

## MNI POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS - Week Ahead 22-28 September

by Tom Lake

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

*Monday 22 September:*

- **Japan:** The formal campaign period for the leadership of the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) got underway, with five candidates on the ballot. Frontrunners to replace outgoing PM Shigeru Ishiba are former Minister of State for Economic Security Sanae Takaichi and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shinjiro Koizumi.
- **United States:** While both the Senate and House are on recess for the Jewish New Year, there is the potential for talks this week between Congressional Democrats and Republicans over efforts to avoid a government shutdown on 1 October. Both sides are seen to be digging in, with little sign of whether the GOP will be able to get its 'clean' funding bill passed in the Senate or if Democrats' demands on a 'laundry list' of demands, such as the permanent extension of subsidies, will be heeded.
- **Russia:** President Vladimir Putin delivers a statement on arms control at a Security Council meeting. Comes amid a series of aerial incursions into NATO airspace by Russian planes and drones that has seen Poland, Estonia, and Germany scramble jets in response, with each incident increasing the risk of escalation via miscalculation or accident. The UN Security Council holds an emergency meeting on the same day following a request from Estonia to discuss the incidents.
- **Middle East:** Ahead of the United Nations General Assembly plenary debate and leaders' addresses (see below), France and Saudi Arabia co-chair a conference on the topic of 'the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution'. Starting at 15:00ET (20:00BST, 21:00CET), it is expected that French President Emmanuel Macron will use the conference to formally announce his country's recognition of a Palestinian state.
- **US-India:** Amid tensions over trade, tariffs and President Donald Trump's raising of fees for H1-B visas, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will hold in-person talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York at ~11:00ET (16:00BST, 17:00CET). This will be the first in-person meeting between the two since the White House imposed 50% tariffs on India.
- **Italy:** Strikes and protests take place across the country, affecting schools, universities, public transport, and ports. A number of trade unions joined together to call the strikes in opposition to the government's stance on Gaza, and to call for Italy to break off diplomatic relations with Israel.
- **Canada-US:** Former US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg speaks at the Canada 2020 think tank's 'Future Forward' event in Ottawa. Buttigieg is viewed as a potential candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2028 and is

expected to speak candidly on his views on the Trump administration and US-Canada relations.

- **Israel:** Market holiday for Rosh Hashanah.

## *Tuesday 23 September:*

- **United Nations:** The General Debate of the 80<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly gets underway in New York City, continuing until 29 September. In line with historic custom, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will be the first head of state or government to address the plenary, to be followed by US President Donald Trump. The presence of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov could see high-profile sideline meetings taking place, while the formal recognition of a Palestinian state by the UK, Canada, Australia, France and others will also draw significant diplomatic focus and comment.
- **Japan:** As part of the LDP leadership election, a joint press conference involving all five candidates takes place at 10:00JST (21:00ET, 02:00BST), followed by a public debate hosted by the LDP's youth and women's bureaus at around 14:30JST.
- **United States:** Special election to be held for Arizona's 7<sup>th</sup> congressional district following the death of incumbent Democratic Congressman Raúl Grijalva in March. The seat is viewed as safely Democratic, with Grijalva's daughter, Adelita, the Democratic candidate and strong favourite to win the seat. Daniel Butierez, a painting contractor who also ran in 2024, is the Republican candidate.
- **Indonesia-EU:** Indonesia is set to sign a formal trade deal with the European Union following the announcement of a 'political agreement' on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in July after nine years of negotiations. European Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic will travel to Indonesia for the signing. Within one-to-two years, ~80% of Indonesian exports to the EU will be tariff-free.
- **Spain:** Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares Bueno delivers an address to the Atlantic Council think tank in New York City, with the speech set to focus on Spain's strategy for Europe, NATO's southern flank, and the transatlantic alliance. Given Spain's long-standing vocal support for Palestinian statehood, the issue is also likely to come up during the minister's address. Starts at 15:30ET (20:30BST, 21:30CET).
- **Asia:** The Asian Development Bank's fifth Asia Finance Forum gets underway in the Philippine capital, Manila. Continues through to 25 September.
- **Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia:** Market holidays for Rosh Hashanah (Israel), Autumnal Equinox (Japan), and National Day (Saudi Arabia).

## *Wednesday 24 September:*

- **Ireland:** The nomination period for potential candidates for the Irish presidency formally closes, one month before the election on 24 October. The three frontrunners are independent *teachta dala* (TD, lawmaker) Catherine Connolly, who is backed by parties of the left including the main opposition *Sinn Féin*, former Gaelic football manager and soldier Jim Gaving, backed by *Taoiseach* (PM) Micheal Martin's *Fianna Fail*, and former minister for Social Protection Heather Humphreys from the centre-right *Fine Gael*.

- **Japan:** The LDP leadership campaign continues at pace, with a public debate hosted by the Japan National Press Club between the five candidates taking place at 13:00JST (00:00ET, 05:00BST). Candidates will also take part in the first of three speech meetings to address party members, this one in Tokyo.
- **Israel, South Africa:** Market holiday for Rosh Hashanah (Israel) and Heritage Day (South Africa).

## *Thursday 25 September:*

- **US-Turkey:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan travels to Washington, D.C., for a meeting with his US counterpart, Donald Trump, at the White House. Writing about the visit on his Truth Social platform, Trump said, "*We are working on many Trade and Military Deals with [Erdogan], including the large scale purchase of Boeing aircraft, a major F-16 Deal, and a continuation of the F-35 talks, which we expect to conclude positively*".
- **UK-Australia:** While a day has yet to be confirmed, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is set to visit the UK following his address to the UNGA in New York. Albanese is set to meet with King Charles III and his British counterpart Sir Keir Starmer to discuss trade, as well as the AUKUS military alliance amid concerns in London and Canberra that the US is considering its options with regard to the submarine purchasing programme.
- **Israel:** Market holiday for Rosh Hashanah.

## *Friday 26 September:*

- **NATO:** A two-day NATO Military Committee Conference gets underway in Riga, Latvia. Involving Chiefs of Defence, the summit will see senior military figures discuss the outcomes of the NATO Summit in the summer, while the war in Ukraine and in particular, Russia's recent aerial incursions into the airspaces of NATO members, including Estonia, Poland and Romania, will feature prominently.
- **Turkey-Egypt:** Naval forces from both countries conclude 'Friendship Sea' drills in the Eastern Mediterranean, the first time in 13 years the two countries have engaged in such military activities. Relations have been strained for years over issues including Turkey's backing of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, Libya, and economic zones in the eastern Med. However, the reappointment of ambassadors in 2023 and both countries' condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza have seen ties improve of late.
- **Japan:** The second speech meeting for LDP leadership candidates takes place in Aichi province ahead of the 4 October vote count and announcement of the results.

## *Saturday 27 September:*

- **Iran:** Following the failure to pass a resolution to permanently lift sanctions on Iran in the UN Security Council, the mechanism to enact 'snapback' sanctions on Iran comes into force. The E3 nations (France, Germany, and the UK) moved forwards with snapback sanctions in response to Iranian non-compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections and a refusal to identify the location of its



enriched uranium stockpile. Iran have threatened to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in response to snapback sanctions.

*Sunday 28 September:*

- **United Kingdom:** The annual conference of the governing centre-left Labour party gets underway in the northern English city of Liverpool. Continuing until 1 October, the conference is viewed as potentially crucial for Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, who faces significant political headwinds after a bruising September in which his deputy prime minister and a key Downing Street aide have been forced to resign in scandal, while he belatedly sacked Ambassador to the United States Peter Mandelson over his links to the late paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein. A successful conference speech could provide some stability to Starmer's position, while an address that goes down poorly will put more pressure on the PM ahead of the November budget statement.
- **Moldova:** Elections take place for all 101 seats in the Parliament of Moldova. The election has garnered significant international attention, given the broader regional geopolitical situation. The liberal pro-EU Party of Action and Solidarity is looking to retain its majority in the face of what President Maia Sandu has alleged is direct Russian interference in the election to try and tip the scales in favour of the Russophile Patriotic Electoral Bloc (BEP). A win for the BEP could halt the progress of Moldova in its EU accession process, or even risk civil unrest, given the deep political divisions in the country.
- **Italy:** The central-eastern Marche and northwestern Aosta Valley regions hold elections to their regional legislatures. In Marche (voting 28 and 29 September), the centre-right coalition of President Francesco Acquaroli is seeking a second term in office, having won power from the left for the first time in Italy's post-war history in 2020. In the Aosta Valley election, the governing regionalist Valdostan Union looks to retain its position as the largest party in the face of a challenge from the parties of the centre-right and right running as formal coalition for the first time.

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