

## MNI POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS - Week Ahead 1-7 December

by Tom Lake

(MNI) London – All timings are subject to change.

*Monday 1 December:*

- **US-Venezuela:** CNN [reports](#) that US President Donald Trump will hold a meeting in the Oval Office at ~17:00ET (22:00GMT, 23:00CET) to discuss next steps on Venezuela. This comes after Trump [confirmed](#) that he had held a phone call with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and as Trump said that Venezuelan airspace should be 'considered closed'. Tensions between the two countries remain at record-highs, with reports that Trump has [delivered an ultimatum](#) to Maduro to resign from office.
- **Ukraine:** President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is in Paris for talks with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron. Coming just two weeks after his last trip to the French capital, the discussions will focus primarily on this weekend's discussions in Florida between US and Ukrainian delegations (see below). A joint press statement is set to be delivered in the early afternoon. Starts a week of intense European diplomacy for the embattled Ukrainian leader, whose political currency domestically (and in the US) has been severely dented by a burgeoning corruption scandal at high levels of government.
- **European Union:** Foreign Affairs Council meets in its defence format in Brussels, with EU foreign ministers talking with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, Ukrainian Defence Minister Denys Shmyhal, and NATO Deputy Secretary-General Radmila Šekerinska. A post-meeting press conference is expected ~14:30CET (08:30ET, 13:30GMT). EU support for Ukraine in the context of ongoing US efforts to push a peace plan will dominate discussions, alongside talks on the implementation of the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030, and specifically the potential inclusion of the UK and Canada in re-armament programmes that could receive EU funding.
- **Germany-Poland:** German Chancellor Friedrich Merz hosts Polish PM Donald Tusk in Berlin for an annual summit of the two countries' governments. The first such meeting since Merz took over the chancellery comes amid a cool-period in relations between Poland and Germany. Both sides are strong backers of Ukraine, and have similar views in securing NATO's eastern flank, combating illegal migration, and boosting EU security. However, issues regarding Polish demands for wartime reparations, and [burgeoning Polish public antipathy](#) towards Germany, continue to overshadow ties.
- **G20:** The United States assumes the presidency of the G20 from South Africa. The international group faces an existential crisis amid the US' boycott of the 2025 summit in Johannesburg, threats from President Trump to disinvite South Africa from the 2026 summit, citing the poor state of bilateral relations. The G20, which includes

G7 and BRICS members, has become increasingly irrelevant as the two US and China-aligned groups move further apart.

- **United Kingdom:** PM Sir Keir Starmer delivers his address to the Lady Mayor's Banquet in the City of London at ~2030GMT. This annual speech is customarily focused on foreign policy and can be used by a PM to outline their views and stance on major geopolitical issues. The address will be watched for signals on the UK government's stance regarding support for Ukraine, and its relations with China, the EU, and the US.
- **Romania, UAE:** Market holidays for National Day (Romania and UAE).

## *Tuesday 2 December:*

- **Russia-US:** Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to hold an afternoon meeting with US presidential envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, in Moscow. The meeting takes place in the context of the ongoing efforts from the Trump administration to push a peace deal on Ukraine and Russia. Witkoff's position as a neutral mediator has been under the microscope recently following the leak of a call between him and Russian presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev, in which Witkoff appeared to give advice to the Russian on how to gain favour with President Trump.
- **United States:** A special election takes place in Tennessee's 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional district following the resignation of Republican Mark Green in July. The district has been held by the Republicans since 1983, and President Donald Trump carried the area by 22% in the 2024 election. Former commissioner for the Tennessee Department of General Services Matt Van Epps is the favourite for the GOP, but some polling has shown Democrat Aftyn Behn within the margin of error. The outcome of the special election will be crucial in either reinforcing Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA)'s narrow majority in the House or pushing the balance closer to an outright tie.
- **United Kingdom:** Chair of the Budget Responsibility Committee at the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) Richard Hughes appears before the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee at 10:00GMT (05:00ET, 11:00CET). The session is billed as being there to discuss last week's budget statement. However, significant focus is likely to be on the OBR's accidental early publication of its budget document ahead of the chancellor's address, which gave away the government's policy decisions. Livestream [here](#).
- **European Union:** MEPs, EU ministers, and the Commission hold a trilogue in an effort to reach an agreement on rules regarding the proposed phase-out of Russian natural gas imports into the EU. The Council set out its position on the proposed rules in an October [press release](#). The European Parliament will negotiate its own points with ministers, while the Commission acts as a mediator.
- **Ireland-Ukraine:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travels to Dublin for the inauguration of the Ireland-Ukraine Economic Forum, in the first official visit to the country by Zelenskyy and his wife. *Taoiseach* (PM) Micheal Martin and *Tánaiste* (Deputy PM) will meet with Zelenskyy, while the Ukrainian president will also have a 'courtesy meeting' with newly-inaugurated Irish President Catherine Connolly.

- **United Kingdom:** The FT's Global Banking Summit gets underway in London, continuing to 4 Dec. Political speakers include Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister Lucy Rigby (09:05GMT, 2 Dec), Shadow Chancellor Mel Stride (10:15GMT, 4 Dec).
- **UAE:** Market holiday for National Day.

## *Wednesday 3 December:*

- **NATO:** A meeting of NATO foreign ministers takes place in Brussels. Arrivals and doorsteps from 07:30CET (01:30ET, 06:30GMT), with a post-meeting presser from Secretary General Mark Rutte at ~15:30CET (09:30ET, 14:30GMT). With US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in attendance, Ukraine's NATO allies will be looking for a full outline of the state of play in US-Ukraine/US-Russia talks on the mooted 28-point peace plan, given the broad exclusion of NATO/Ukraine's European partners in the talks so far.
- **China-France:** French President Emmanuel Macron starts a three-day visit to China. Macron will hold one-on-one talks with President Xi Jinping on Thursday, 4 December in a closed-door meeting. A second session will then take place with ministers present. Macron is expected to outline EU talking points on trade, amid shaky relations between the two sides, exacerbated by the US-China trade spat. The French president is also likely to look to draw Chinese investment and innovation in his country's economy, while seeking a 'strategic dialogue' on foreign policy issues, including the war in Ukraine and tensions in the Indo-Pacific.
- **European Union:** Commission Vice-President Stéphane Séjourné is set to present a new Economic Security Package, labelled 'Resource EU'. The intention of this initiative is to limit the ability of countries such as China and Russia from being able to coerce the EU or its member states via trade or supply chains to achieve its political aims. The plans are set to include a hub of central EU purchases and stockpiling of critical minerals and rare earths.
- **Europe:** The 'Battle for the Soul of Europe' annual conference takes place in Brussels. The two-day event brings together right-wing and nationalist politicians from across Europe. The 2024 event [drew significant headlines](#) after the police shut the event down at its initial location due to the threat of public disorder, forcing speakers, due to include Hungarian PM Viktor Orban and Reform UK party leader Nigel Farage, to find another venue at late notice.

## *Thursday 4 December:*

- **India-Russia:** Indian PM Narendra Modi is set to host Russian President Vladimir Putin, his first trip to India since launching the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Modi and Putin will take part in high-level discussions as part of the 23<sup>rd</sup> India-Russia Annual Summit. Bloomberg [reports](#) that talks could take place on India potentially purchasing Russian fighter jets and missile defence shields. The US has sought to dissuade India from maintaining its close military and economic ties with Moscow, imposing secondary sanctions on New Delhi for its continued purchase of Russian oil. However, India's efforts to be seated at the top table of global geopolitics, and its reluctance to jettison established relations with Russia in favour of more capricious links to the West, has resulted in little change in the Modi government's stance.



- **Poland-Hungary:** Polish President Karol Nawrocki was due to meet with Hungarian PM Viktor Orban in Budapest. However, this was called off following Orban's trip to Moscow last week to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which was strongly criticised by the Polish government. Instead, the right-wing Polish president will only take part in the meeting of the Visegrad Group presidents in Esztergom, Hungary on 3 November.
- **Canada:** PM Mark Carney is due to speak at the Assembly of First Nations' Special Chiefs in Ottawa at ~09:30ET (14:30GMT, 15:30CET). Carney's address to the indigenous people's group comes days after the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Alberta Premier Danielle Smith that could set the stage for a new oil pipeline. The plan will receive backing from some indigenous groups, but vehement opposition from others, raising political risks for Carney from the project.
- **United States:** The Floridian state legislature's redistricting committee holds a meeting amid increasingly fractious national political battles over congressional boundaries pre-midterms. As Punchbowl News reports "Florida has become increasingly more important as Republicans have struggled to secure new maps in other red states. The GOP-controlled Florida legislature is committed to redistricting but there are two main roadblocks," identifying Democrat resistance and Florida's anti-gerrymandering laws.

## *Friday 5 December:*

- **United States:** Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center hosts the draw for the group stages of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. US President Donald Trump will be in attendance, as will Canadian PM Mark Carney. FIFA President Gianni Infantino will present the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize.
- **Thailand:** Market holiday for King's birthday.

## *Saturday 6 December:*

- **Global:** The Doha Forum gets underway in the capital of Qatar, continuing to 7 December. Main political speakers on day one: Qatari PM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan (all 02:30ET/07:30GMT); Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis, Jordanian Deputy PM Ayman Safadi and Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide (all 04:00ET, 09:00GMT); Qatari Finance Minister Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari and IMF Deputy MD Bo Li (both 04:05ET, 09:05GMT); US Ambassador to NATO Matthew Whitaker, GCC Secretary General Jasem Mohamed Al Budaiwi and former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (all 06:30ET, 11:30GMT); Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa (07:15ET, 12:15GMT); Turkish Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek (08:30ET, 13:30GMT).
- **United States:** The Reagan National Defense Forum takes place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA. Speakers include US Secretary of Defence/War Pete Hegseth, Director of the Office of Management and Budget Russell Vought and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine. Hegseth under significant scrutiny at present following his apparent order to 'kill

everybody' aboard an alleged drug-smuggling boat in the Caribbean after an initial strike from US forces left two shipwrecked survivors.

*Sunday 7 December:*

- **Japan:** Following a deal agreed on 1 December between PM Sanae Takaichi and Japan Innovation Party (Ishin) co-leader Hirofumi Yoshimura, Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party and Ishin are set to submit a bill within a week (setting a 7 December deadline) that will move on discussions over a 10% reduction in the number of members of parliament to separate negotiations between the government and opposition parties. A cut to the number of lawmakers was a key demand for Ishin joining Takaichi's minority government in the autumn.
- **United States:** The US Supreme Court is set to make a final decision on the congressional map that will be used in Texas for the 2026 midterms by 7 December (with the filing deadline on 8 December). The Texas map was the spark that lit a number of efforts from Democrats and Republicans to redraw congressional boundaries ahead of the elections in order to boost their chances of retaining/winning control of the House of Representatives. If the court rules in favour of the 2025 map, it would provide a notable boost for Republicans in five key seats.

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