

Geopolitics

BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit

Transatlantic Strains Highlighted at Munich Security Conference. Iran's Military Drills & Missile Launches Increase Tensions but negotiations remains

Transatlantic Strains Highlighted at Munich Security Conference: At the 62nd Munich Security Conference in Munich, deepening tensions between the United States and European allies dominated discussions, with leaders stressing the need to recalibrate the transatlantic relationship amid a shifting global order. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz warned that the US is “not powerful enough to go it alone” and called for rebuilding trust with Europe through NATO cooperation. French President Emmanuel Macron echoed calls for European strategic autonomy in defense, technology, and trade, while US Secretary of State Marco Rubio emphasized enduring US–Europe ties but aligned with Trump administration policy priorities. The conference also featured discussions on strengthened defense spending, NATO’s future, and near-final security guarantees for Ukraine in case of a ceasefire with Russia.

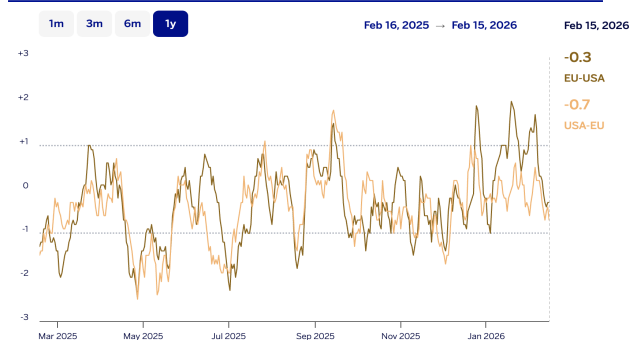
Iran's Military Drills and Missile Launches Increase Tensions: As talks opened, Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched naval drills and live-missile firings into the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic oil transit route, signaling readiness and responding to US military buildup in the region. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared that the US will not succeed in efforts to weaken Iran, underscoring Tehran's defiance. United States, while pursuing diplomacy, has signaled it wants broader commitments from Tehran that go beyond the nuclear issue, including restricting missile and military influence. US officials, including top envoys, are part of the Geneva talks, and President Trump has emphasized both negotiating and maintaining military pressure.

The BBVA Monitor: Geopolitical Risk rises in some European countries after Munich Security Conference

- **Geopolitical risk** indicators increased this week in some European countries, particularly in **Sweden** and the **Netherlands**, following the Munich Security Conference. Although **bilateral tensions** between the **EU** and the **US** are not presently in the high-risk area, they have entered that zone several times during 2026, following a prolonged period in 2025 when the indicator remained predominantly in neutral territory (see Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3).
- In **Iran**, despite heightened tensions, the **geopolitical risk** indicator remained in the neutral area, while the **political tensions** index continued to decline, also entering the neutral zone. The **social unrest** indicator maintained its easing trend. By contrast, the **Economic Policy Uncertainty** index remained at high-risk levels (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 5).
- In **India**, the **Economic Policy Uncertainty** index is beginning to reverse its upward trend, while the **Trade Policy Uncertainty** index remains stable in the extreme-risk area. The rest of the indicators remain relatively calm, fluctuating between neutral and low-risk levels (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 6).

FIG 1. BILATERAL TENSIONS EU - US

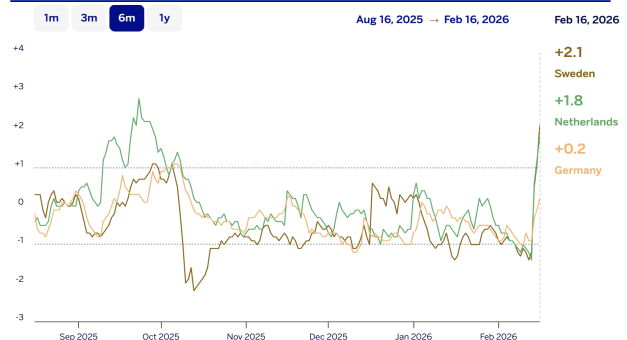
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



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

FIG 2. GEOPOLITICAL RISK: EUROPE

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



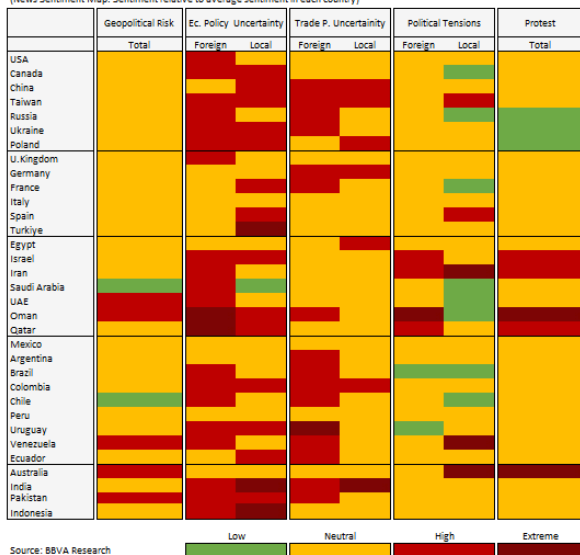
Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org. Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) interest relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

FIG 3. 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 (February 10th, 2026)

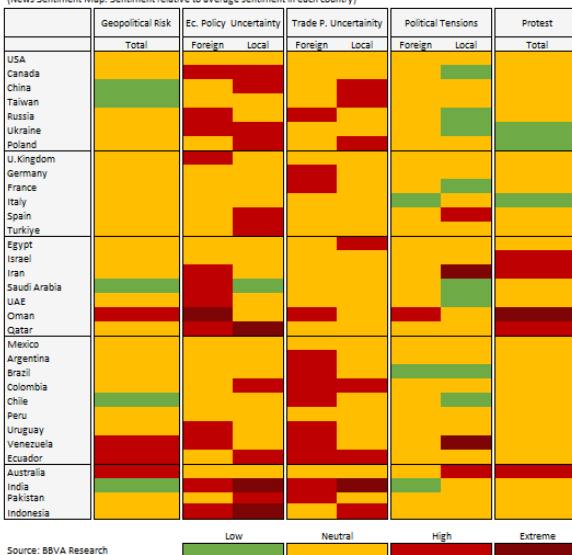
(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)



Source: BBVA Research

Summary of signals (February 17th, 2026)

(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)

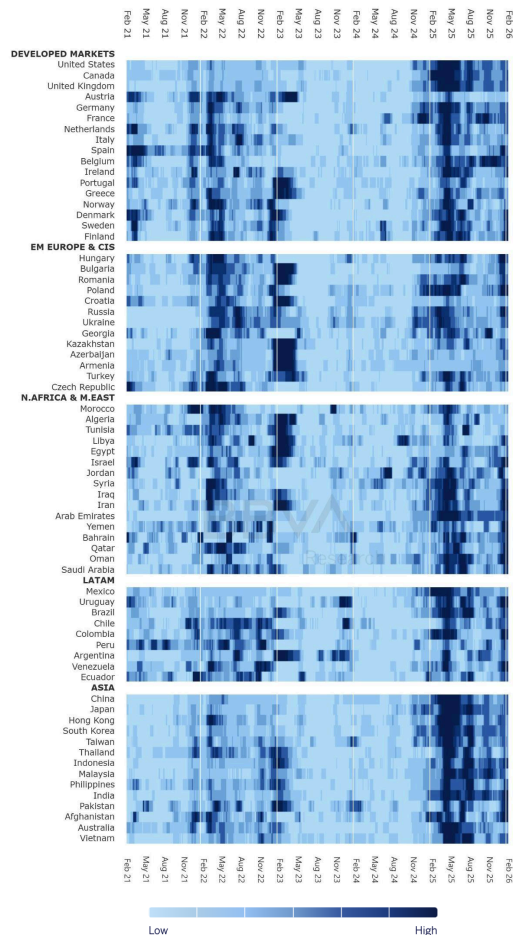


Source: BBVA Research

Source: BBVA Research and <http://www.qdelt.org/>

FIG 4. ECONOMIC POLICY UNCERTAINTY MAP

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



Source: BBVA Research & www.qdelt.org. Darker Blue colors stands for higher economic policy uncertainty while lighter blue colors for low uncertainty

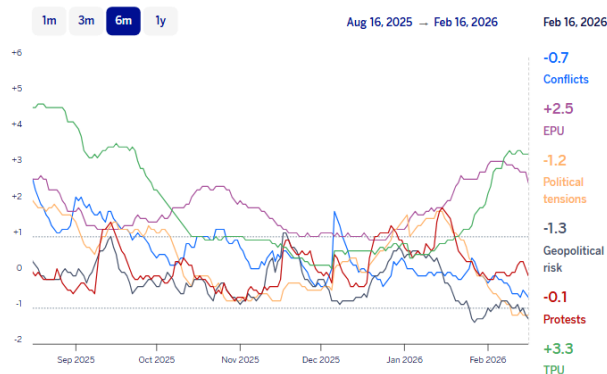
FIG 5. IRAN: MAIN GEO INDICATORS

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



FIG 6. INDIA: MAIN GEO INDICATORS

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



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

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 Schrodtt (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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