

The BFPG's 2025 Foreign Policy Calendar

2024 was a year defined by geopolitical tension, international conflict and a broad anti-incumbency trend which introduced a host of new faces to the world stage. Looking ahead, 2025 will bear witness to how many of these shifts and conflicts unpredictably play out, and no doubt inject further turbulence into an ever more fractious geopolitical arena. **To help guide you through the year, BFPG has compiled a list of this year's major global milestones and events and what to look out for in 2025.**

January

1st January: Poland assumes Presidency of the Council of the European Union



On the 1st January, Poland assumes the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, taking over from Hungary, whose Presidency was far from smooth. Under the shadow of the ongoing invasion of neighbouring Ukraine, and the slogan "Security, Europe!", Poland plans to focus its Presidency on

strengthening European security and defence. But in a difficult economic environment across Europe, and when domestic affairs look set to draw certain member states inwards - from Romania to France and Germany - Poland faces a difficult road ahead to motivate and steer the EU towards bolstering its security and resilience.

20th January: Inauguration of United States President Donald Trump



The United States' President-elect Donald Trump will take office for the second time on the 20th January, with a bold vision for the United States' role in the world. Trump's second term is expected to bring renewed pressure on Europe to take on a greater share of the responsibility for its own defence and security, as well bad news

for climate activists, and the potential for a tit-for-tat trade war with China. Meanwhile, Trump's policy elsewhere, not least on the Middle East, seems less clear, echoing the unpredictability and volatility that is expected to underpin the next four years of American foreign policy.

20th - 24th January: 2025 World Economic Forum, Davos



The 55th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum will convene in Davos, Switzerland in mid-January, under the banner of "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age". Discussions will focus on building stronger and more resilient economies amid major geo-economic

and technological shifts, including the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), climate and clean technologies. AI is, as ever, expected to be high up on the agenda, presenting leaders with an opportunity to discuss key themes ahead of the global AI Action Summit in February.

February

10th - 11th February: AI Action Summit, Palais des Festivals, Cannes



Heads of state, international organisations and major businesses from across the world will gather in France for the next iteration of global AI summits, following in the footsteps of the UK in 2023 and the Republic of Korea in 2024. The Summit has a number of primary deliverables

- launching a global platform for AI capacity building, stimulating standards and investment for sustainable AI, and placing the European continent firmly on the map when it comes to the future of AI.

14th - 16th February: 61st Munich Security Conference



The Munich Security Conference assembles senior decisionmakers and thought-leaders from around the world to lead the debate on international security policy. This year's conference is set to address issues including Europe's role in security and defense, new visions of the global order, and the security implications of climate change, as well as welcome recommendations from its Middle East Consultation Group - an initiative aimed at addressing the

complex dynamics of the region. The global ramifications of United States President Donald Trump taking office will also no doubt dominate conversations, as will debates about how to engage with nations not welcome at the summit (both Russia and Iran have been left off the invite list since 2023). It remains unknown whether either nation will be invited to the 2025 conference, and their presence would no doubt impact what is discussed.

23rd February: German General Election



Following the collapse of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz' three party coalition in November 2024, Germans will head to the polls in February to determine the fate of Europe's largest economy. The centre CDU/CSU are expected to win the largest share of

the votes, although it is unlikely any party will win a majority, necessitating a coalition, as is common in German politics. All eyes though will be on how Germany's far-right party, AfD, performs given its softer approach to Russia and opposition to the European Union.

24th February: Third Anniversary of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine



In February, the world will mark the three year anniversary of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. 2025 will be a critical year for Ukraine, not least due to the inauguration of President Trump. While - despite his promises - a swift peace negotiation brokered by a newly elected

Trump seems unlikely, Trump's appointment will certainly usher in changes, not least a recalibration of both the United States' commitment to Ukraine, and, in turn, European defence and security commitments to Ukraine.

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March/April

By Spring: UK China Audit



Promised in Labour's election manifesto back in summer 2024, the government's 'audit' of the UK's relationship with Beijing is set to be published by Spring 2025. The audit is expected to primarily be

a review of internal processes, with Labour already engaging in a shift in the UK's approach to China while the audit has been underway. Rachel Reeves is expected to make a January trip to China as part of plans for more proactive engagement with China.

May

By May: Australian General Election



Australia's general election is due in May, although current Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese could send voters to the polls early. Centre-left Albanese is framing this year's federal election as a choice between "building Australia's future" under Labor or "taking Australia backwards" under the Coalition of the Liberal Party of Australia and the Nationals, but poor approval ratings

suggest Labour might struggle to secure a majority. Cost of living will play a defining role in the election, with foreign policy largely taking a backseat, but managing the threat of US sanctions from a Donald Trump presidency, tackling the climate crisis which Australians are feeling acutely, and an increasingly posturing China will all nonetheless await the victorious government.

May: Polish Presidential Election



May will welcome presidential elections in Poland, in an effective referendum for Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centre-right coalition government. While Prime Minister Tusk holds significant sway over day-to-day governance, the President (currently President Andrzej Duda of the right-wing populist Law and Justice (PiS) party) looms as

a crucial, and often incongruous power. The presidential race is expected to be a showdown between Rafał Trzaskowski, the Mayor of Warsaw for Civic Platform (PO), and Karol Nawrocki, representing PiS, who is expected to continue Duda's nationalist policymaking and blocking of Tusk's democratic reforms.

May 4th - 18th: Romanian Presidential Election



Romanians will head to the polls for a re-run of the presidential elections, after Romania's Constitutional Court annulled the first round of voting over suspected Russian interference, as alarm bells rang at the surge

in support for relatively unknown pro-Russian candidate, Călin Georgescu. The re-run will be a determining test for democracy, and whether Romania advances down a pro-European path or sidesteps into the embrace of Moscow.

16th May: Albania hosts the European Political Community



Albania will host the sixth summit of the European Political Community, which it will seek to use to position itself as a key strategic partner across Europe, as it looks to further its European integration and

strengthen its democratic institutions. Trans-Atlantic ties under President Trump, the future and stability of European defence and security, and migration are expected to be top priorities for the summit.

27th May - 1st June: 78th World Health Assembly



World Health Organisation (WHO) member states will convene in Geneva at the end of May for the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA). 2025 ushers in the Fourteenth General Programme of Work, WHO's strategy for 2025-2028, and marks the beginning of the journey of the latest high-level road map for global health, set to

reinstantiate actions needed to get the health-related Sustainable Development Goals on track, while future-proofing health and care systems. While specific Assembly priorities are yet to be announced, this year's conference will aim to finalise negotiations on the WHO Pandemic Agreement on prevention, preparedness and response, which the 77th WHA failed to deliver.

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June

15th - 17th June: G7 Summit



Group of Seven (G7) leaders will gather in Canada in June, for a summit set to prioritise moving toward more inclusive economies, combatting the effects of climate change, and regulating emerging technologies. This year's Summit will welcome a number of new leaders, not

least host Canada's own, given a number of G7 incumbents have lost, or look set to lose elections since last year's Summit. The Summit will therefore be an opportunity for these new faces to make a mark on the world stage and may also lead to a shift in priorities as new administrations take office.

24th - 26th June: NATO Summit



In a busy season of summits, 2025's NATO Summit will take place in the Hague, Netherlands. The Summit will seek to lay out plans for adapting and strengthening the Alliance for a rapidly changing security environment. While 23 out of the 32 allies now meet NATO's defense spending commitment of 2% of GDP, money

will no doubt be on the minds of decision-makers. Standing firm on Europe's need to take on a greater share of the responsibility for its own defence and security, newly-elected President Donald Trump's presence at the summit, and the United States' waning interest in providing continual material support, could prompt discussions of raising the spending threshold.

July

July: BRICS Summit



This year Brazil will welcome BRICS members for their annual summit, including its four most recent members (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE), as well as thirteen partner countries, as the bloc continues to rapidly expand. The bloc was originally set up to counter

Western dominance, particularly in multilateral institutions, although several members, such as Brazil and India, still maintain strong relations with the West. Ambitions for the Presidency are expected to focus on modernising the global governance system, climate finance and sustainability, and tackling systemic poverty.

July: AI for Global Good Summit, Switzerland



The AI for Good Global Summit is the leading UN event on AI, that will bring together thought-leaders in AI and global decision makers in Switzerland, to identify practical applications of AI, accelerate progress

towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals and scale solutions for global impact. Discussions are likely to build on the outcomes delivered at February's AI Action Summit, such as the planned global platform for AI capacity building.

August

17th August: Bolivian Presidential Election



Bolivia is set to hold a general election in August, amid a protracted power struggle between President Luis Arce and former President Evo Morales of the same leftist Movement for Socialism (MAS) party, which has triggered a failed coup, a reported assassination attempt, and ongoing public protests. Bolivia's constitutional court ruled in late 2024 that Morales, who has served three presidential terms, is

ineligible to run again, while Arce's approval ratings remain very low. With the MAS Party divided, the question is whether any of Bolivia's other political parties can make a persuasive case to the Bolivian public; for any and all who end up on the ballot, a focus on bolstering Bolivia's beleaguered democracy, initiating judicial reforms, and addressing urgent economic and environmental issues will be crucial.

September

9th - 23rd September: 80th session of United Nations General Assembly



In September the United Nations General Assembly, the largest annual meeting of government and civil society leaders, will convene for the 80th time. While it will be an opportunity to celebrate the UN's successes, reflection on the path ahead will be at the forefront of the conversation. Indeed, complex challenges in recent years -

from the COVID-19 pandemic to the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza - have exposed the organisation's limitations and will no doubt dominate conversations. This year's assembly will also focus on taking stock of the 2024 Pact of the Future, as well as the path to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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October

7th October: Anniversary of the Israel-Hamas War



The 7th October will mark two years since Hamas' surprise attack on Israel, and the subsequent and devastating escalation in conflict and violence in Gaza, and ensuing regional escalation. It is impossible to

predict at this stage what the situation will look like in October but there is potential for the anniversary to present a flashpoint in both war or peacetime.

By 20th October: Canadian Federal Election



2025 got off to a bumpy start in Canada's political circles, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation on the 6th January, and Parliament's subsequent prorogation until 24th March. A new Liberal leader will be selected and will face a confidence motion as soon as the prorogation of parliament ends. If they lose, they will likely

resign, thereby triggering an early election. Either way the federal election must be held before the 20th October. Key debates in the election are likely to be inflation, immigration, and a housing shortage, overlaid with palpable anxiety about a potential US trade war, following the incoming Trump administration's promise of up to 25% tariffs on Canadian exports to the United States.

By 27th October: Irish Presidential Election



Following its 2024 general election, the Republic of Ireland will hold a presidential election towards the end of 2025, to elect Taoiseach Michael D Higgins' successor. While candidates have not yet declared their interest, former Fianna Fail Taoiseach from 2020 to 2022,

Micheál Martin, is tipped to run, among many others. Ireland remains in coalition talks after no party secured a majority in the Dáil last November, meaning 2025 will bring considerable transformation across both legislative and presidential branches.

November

10th - 21st November: COP30



Host of not only the 2024 G20 Presidency, but the 2025 presidencies of both BRICS and COP30, Brazil is on a diplomatic offensive set to plant itself firmly back on the diplomatic map. This year's COP will center on delivering a fresh round of climate targets for 2035 - in a last ditch attempt to keep the 1.5°C mission on track - and is set to be the

most consequential climate summit since the Paris conference 10 years ago. The summit will also be decisive in reinforcing Brazil's role as a protagonist in the global climate agenda, and will no doubt be centred around ambitious priorities on climate finance goals, emissions reductions, and knowledge-sharing; many of which Brazil pioneered under its G20 presidency.

22nd -23rd November: G20 Summit, South Africa



This year's G20 Summit will be held in South Africa; the first time an African nation has convened the gathering. Under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability", South Africa is set to prioritise strengthening global disaster resilience and response, ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries, and mobilising finance for a just energy transition. This presidency will build

on themes addressed by its predecessors, Brazil, India, and Indonesia, and will finish off a four-year stretch during which the G20 presidency was held exclusively by nations of the Global South. South Africa will be looking to capitalise on this unprecedented opportunity for developing nations to shape the G20 agenda, collaborating to set the parameters for discussions for leaders of developed countries.

By 23rd November: Singapore General Election



Due by November 2025, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong will be taking his party into a general election for the first time since his election. His conservative People's Action Party (PAP), which has governed Singapore since independence, is once again forecasted to win

securely, albeit Wong has strongly warned voters of the risks of complacency. Whatever the electoral outcome, managing the cost of living, the threat of US tariffs from a Donald Trump presidency, and an increasingly posturing China will all await.

December

12th December: 10th Anniversary of Paris Climate Agreement



December will mark a decade on from the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, which set the goal to keep the global average temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. Fast-forward a decade and the

globe is set to continue warming to devastating effect, with 2024 being the hottest year on record. As we approach this poignant anniversary, many place hopes in an ambitious and revolutionary COP30, although the limited success of COP29 will certainly hang over this year's Summit.