

Great Decisions 2026 Topics by Date

February 5

1 - Debating America's Global Role *by G. John Ikenberry*

Trump's return has marked a break from 80 years of U.S. foreign policy leadership, embracing an "America First" approach. This chapter explores the risks of isolation and diminished influence in relation to Trump 2.0 foreign policy.

February 12

2 - Trump Tariffs in Historical Perspective *by Michael Mastanduno*

Trump's aggressive trade and tariff policies have shaken global economic norms. What's the rationale behind this radical shift in economic policy, and what are the implications for multilateral trade and geopolitics?

February 19

3 - U.S.-China relations *by Oriana Mastro*

Relations with China remain tense, with tariffs, military modernization, and pressure on Taiwan. Does Trump have a coherent China policy, and will his tariffs on Rare Earth minerals be effective? What are America's strategic options?

February 26

4 - Today's Nuclear Age *by Gideon Rose*

U.S. alliance skepticism may drive countries like Japan and South Korea to reconsider nuclear options. What are the implications of the Trump administration's rethinking of the U.S. alliance system for regional and global security? Will this new uncertainty alter the way allies and rivals in various regions make decisions about security and nuclear weapons?

March 5

5 - Ukraine and the Future of European Security *by Thomas Wright*

With reduced U.S. support for NATO and Ukraine, Europe faces strategic uncertainty. The Trump administration has signaled an intention to reduce its security role in Europe. What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas, and how might Europe respond?

March 12

6 - Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order *by Scott Bessent*

Can multilateralism survive amid shifting global power and rising nationalism? This chapter examines the future of global cooperation across trade, health, and finance.

March 19

7 - U.S. Engagement of Africa *by Jendayi E. Frazer*

Africa's geopolitical role is growing. What lessons can the U.S. learn from China's presence there, and how might it strengthen ties, especially with leading nations like Nigeria? What tools of statecraft might the U.S. bring to its engagement with Africa?

March 26

8 - The Future of Human Rights & International Law *by Jose Enrique Alvarez*

As democracy and human rights retreat globally—and the U.S. pulls back—how can civil society and legal norms remain effective in a divided world? What is the role and force of international law in this era of impunity?