

Geopolitics

# BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit  
09 January 2025

## Trump insists on 5% GDP NATO Military Spending and spreads controversial proposals on Greenland and Panama Canal

**Trump repeatedly wants allies to spend 5% of GDP on defense:** Donald Trump insists he wants NATO members to spend a whopping 5% GDP on defense. "Europe is in for a tiny fraction of the money that we're in," Trump said during an appearance at Mar-a-Lago late. A 5 percent target is more than any NATO member currently spends. The US last year spent 3.4%; the closest is Poland, which spent 4.7% ([Politico](#)).

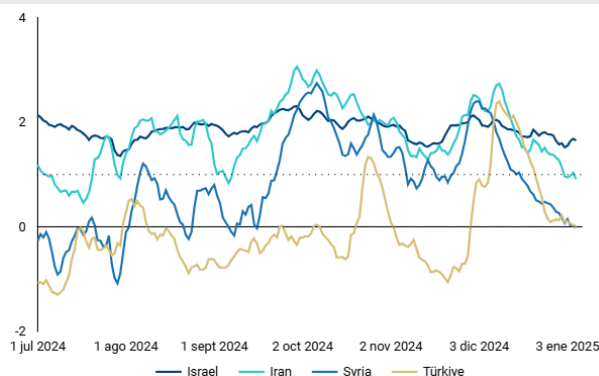
**Trump's Controversial Geopolitical Proposals on Greenland and Gulf of Mexico Stir Global Reactions:** President-elect Donald Trump has reignited controversy with a pair of bold geopolitical initiatives. Trump has renewed his push to acquire Greenland, citing its strategic location and natural resources as critical to U.S. interests. Greenland's Prime Minister Múte Egede and Denmark's government have firmly rejected the idea, reiterating the island's autonomy and refusing to entertain a sale. In another contentious move, Trump has proposed renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America," arguing that the United States plays a dominant role in the region and linking it with aspirations to control the Panama canal ([Reuters](#)).

**Escalating Political Tensions in Venezuela amid Swearing-In Ceremony:** The son-in-law of Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo González was reportedly kidnapped in Caracas just days before a contentious swearing-in ceremony on January 10, where both Maduro and González claim they will assume the presidency. The Venezuelan government has warned that González will be arrested if he returns to the country for the ceremony, citing charges of incitement, forgery, and other alleged crimes ([France 24](#)).

### The BBVA Monitor: political tensions increased in Venezuela

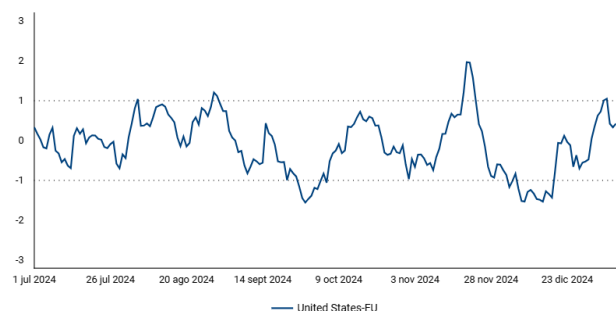
- The **conflict intensity index** eased in the Middle East in some countries, especially in **Turkey**, following the sharp increase at the beginning of December. However, **Israel** remains in the high-risk area (Fig.1 and Fig. 3). The conflict index also eased during December in **Russia** and **Ukraine** (Fig.3 and Fig. 5).
- **Bilateral tensions between the US and Europe** increased over the last week, but still they are contained (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).
- **Political tensions** rose in **Venezuela** to the extreme risk area due to the kidnapping of the son-in-law of Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo González. In contrast, the political tensions indicator eased in **Argentina**, which is now in the safe area (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).

Fig1. **CONFLICT INDEX: ISRAEL&IRAN&SYRIA&TURKIYE**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](http://www.gdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

Fig2. **BILATERAL TENSIONS: US-EU**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](http://www.gdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

\*The selection of news has been enriched by the BBVA Research Geo Assistant developed with Chat-GPT.

Fig3. **BBVA RESEARCH GEOPOLITICS MONITOR "SIGNAL" CHANGES**

(Signals in Geopolitical Risk, Political Tensions, Economic Policy Uncertainties, Protest and Conflict according to Standard Dev)

**BBVA Research Geopolitics Monitor main "Signal" changes after the Hamas-Israel Conflict**

Summary of Signals After Hamas-Israel Conflict December 17th, 2024  
(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)



Source: BBVA Research

Summary of Signals After Hamas-Israel Conflict January 7th, 2025  
(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)

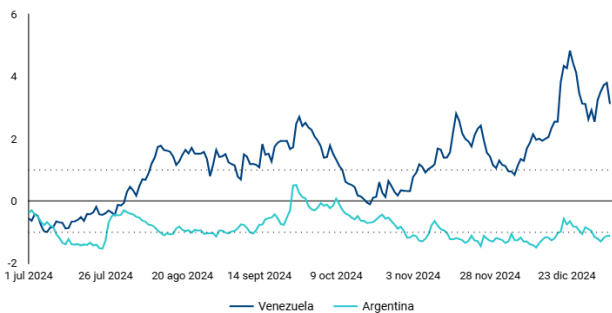


Source: BBVA Research

Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org).

Fig4. **POLITICAL TENSIONS INDEX: VE & AR**

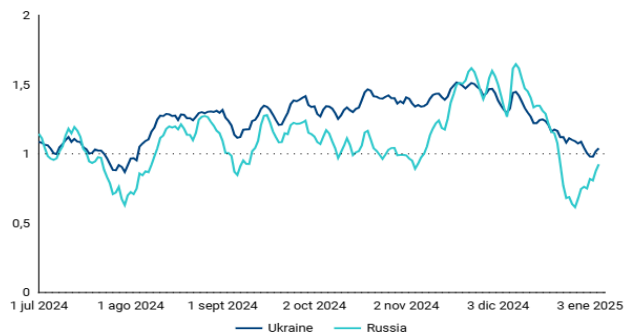
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

Fig5. **CONFLICT INDEX: UKRAINE & RUSSIA**

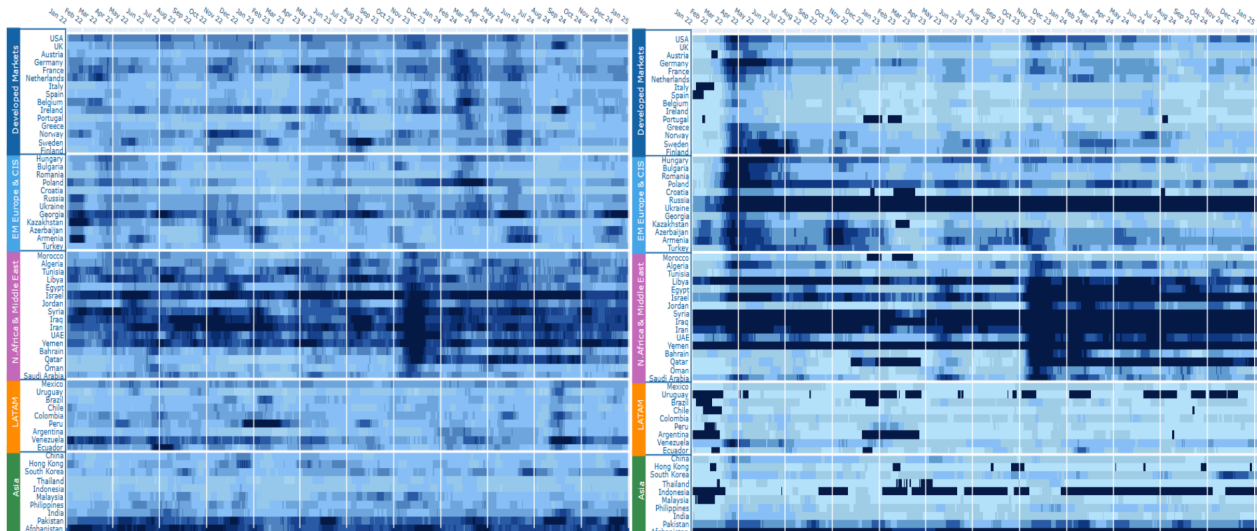
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

Fig6. **BBVA RESEARCH PROTEST AND CONFLICT HEAT MAPS**

(Evolution of Protest and Conflict over time by regions)



Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org).

## Methodological annex: indicators' construction

We have developed a daily tracker with weekly updates to monitor protest and conflict indicators for every country in the world from 2019 to present day. To construct this, we use a rich 'big database' of international events (GDELT), created by Leetaru and Schrodt (2013). GDELT is an open-source database that extracts and parses digital news monitoring world events covered by news media from nearly every corner of the world, whether broadcast, printed, or published on the web, in over 100 languages, every moment of every day, updated every 15 minutes. Thus, it contains a comprehensive and high-resolution catalog of geo-referenced events and themes.

Using different dictionaries, several thousands of taxonomies and themes are identified in the news pieces to classify the information. The algorithms used by GDELT also identify emotions, organizations, locations, news sources, and events across the world as well as their average sentiment using Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques and the lexicon approach.

The included indicators are:

- Geopolitical Risk: or sentiment (weighted by coverage) of the country's geopolitical risk perception.
- Political Tensions: or sentiment (weighted by coverage) of the country's political tensions.
- Economic Policy Uncertainty or sentiment (weighted by coverage) about the country's economic policy uncertainty, also disaggregated by media origin.
- Protests or coverage regarding social protests or unrest in the country.
- Conflict or coverage of armed conflicts, which go beyond verbal protests.
- Bilateral Tensions or the sentiment (weighted by coverage) between a specific pair of countries that appear together in the news article (plus NATO and EU).

The indicators track the evolution of tensions and are normalized by their country's history since 2019, thus they are all expressed in terms of standard deviations from their historical patterns. Indicators usually lie within the range [-1,1]. Therefore, when the values exceed one (the upper boundary of the range), this means escalating tensions. While it's possible to observe simultaneous tensions arising in multiple countries (for example, due to geopolitical events affecting several nations, as seen in some of our heatmaps), using these indicators for direct quantitative comparisons of risk levels between countries is not recommended.

We apply a weighted moving average of 28 days (to include four complete weeks with the same number of days of the weeks) to reduce the noise of daily information and identify signals more clearly. The weights have been calculated using a discrete geometric distribution such that it puts more weight on recent data and less on past data (see Graph 1). Aggregating by weeks, the weight of the most recent week has a weight of 68%, the past week 22%, the previous 7%, and the fourth 3%. The weight of the 28 days can be seen in the following image. In such a way, the indicators reflect what has been happening in the last few days.

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