

Geopolitics

BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit
23 April 2025

The US labels Trade War with China as unsustainable. Ukraine - Russia Peace Talks Progress. US & Iran nuclear talks continues

The US labels the Trade War with China as unsustainable: US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent indicated that the ongoing trade war with China is unsustainable and anticipated a de-escalation, although formal negotiations have not yet begun. The US imposed 145% tariffs on Chinese imports, while China retaliated with 125% tariffs, contributing to instability in financial markets and concerns on growth. Trump suggested that final tariff rates would be significantly reduced ([AP](#)).

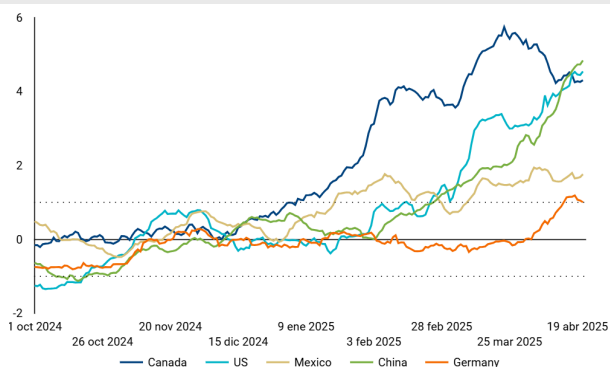
Ukraine-Russia Peace Talks Progress Amid Russian Concessions: Ukrainian President expressed readiness for negotiations with Russia, conditional upon a ceasefire. This follows reports suggesting Russian President Vladimir Putin may be willing to halt military advances along current front lines and relinquish claims to four Ukrainian regions previously declared annexed. The US continues diplomatic efforts and General Keith Kellogg will participate in upcoming talks in London. Ukraine remains opposed to conceding any territory, including Crimea, and seeks a foreign force to enforce agreement ([Reuters](#)).

Iran - US Nuclear Negotiations Advance to Technical Discussions: Negotiations between Iran and the United States over Tehran's nuclear program have progressed to the "expert level," indicating a constructive direction. This shift to technical discussions reflects pragmatic objectives from both sides, though disagreements persist over uranium enrichment limits and sanctions relief. Challenges remain regarding specifics like acceptable enrichment levels and sanction rollback conditions ([AP](#)).

The BBVA Monitor: Trade War remains at the forefront, while Geopolitical Risk in Ukraine eases amid Peace Talks

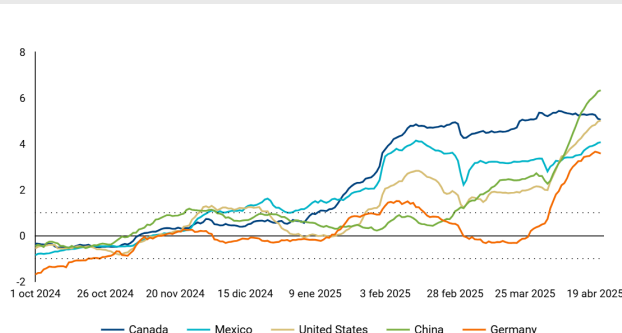
- **Trade Policy Uncertainty (TPU) and Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU) indicators** remain in the spotlight, with **China** continuing to exhibit high levels, though the upward trend has begun to moderate. In both **Canada** and **Germany**, economic uncertainty indicators are also showing signs of correction (see Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, and Fig. 4).
- **Geopolitical risk indicators** have declined in both **Russia** and **Ukraine**, reflecting progress in peace talks over the past week (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 5).
- In **Iran**, the **Economic Policy Uncertainty indicator** has also decreased, moving from the extreme risk area to the high-risk one, following advancements in nuclear negotiations (see Fig. 3).

Fig1. **ECONOMIC POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX**
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



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

Fig2. **TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX**
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



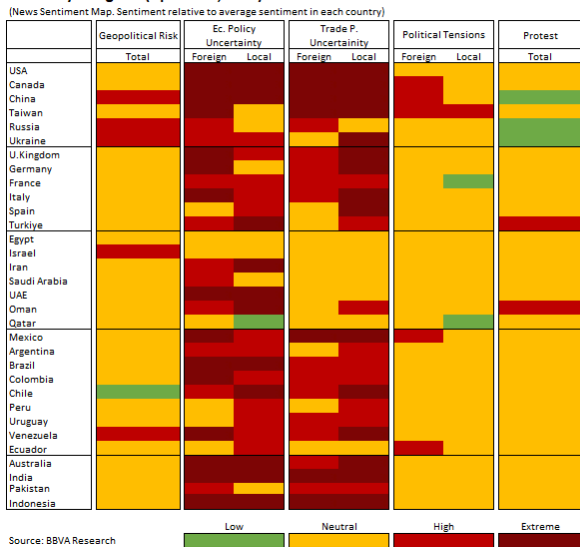
Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org. Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) interest relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

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

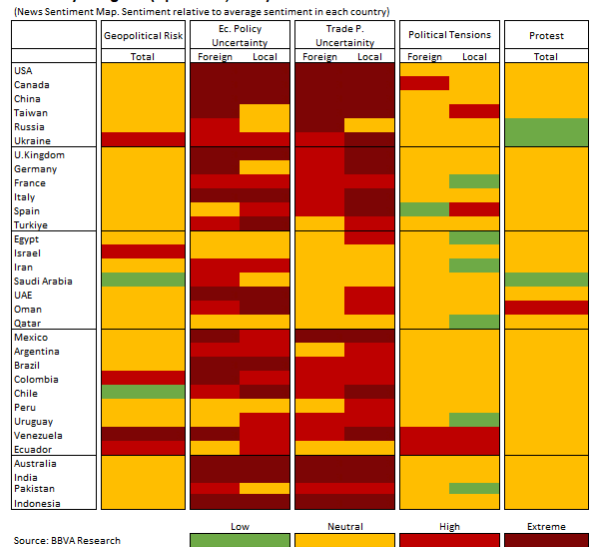
Fig3. BBVA RESEARCH GEOPOLITICS MONITOR "SIGNAL" CHANGES

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

Summary of signals (April 15th, 2025)



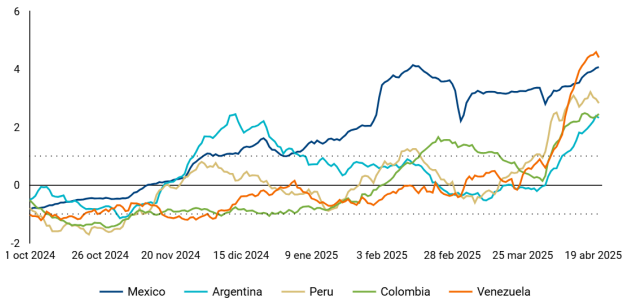
Summary of signals (April 22nd, 2025)



Source: BBVA Research and www.qdelt.org.

Fig4. TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX

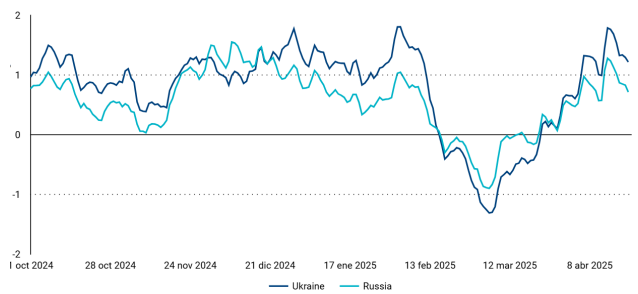
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



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

Fig5. GEOPOLITICAL RISK INDEX

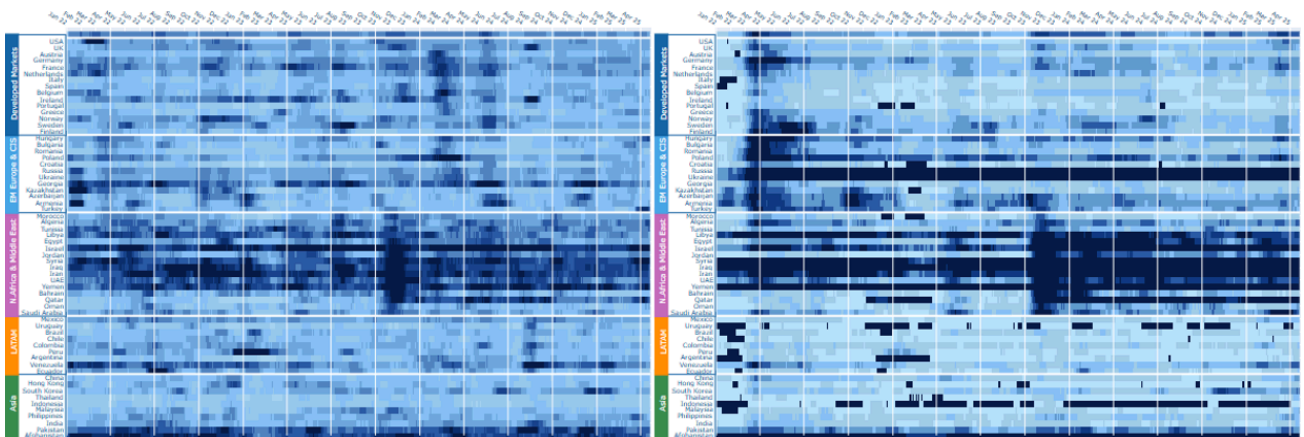
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & 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.

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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