalist reforms proposed by President Le Pen have sparked pockets of social unrest, particularly among minority groups. Protests against the "French-first" policies have emerged, voicing concerns about potential discrimination and exclusion. The government faces the challenge of balancing its nationalist agenda with addressing the grievances of marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the government has undertaken initiatives to reshape the education system, incorporating a revised curriculum that aligns with the administration's nationalist narrative. This includes changes in history education to emphasize specific aspects of French history and identity. These alterations have triggered debates about the role of education in shaping national consciousness. In response to these debates, the Le Pen administration has expressed concerns about media influences that are perceived as contrary to national interests. While not imposing direct censorship, there have been discussions around media regulations to ensure alignment with the government's narrative. This has raised debates on the balance between national security interests and the preservation of freedom of expression.

Finally, the government's focus on border controls and national security has led to the implementation of stricter measures. Discussions around the balance between security and civil liberties have intensified, with critics expressing concerns about potential infringements on individual freedoms. The administration contends that these measures are essential for safeguarding national interests and ensuring public safety.

Overall, the social developments in France reflect a complex interplay between the pursuit of a distinct national identity, concerns about social cohesion, and debates over the balance between individual liberties and collective security. The Le Pen administration faces ongoing challenges in navigating these dynamics while attempting to reshape the societal fabric of France.

### **Military Affairs**

In 2023, France's military was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the world, with an extensive fleet of aerial tanker planes and helicopters and a remarkable count of destroyer warships. In recent years, it has invested in tank-busting kamikaze drones and added substantially to its air defense. France, Germany, and Spain have finished developing the Franco-German-Spanish Future Combat Air System, or FCAS (known in France as the système combat aérien du futur, or SCAF). Finally, France and Germany developed the next-generation tank known as the Main Ground Combat System, or MGCS. France also signed a landmark mutual defense treaty with Greece in 2021, with the two conducting increasingly frequent large-scale naval exercises throughout the Mediterranean. Turkey has repeatedly condemned these exercises.

Recently, President Le Pen has repeatedly and vehemently vocalized her desires to remove France from NATO's integrated military command, though little has come of this so far in terms of policy.

# Germany

**Year 2027 | Chancellor Friedrich Merz | Population 83,800,000**

## **Political Affairs**

The SDP continued to lose popularity in 2024 as inflation caused many Germans greater financial stress and wariness of public spending. The party's factions continued to quarrel and in September of 2025, voters elected the CDU and FDP coalition government as their 21st Bundestag. Friedrich Merz became the new chancellor with his pro-business and pro-market economic views. Since taking office, the German economy has grown steadily and allowed the government more room when allocating budgetary resources. The government has steadily been increasing its spending on defense since 2023 and in the beginning of 2026 decided to reinstate mandatory conscription for the military. This was seen as widely unpopular, especially among younger Germans and despite Merz's fiscal policy success, the AfD has continued to grow which compels Merz and his party to proceed with caution. The rise of populist movements across Europe including France and Italy has influenced the political landscape, creating internal pressures for Germany to assert its leadership while managing dissent within its borders. Germany pursued a balanced approach, navigating the delicate balance between safeguarding its borders and upholding its humanitarian values. Striking this equilibrium became essential to managing internal stability while fostering unity with EU allies in the face of external threats

## **Economic Affairs**

The German economy is strong as it has seen an increase in its GDP growth rate for the past 7 years with GDP reaching 5.4 Trillion at the end of 2026. It continues to be a major economy in the EU with its manufacturing excellence, export-oriented policies, skilled workforce, and innovative research and development sectors. The country has increased its domestic energy production to 60% of its needs. While Germany is no longer reliant on Russian energy, its neighbors in southeastern Europe (Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, and Serbia) are, causing German officials to maintain a close eye on supply lines in case of an unexpected cut in Russian supply which would require their assistance. Even though inflation plagued the nation in the post-COVID years, inflation peaked in 2024 and has managed to hover around European Central Bank targets of 2%.

## **Social Affairs**

New mandatory conscription laws have received mixed reviews from the public - with younger Germans being particularly outraged. Immigration has been curbed way down since 2025 as Germany continues to work with other regional partners, mainly Turkey, to negotiate on migrants and its border policies. Earlier this year Merz and Erdogan solidified their ties with renewed commitments of German funds in exchange for Turkey's promise to manage the movement of

migrants and refugees. However, the Turkish-German population has become more active in recent years. Individuals often get involved in political discussions, putting pressure on liberalizing the country's migration policies. The government has not responded to these demands in any meaningful way due to the political fragility of the situation and is continuing to cause frustration between the Turkish-German population and more right-wing voters.

### **Military Affairs Stance**

Germany has invested in modernizing its military capabilities, with a focus on technological advancements, cyber defense, and rapid response forces. As a NATO member, Germany actively participates in alliance activities and contributes to regional security. Ongoing tensions in Eastern Europe specifically involving Russian aggression necessitate a robust defense strategy, and Germany seeks to strike a balance between deterrence and diplomatic resolutions to avoid the escalation of conflicts. Since Merz came to power he has been trying to cooperate more with other EU leaders on matters of defense leading to the development of the Franco-German-Spanish Future Combat Air System, or FCAS. Germany and France have also developed a next-generation tank known as the Main Ground Combat System, or MGCS.

# Greece

**Year 2027 | Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis | Population 10,400,000**

## **Political Affairs**

In recent years, Greece has experienced enough political instability to warrant concern from its larger EU partners. The New Democracy party, led by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, achieved a significant victory in recent elections but fell short of a majority. Mitsotakis' premiership has been marred by controversies, including a spying scandal and accusations of centralizing power. The political atmosphere is characterized by a lack of a clear majority, making coalition building challenging, with the potential for a technocrat-led grand coalition. This instability raises concerns about Greece's political direction and policy-making quality. Additionally, while Greece continues to participate actively in EU initiatives, particularly in energy diversification, its internal political instability and contentious social issues pose challenges to fully aligning with broader EU policies and values. From this political disunity, diplomatic outreach from strategic partner France has strengthened the countries' bond.

## **Economic Affairs**

The Mitsotakis government's pro-business approach has attracted investment and driven initiatives like digitalization and decarbonization of the economy. However, concerns remain about the handling of corruption, with perceived leniency towards tax evaders and financiers accused of criminal activities. Chief among Greece's economic projects is the EastMed pipeline, the extraction and funneling of gas reserves from Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel to continental Europe, through Greece and Italy.

## **Social Affairs**

Greece confronts several profound social challenges. The treatment of migrants and asylum seekers remains a contentious issue, with international criticism over alleged pushbacks and poor detention conditions. Civil society, particularly organizations focused on migration, experienced a constricted operational environment amid accusations and legal obstacles. Media freedom faces significant threats, including surveillance scandals and violence against journalists, contributing to a sharp decline in press freedom rankings. Additionally, Greece struggles with racism and intolerance, evidenced by increased incidents of hate crimes against refugees, migrants, and LGBT individuals. In geopolitics, this manifests as opposition to neighboring Turkey, often blamed for Greece's share of the migrant crisis. As far-right voices have gained a noticeable foothold in the political discourse, nationalist sentiment swirls around the "Megali Idea", a mythic narrative uniting Greek peoples throughout the Balkans and into Turkey, restoring historic lands lost centuries ago.

## **Military Affairs**

With Hellenic-US joint operability strengthened to all-time highs under the Biden administration, Greece's robust military presence is historically linked to U.S. patronage. France also continues to be a critical ally as underlined by their 2021 mutual defense agreement. France vocally supports the bilateral partnership under the premise of international maritime law and regularly runs exercises with the Greek government.

Greece's military strategy is marked by a significant shift towards modernization and regional assertiveness. This includes a comprehensive upgrade of its air force, with key acquisitions such as F-35 fighter jets and Rafale aircraft, emphasizing an enhanced air defense capability. Greece's Navy, while smaller than many neighboring countries, possesses several key advantages, notably its submarine capability.

Concurrently, Greece is actively expanding its diplomatic and military alliances, particularly in response to Turkey's regional activities in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean Seas. The bolstered U.S.-Greece defense relationship, highlighted by the enhanced Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement of 2021, supports this strategic direction. Greece's defense spending remains robust, surpassing 3% GDP, indicating a strong commitment to maintaining a formidable military presence in the region.

# Italy

**Year 2027 | President Giorgia Meloni | Population 58,200,000**

## **Political Affairs**

In 2024, President Giorgia Meloni's administration launched an ambitious initiative to position Italy as a global technology and innovation hub. The government collaborated with leading tech companies, investing heavily in research and development, fostering a culture of innovation that attracted skilled professionals and propelled Italy into a new era of technological advancement.

By 2026, Italy, under President Meloni's leadership, embarked on a bold journey toward sustainability. The government unveiled a comprehensive plan for a renewable energy revolution, committing to phasing out fossil fuels. Significant investments in nuclear, solar, and wind energy projects were made, and ambitious targets were set to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, signaling Italy's commitment to combating climate change. Italy has also continued to decrease its reliance on Russian gas, and what it does import now comes primarily from Algeria.

Moving into 2027, President Meloni's administration prioritized regional collaboration to address geopolitical challenges. Italy played a pivotal role in fostering stability in the Mediterranean, working closely with neighboring countries on security initiatives, economic development, and joint efforts to manage migration more effectively. Meloni has threatened the institution of a naval blockade to halt illegal immigration, but the cost has proven insurmountable thus far when it comes to enforcing such a policy.

President Meloni's administration maintains a robust commitment to regional security through active participation in NATO initiatives. Despite her emphasis on regional collaboration, Italy, under Meloni's leadership, recognizes the strategic importance of the transatlantic alliance. The government views NATO as a cornerstone of collective defense and security, fostering stability not only in the Mediterranean but also on a broader international scale. Italy continues to contribute to NATO's objectives, including joint military exercises, intelligence-sharing, and collaborative efforts to counter emerging threats.

Italy under Meloni's leadership is strategically aligned with the principles of the EU. The emphasis on economic growth and collaboration with neighboring countries extends to a broader commitment to EU values. Italy actively participates in EU initiatives, advocating for policies that strengthen the economic resilience of member states and foster greater cohesion within the union.

## **Economic Affairs**

Italy's economy experienced a notable resurgence under President Giorgia Meloni's leadership. The government's strategic investments in technology and innovation were unpredictably successful, propelling Italy into a leading position in the tech sector. A wave of start-ups, coupled with advancements in artificial intelligence and green technologies, contributed significantly to economic growth.

The renewable energy revolution initiated by President Meloni in 2026 had a profound impact on Italy's energy landscape. The country made substantial progress in transitioning to sustainable and clean energy sources, reducing its dependence on fossil fuels. This not only enhanced environmental sustainability but also opened new economic opportunities in the burgeoning green economy.

President Meloni's focus on inclusive economic growth yielded positive results by early 2027. Policies aimed at reducing income inequality and supporting small businesses created a more resilient and equitable economy. Italy experienced increased social mobility, with a growing middle class playing a pivotal role in driving economic expansion. Despite global challenges, Italy's economy remained resilient in 2027, thanks to proactive government measures. The nation's emphasis on youth empowerment and education has led to a skilled and innovative workforce, positioning Italy competitively in the global market.

The EastMed pipeline, set to break ground in 2028, will channel massive volumes of natural gas from reserves located in Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt to the EU through Italy.

## **Social Affairs**

Under the new policies implemented by the Meloni administration, individuals awaiting repatriation may face a waiting period of up to 18 months. More detention centers have been built in isolated areas. Despite this, Italy is averaging 160,000 migrants each year who arrive by sea; migrants also make up about 15% of the total population, up 5% from 2022. Italian society hasn't faced this type of an immigration surge since 2016.

## **Military Affairs**

Italy has focused more on social, political, and economic developments in recent years; though their Navy is still formidable, and even ranked among the top in the EU, Italy's land forces have remained below the capabilities of its allies, reflecting a relative lag in military modernization compared to other European nations. Battle tank, anti-tank, and armored fighting vehicles were designed and have been produced in recent years, but not enough to bridge the gap between Italian and other European capabilities.



# Japan

**Year 2027 | Prime Minister Eisaku Sato | Population 122,150,000**

## **Political Affairs**

The Japanese government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sato, embarked on a path of proactive engagement and assertive policymaking. The acquisition of the U.S. military assets stationed in Japan symbolized a departure from its traditionally passive stance in regional politics. This bold move signaled the dawn of a new era for Japan, one where it transitioned from being a passive observer to an active shaper of regional dynamics.

## **Economic Affairs**

Amidst geopolitical shifts, Japan's economy remained a critical foundation of its newfound assertiveness. While maintaining its economic strengths, particularly in technology and manufacturing, Japan faced the challenge of navigating complex trade dynamics in a region fraught with tension and competition, especially with China's growing influence. The Japanese economy has seen growth in recent years—thanks to a boom in the semiconductor industry. Japan continues to reap the benefits of its trade partnerships, both bilateral (e.g., China) and multilateral (e.g., the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP).

## **Social Affairs**

The Japanese populace grappled with the implications of its new role in regional security. North Korea's aggressive posturing and escalatory tactics and Chinese expansion has evoked a spectrum of responses from apprehension to a renewed sense of national purpose. New emerging security partnerships in the region provide hope, but the string that ties these relationships together is fragile. As such, the public's opinion of Japanese rearmament has shifted to a more accepted view. However, the public still supports the stated goal of a world without nuclear weapons, even in a challenging security environment.

## **Military Affairs**

In the face of escalating regional tensions, Japan's security strategy underwent significant transformation. The “No War” clause of Article 9 of the Constitution still remains a heavily debated topic among Japanese constitutional scholars, however, its gradual reinterpretations have allowed Sato to build up the Japanese Self Defense Force.

The provocations by North Korea and the strategic challenges posed by China in the East China Sea required a robust response. Under Prime Minister Sato's directive, Japan enhanced its naval capabilities, asserting its commitment to freedom of navigation in international waters and

regional stability. These developments, coupled with strategic dialogues and historic bilateral military training exercises with South Korea, marked a crucial step towards fostering regional balance and collaboration.

As of 2027, Japan emerges as a nation redefined, no longer in the shadows of its historical alliances. Prime Minister Sato's leadership, characterized by a mix of vision, pragmatism, and diplomatic acuity, steers Japan through this era of uncertainty and opportunity. His approach, blending traditional Japanese values with a forward-looking stance, positions Japan as a key player in shaping the evolving geopolitical landscape of East Asia and beyond. Japan's journey in this new era is not just one of military and economic might but also of defining its unique role in a rapidly changing global context, balancing power, diplomacy, and national identity.

# Middle East

One of the most notable developments in this period was the resolution of the Gaza Strip conflict. In 2023, Israel launched a military campaign against Hamas, the group that controlled the coastal enclave, after Hamas attacked Israel late that year. By the end of 2024, the operation had resulted in the elimination of the Hamas leadership and the displacement of millions of Palestinians. Gaza was left ostensibly bifurcated by the conflict. Israel occupied the northern part of Gaza, and pledged to facilitate a peaceful transition to a new governance structure. However, as of 2027 the reconstruction process has been slow and fraught with challenges, leaving the future of Gaza uncertain.

Another surprising development has been the slow rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, two regional rivals that had been engaged in a proxy war for years. The diplomatic thaw, which began in 2025, was motivated by mutual economic interests and a shared interest in the regional leadership opportunities created by the diminishing U.S. security umbrella. With a lot still left to be resolved, the entente sits on a knife's edge. The two countries agreed to cooperate on oil production and to reduce their involvement in the conflicts in Yemen and Syria. However, the rapprochement is fragile and does not address the underlying sectarian and geopolitical differences between the two countries.

A recent alliance that emerged in the region was the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), which consisted of Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, and Greece. The alliance, formed in 2019, aimed to exploit the offshore gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, which were estimated to be worth billions of dollars. However, the alliance faced opposition from Turkey, which claimed rights over some of the disputed areas. Scheduled to break ground in 2028, the EastMed pipeline will channel massive volumes of gas from the EMGF super-reserves through Italy, into the European continent.

Iraq and Syria, two countries that had been ravaged by civil wars and foreign interventions, continued to struggle with political fragmentation and instability. Iraq, which had been a key ally of the US in the region, saw its central government weaken and lose control over various regions. The Kurdish region in the north, which had been autonomous since 1991, renewed its aspirations for independence and held a referendum in 2025. The result was overwhelmingly in favor of secession, but the Iraqi government rejected it and threatened to use force. The situation was further complicated by the presence and influence of Iranian-backed militias, which had been instrumental in the fight against the Islamic State. Syria, on the other hand, saw the consolidation of the Assad regime, which had survived the civil war with the help of Russia and Iran. Russia, which had established a military base in Syria in 2015, increased its involvement in the reconstruction efforts and became the main external power in the country. However, the Assad

regime still faced resistance from various opposition groups and suffered from economic hardships.

Lebanon, once a model of coexistence in the region, faced a severe economic crisis and political turmoil. The crisis, which began in 2019, was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the massive explosion that rocked Beirut in 2020. The crisis led to widespread protests and demands for political reforms and accountability. However, the political elite, which was divided along sectarian lines, failed to respond to the crisis and form a stable government in 2026. The situation was exploited by various regional actors, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, who sought to gain influence and leverage in the country.



# North Korea

**Year 2027 | Supreme Leader Kim Jung Un | Population 26,520,000**

## **Political Affairs**

Between 2024 and 2027, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has navigated a dramatically changing global political landscape. The most significant change has created a power vacuum and has reshaped alliances in the region. This retreat forced North Korea to reassess its geopolitical strategies and its role on the international stage.

North Korea's diplomatic activities intensified, particularly with China and Russia. The surprise visit of Kim Jong Un to Beijing in 2026 was a strategic move to reaffirm ties with China amidst the shifting geopolitical landscape. Concurrently, the DPRK strengthened its relationship with Russia, exemplified by the 2024 and 2026 Russia-DPRK visits and military exchanges. These diplomatic efforts were aimed at securing economic aid and strengthening military capabilities.

The internal dynamics of the Workers' Party of Korea witnessed a tumultuous period. A faction led by young, ambitious leaders emerged, advocating for aggressive foreign policy and self-reliance in economic development. They frequently clashed with the old guard, who favored strategic saber rattling and reliance on established allies like China. This power struggle influenced North Korea's policy decisions, both domestically and internationally.

## **Economic Affairs**

The 2024 and 2026 Russia-DPRK military exchanges had profound economic implications for North Korea. In exchange for artillery ammunition, North Korea received not only military technology but also vital economic resources. The influx of Russian grain significantly alleviated food shortages, reducing dependence on international food aid. This exchange marked a pivotal moment in North Korea's economic resilience against international pressures.

Despite the aid from Russia, North Korea's economy still faced substantial shortfalls. The country struggled with endemic food insecurities, exacerbated by limited agricultural productivity and international sanctions. Black market activities flourished as citizens sought to circumvent state-controlled economic systems. The government implemented several measures, including limited economic reforms and crackdowns on illegal market activities, but these efforts were often met with mixed results, fomenting internal political disputes.

North Korea's approach to foreign trade in this period was characterized by cunningness and adaptability. Despite stringent international sanctions, the regime found innovative ways to engage in limited trade, particularly through clandestine networks in Southeast Asia and Africa,

and international cybercrime. These activities, while not sufficient to fully counteract the impact of sanctions, provided a crucial lifeline for the North Korean economy.

### **Social Affairs**

The influence of smuggled foreign media, particularly from South Korea and China, on the younger generation has long been a concern of the Kim regime. Amid souring tensions between the North and South, the DPRK tightened its control over information, using state propaganda and enforcement to shape public sentiment and crack down on smuggled media. Despite the influences of sources like outside media, the regime maintained a strong grip on the narrative, portraying itself as a bastion against foreign aggression, isolating its citizens further than ever before.

Amid economic hardships and social crackdowns, pockets of dissent emerged within North Korean society. Although tightly controlled by the regime, discreet expressions of discontent became more frequent. Although they were politically powerless and small in numbers, underground networks distributing foreign media, clandestine discussion groups, and quiet resistance to government policies were some of the ways dissent manifested, posing a challenge to the regime's authority.

### **Military Affairs**

The 2024 and 2026 Russia-DPRK military exchanges marked a significant leap in North Korea's military capabilities. The acquisition of advanced drone technology and enhanced cyber warfare tools from Russia enabled the DPRK to bolster both its defensive and offensive capacities. By 2027, North Korea had successfully tested multiple styles of highly effective and inexpensive offensive drones.

North Korea's missile program remains a strategic asset. Despite numerous challenges and glacially slow development due to international sanctions, military demonstrations involving missiles still occur. More than rudimentary displays of technological prowess, the regime sees activities like missile tests as strategic tools in regional power dynamics. These tests served multiple purposes: showcasing military strength, deterring perceived threats from South Korea and Japan, and maintaining a posture of defiance against international pressures. These actions were carefully calibrated to assert North Korea's presence on the global stage without crossing the threshold into open conflict. In response to the changing military dynamics in the region, especially the increased militarization of South Korea and Japan, North Korea adapted its military strategies. While continuing to enhance its offensive capabilities, the DPRK also invested in asymmetric warfare tactics, including cyber operations and special forces, to counterbalance the conventional military superiority of its neighbors. This shift represented a pragmatic approach to dealing with the evolving security challenges in East Asia.

# Russia

**Year 2027 | President Vladimir Putin | Population 141,870,000**

## **Political Affairs**

An aging Putin remains in power after winning the elections in 2024, securing the presidency until 2030. It is expected that he will remain in power till his death. The main issues of Putin's campaign were the economy, the war in Ukraine, and stopping Western incursions on Russian sovereignty. He has consistently blamed the U.S. and its Western allies for Russia's problems and their involvement in domestic affairs. Furthermore, Putin has vowed to spur economic growth despite Western sanctions and called for greater cooperation with its Eurasian allies and China. He has also proclaimed his desire to protect Russian culture and language along with Russian-speaking minorities in other countries.

Regarding the war, he maintained control of the narrative through filtering what information Russians consumed on social media, the internet, and state-controlled or funded media outlets. Even as the Russia-Ukraine war turned into a frozen conflict, the information war continues to combat dissenting narratives at home. The information war includes an increase in Russian cyberattacks on independent media and journalists both within and outside of Russia who attempt to expose the realities of the war. The Kremlin also suppressed opposition leaders who had developed fairly large bases. Even though censorship is rampant, young Russians are finding various ways to gain access to Western news, shows, and culture.

There was in-fighting among the security agencies, the military, and the government bureaucracies over how to continue the war, but Putin was able to mitigate the chaos and assert control over them. Different factions had different approaches on how to change the status of the battlefield. The hawkish factions wanted to increase the tempo of the war and gain a strategic advantage when Ukraine was exhausted and taking time to rethink their operational and tactical objectives. The less hawkish side wanted to pause or slow down fighting to have time to rearm, reevaluate Russia's weaknesses, and increase combat readiness before engaging in a new offensive. Ultimately, Putin had to accept a slower pace of war. Although the war has slowed down, Putin has not yet given up on his quest to win. Putin plans on using this respite to get Russia back on track and prepared.

Russia is also supporting pro-Moscow groups all across Europe to undermine the anti-Moscow sentiment and policies. It is part of its overall strategy to drive a wedge between Western nations, particularly NATO countries who are mostly united in opposition to Russia's invasion into Ukraine. Russia has also pledged to mobilize support and funding for many of the far-right groups and parties in Europe that are sympathetic to the Kremlin.

## **Economic Affairs**

The Russian economy is feeling the effects of Western sanctions as economic growth has slowed, access to advanced technologies has forestalled, and its energy market has shrunk. The sanctions, however, have not had the most severe impact on the Russian economy because the Russians have been able to gain access to goods and services through unorthodox countries, like China, North Korea, India, Turkey, and several countries in Central Asia. Despite Western disapproval, these countries have not economically isolated Russia but instead helped it circumvent sanctions. This meant that Russia was still able to gain access to some, but not all, advanced technologies. India continues its purchase of weapons and weapon systems from Russia, helping to fuel the Russian defense industry.

Putin's war economy has slowly transformed back to pre Ukraine war levels with reduced government spending and a less restrictive monetary policy to deal with the prospects of high inflation. This means that a smaller percentage of GDP is military spending but more money is sent to rebuild and develop the territories obtained from the war. The reduced government spending has not gone well with Russians who depend on the state for many essential services, including housing. Affordable housing was a big selling point in Putin's promises to the Russian people, and they expect to receive their social services without any interruptions.

Russia has not been able to increase its market share of the energy market because there are other competitors in the region. Azerbaijan, Qatar, and some OPEC countries have capitalized on Western sanctions on Russia to increase their market share in countries that previously relied on Russian energy. With European countries trying to diversify from Russian energy, Russia is now in search of new markets to export its energy and exports more to markets of which it is still a part.

## **Social Affairs**

The Russian population has shown their frustration with the war effort through many protests and demonstrations, though none of them large in size. Putin was able to quell the anger by renewing the information war in Russia through all forms of media and focusing on the positives in the economy. These ostensible signs of Putin regime's weakening did not lead to any new developments as Putin succeeded in controlling what and when Russians received information on the war. Accurate news did not reach the people unless it was a Russian success.

The effects of the brain drain have slowed innovation and research in Russia since the start of the war. There has been an exodus of college-educated scientists, researchers, academics, and skilled professionals. Although some have returned to be with their families, many have left with no sign of return. The brain drain had its last surge when Putin mobilized another 300,000 troops after his 2024 electoral victory. This drain was much smaller than the departure of the nearly one million high-skilled professionals from the early months of the war. To promote STEM

education, the Russian government is funding more educational programs, providing more grants, and increasing exchange programs with neighboring and allied countries.

Support for Putin remains high as he is viewed as a strong leader who is combating Western aggression. Putin has been able to convince Russians that the West is threatening Russia and its way of life. He has also painted himself as a leader who will ensure the economic prosperity of Russians, who view their economic well-being as more important than their political freedoms.

### **Military Affairs**

Following heavy losses in Ukraine, Russia's campaign in Ukraine has largely frozen.

Enlistment has slowed down since the last mobilization. Russia has made gains in its air power but the Ukrainian air defenses keep the Russians at bay over much of the country. Furthermore, Russia has a surplus of ammunition, thanks to increased military ties with North Korea, but is not able to produce heavy armaments fast enough to replace ones lost in war. This lull in fighting will allow them to reconstitute before they engage in a new offensive. Russia continues to excel in "gray-zone" tactics, including covert action, targeted cyber operations, mis/dis/malinformation campaigns, and information warfare tactics it deploys on governments across Europe and Asia.



# South Korea

**Year 2027 | President Park | Population 51,360,000**

## **Political Affairs**

In response to the changing geopolitical milieu, the South Korean government, under the leadership of President Park, embarked on a transformative journey. Recognizing the necessity to protect its sovereignty, South Korea expanded its military capabilities, investing in advanced missile defense systems and bolstering domestic technological advancements. In the face of an aggressive North Korea, this strategic pivot signified a shift in military posture and a declaration of a new era in South Korean autonomy.

## **Economic Affairs**

President Park's administration continued the policies of economic deregulation initiated by former President Yoon, fostering an environment conducive to growth and innovation. This financial strategy aimed to support the expanded military expenditures and to reinforce South Korea's stature as a significant player in the global economy. South Korea's indigenous military industry—in particular aircraft, artillery, and shipbuilding—has grown exponentially that it now rivals even the latest in U.S. military technology.

## **Social Affairs**

The societal impact of South Korea's strategic shift was multifaceted. While there was a sense of national unity in the country's newfound purpose, the escalation of regional tensions, particularly with North Korea's increased provocations, heightened public anxiety. The government balanced these concerns with new efforts in military partnerships. At the moment, these efforts seemed to have worked, but historical scars occasionally resurface to test the budding partnership.

## **Military Affairs**

South Korea's transformation was immediately evident. With North Korea's heightened hostilities and China's assertiveness in the East China Sea, South Korea took decisive steps to fortify its defense capabilities. President Park's administration navigated these challenges with a blend of cautious diplomacy and robust defense, engaging in strategic dialogues with key regional players like Japan and China. These efforts aimed to establish a new equilibrium in East Asia, balancing power dynamics and historical sensitivities. As of 2027, South Korea is a nation redefined, charting a course of military fortification, diplomatic agility, and economic prowess. Under President Park, the country emerges from the shadow of its historical alliances, poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of a rapidly evolving global order.



# Turkey

**Year 2027 | President Recep Erdogan | Population 90,000,000**

## **Political Affairs**

Turkey's political landscape represents one of complex, volatile transitions. While President Recep Erdogan continues to dominate political influence, growing opposition to his aggressive policies and rhetoric have forced the president and his AKP party to choose: appeal to moderation or double down on nationalist rhetoric. Despite efforts toward detente in late 2023, hopes for improved relations between Greece and Turkey flatlined as territorial negotiations stalled and economic interests flared. With critical issues such as Cyprus and support of Hamas driving deeper the wedge between Turkey and its European allies, Russian overtures for partnership have grown more pronounced. Turkey's repeated purchases of Russian S-400 missile defense systems, most recently in 2025, represent a growing defense relationship between the two Black Sea rivals.

Turkey's geopolitical centrality is a double-edged sword. Bordering eight separate countries, plus the Black Sea, Ankara can project power directly into the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Levant. However, this also leaves the country vulnerable to instability and aggression from its neighbors. Large numbers of refugees emanating from the Middle East challenge Erdogan's government with spiraling instability. Many European partners blame Ankara for perceived lapses in border security. Greek officials in recent years have increasingly accused Turkey of purposefully "opening the floodgates" of migrants, which results in destabilization and strains on social service resources.

Beyond Turkey's western border, across the geostrategically vulnerable Thracian Plains, growing Balkan unrest threatens to further jeopardize security in the region. Increasingly volatile Bulgaria, and NATO membership has drawn particular concern for Erdogan's government.

## **Economic Affairs**

Turkey's strategic location bridging East and West served as one of the world's most vital economic routes for millennia. As technological development diversified trade corridors linking the continents, Anatolia's geographic importance diminished.

In the 1990s Europe grew closer ties with the economically liberalizing Turkey through the creation of the Southern Gas Corridor. New networks of existing and proposed pipelines offer diversification from Russian energy. Likewise, Black Sea pipelines such as Blue Stream (2003) and TurkStream (2020) offer Russia route diversification aside from its traditional pathways across Eastern Europe.

First discovered in 2009, large reserves of natural gas in the UNCLOS-recognized EEZs of Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greece led to the development of the EastMed pipeline project.

After substantial delays and additional discoveries, EastMed is scheduled to break ground in 2028 providing critical energy diversification to Europe.

In 2020, Turkey discovered large amounts of reserves within the Sakarya gas fields, estimated to contain 540 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas. Experts claim the discovery has the potential to transform Turkey from an energy importer to exporter. The commencement of Phase II of the Sakarya Gas Field development, anticipated to yield 14 bcm of gas by 2027, signals a pivotal shift for Turkey towards energy self-reliance. These discoveries potentially allow Europe further diversification from Russian energy.

In its mountainous eastern provinces, Turkey has access to the headwaters of 45% of the Tigris and 90% of the Euphrates Rivers. The Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP), a series of hydroelectric dams including the massive Ataturk Dam, provides vital energy and revenue to Turkey, but often at the expense of its southern, Levantine neighbors.

Following aggressive interest rate hikes to 25% in 2023, earthquake recovery, and a mild recession, Turkey managed to curb its rampant inflation to manageable levels and is now projected to experience 4% GDP growth in 2027. As the 19<sup>th</sup> largest economy globally, with a GDP of roughly \$910 billion and both energy and defense sectors poised for transformation, Turkey stands at a geostrategic crossroads.

### **Social Affairs**

With large minorities of Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks, Turkey's historic relationship with its ethnic diversity has been complex and tumultuous. Amid campaigns for national unity dating back to Turkey's founding Kemalist movement, periods of conflict and oppression stain its proud cultural narrative, particularly in the eyes of its neighbors and allies. Erdogan's refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915-16 and the Greek Genocide of 1914-1923 remains a deep point of geopolitical contention.

Recent instances of racial violence targeting Bulgarian Turks have ignited public indignation and reignited conversations about Bulgaria's "Revival Process" that occurred between 1985 and 1989. This period, under the communist regime of Todor Zhivkov, was marked by a forced assimilation of Bulgarian Turks, culminating in a mass exodus.

Ongoing conflict with the Kurdish separatist movement, most notably the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) feeds domestic instability while deepening concerns among Turkey's allies over human rights abuses. Counter accusations from Turkey aim at US support of allegedly

PKK-affiliated groups in Syria and PKK-borne plots facilitated from within the borders of European allies such as France and Germany. Turkey's crucial role of managing and hosting refugees while negotiating support from European partners has largely led to a deterioration in the relationship, marked by tensions over responsibilities, expectations, and the balancing of humanitarian obligations with political and security concerns.

### **Military Affairs**

Apart from the United States, Turkey possesses the largest military in NATO. Ankara's military affairs are characterized by a strategic focus on regional influence and national security, coupled with significant efforts in modernizing its armed forces. Turkey has placed a high priority on asserting its military presence, particularly along its southern borders with Syria and Iraq, while managing escalating tensions in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. Central to its strategy has been massive investments in the development of indigenous military capabilities. Key projects in this area include the production of advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), sophisticated missile systems, and the bolstering of the domestic defense industry.

Turkey's pursuit of self-reliance in defense production has reduced its dependence on foreign suppliers, with the domestic defense industry experiencing growth in sectors like armored vehicles, naval, and aerospace. The country's defense exports have notably increased, particularly in UAVs and military hardware, positioning Turkey as a competitive player in the global arms market.

President Erdogan's diplomatic record with neighboring Greece swings from peaceful engagement to threats of invasion. With elections approaching, nationalist rhetoric has predictably escalated. Erdogan frequently invokes the historic "Blue Homeland" national narrative and continues to push claims that undermine UNCLOS, to which it is not a signer, and neighboring Greece's recognized sovereignty.

As a NATO member, Turkey's role is crucial, particularly by: facilitating force projection to the Eastern Mediterranean, supporting counterterrorism operations from Incirlik Air Base, and by "bottling up" Russia in the Black Sea. However, the winding-down of the Global War on Terror, strained ties with NATO partners, and a burgeoning relationship with Russia cast doubt on these strategic roles.



# United Kingdom

**Year 2027 | Prime Minister Keir Starmer | Population 70,015,000**

## **Political Affairs**

Rishi Sunak's approval ratings continued to plummet through 2024. Fed up with the conservative policies of the Tories, British citizens voted for the Labor Party when they took to the polls in November of 2024. Chosen for his liberal social and economic policies, Keir Starmer became the new Prime Minister. Starmer ran and won on the slogan of *National Renewal* which promised economic, national, border, and climate security. His policies were initially popular but due to the lack of government revenue, Starmer has been unable to make meaningful changes in the last three years and resorted to raising taxes. Although the public wanted greater economic investment, their opinion has soured on Starmer and has shattered belief in Labor's ability to improve conditions. The increased taxes caused a surge in support for the Tories and the two parties are now polling equally as we near the end of 2027. While Brexit debates remain regarding Britain's role in international governance, the Labor Party has remained committed to a policy of cooperation with other nations to meet current and future threats.

## **Economic Affairs**

The UK economy recovered from the 2021-2024 recession. Its manufacturing sector has significantly declined with the service sector now dominating the economy and accounting for around 80% of GDP in the UK. While the other E7 economies have witnessed strong growth, Britain's sluggish economy has further constrained its government's investment at home and abroad. Moreover, to care for the growing aging population, the government has been forced to spend more on pension payouts. The Labor government delayed enacting unpopular policies until recently. Earlier this fall, the government raised the retirement age to 70 while at the same time raising taxes - to the highest they've been in 75 years. All these factors have combined to put downward pressure on the sterling and contribute to lessening British international influence. Since the UK's 2021 free trade agreement (FTA) with Turkey, economic ties between the countries have deepened dramatically.

## **Social Affairs**

Since 2024, the population has grown to over 70 million and is now the second highest in Europe, behind Germany. Adults over 75 have grown to 16% of the population, putting more pressure on the government's pension and social security systems. Urban resources are stretched even more thinly as 85% of Brits live in metropolitan areas. Immigration has dropped significantly due to the stricter controls enacted in 2024; the country's minorities have continued to deal with discrimination as public backlash against multiculturalism has grown. Despite

attempts at reform, economic inequality has increased - with digital connectivity a growing reason for the disparity.

### **Military Affairs**

The country maintains a robust military presence, combining advanced technology with well-trained personnel. The British Armed Forces have undergone modernization efforts, focusing on cyber warfare capabilities, drone technology, and artificial intelligence integration. The UK continues to be an active member of NATO as it has successfully fulfilled its 2% requirements, participating in joint defense initiatives and contributing to international peacekeeping missions. The Royal Navy, equipped with modern vessels, plays a crucial role in securing maritime interests and access to vital trade routes—particularly throughout the Mediterranean, while the Royal Air Force employs cutting-edge aircraft to ensure air superiority.



# United States

**Year 2027 | President Donald Trump | Population 341,000,000**

## **Political Affairs**

In 2024, Donald Trump was elected after a sweeping general election with Republicans in Congress also making huge gains.. Throughout his second term, President Trump reversed many of his predecessor’s accomplishments and struck unprecedented trade deals with other countries. Trump revamped efforts to build a wall with Mexico, and did not follow through on his promise to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

## **Economic Affairs**

President Trump’s “America’s First” economic policies strengthened the United States' domestic manufacturing and technology industries. However, the greatest increase in the U.S. economy came from increased Foreign Military Sales (FMS). The US economy is currently experiencing a mix of growth and challenges. While consumer spending remains solid and the labor market is relatively strong, retail sales have declined, and economic activity in manufacturing and services sectors has slowed. Additionally, the net international investment position shows a significant deficit. Overall, the economy's resilience is evident, but experts predict a slowdown and potential recession.

## **Social Affairs**

Public discourse in the United States remains highly polarized. President Trump—acting on his authoritarian tendencies—often incited violence in his controversial rhetoric and actions. Preoccupied with covering domestic affairs, U.S. media coverage of international news fell to the wayside. President Trump’s “America’s First” policies divided the public’s opinion on the United States’ role in the world. Many of his supporters found safety in expressing their most protectionist and xenophobic attitudes.

## **Military Affairs**

Under the Trump Administration, the State Department’s Office of Regional Security and Arms Transfers and the Department of Defense's Defense Security Cooperation Agency more readily approved FMS sales, often selling the latest U.S. military equipment and technology to its allies. As allies continued to buy the latest U.S. military technologies, the United States retained its spot as the highest exporter of military equipment and technology in the world.