

# The Missing Global Trends 2025:

## Intelligence Community Disruption Under New Leadership

The absence of the National Intelligence Council's (NIC) traditional Global Trends report for 2025 represents a significant departure from a 28-year pattern of strategic intelligence assessment, raising concerns about the politicization of intelligence analysis under the current administration.

This disruption occurs amid broader changes to the intelligence community's structure and priorities under Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, highlighting tensions between analytical independence and political alignment.

### Historical Context and Established Pattern

The Global Trends series has served as a cornerstone of strategic intelligence assessment since 1997, with the National Intelligence Council producing comprehensive reports every four years to coincide with incoming presidential administrations.

These unclassified assessments traditionally examine key trends and uncertainties expected to shape the strategic environment over the following two decades, providing analytical frameworks for policymakers crafting national security strategy.

The reports have consistently maintained their publication schedule through multiple administrations, including previous Trump presidency periods, making the current absence particularly noteworthy.

The Global Trends reports assess critical drivers and scenarios with an approximate fifteen-year time horizon, drawing on intelligence from diverse sources including academic experts and private sector specialists.

Previous editions have examined structural forces including demographics, environment, economics, and technology, while analysing their implications for emerging global dynamics.

The most recent published report, "Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World," was released in 2021, establishing the expectation for a 2025 edition that would examine trends through 2045.

### Current Intelligence Community Disruptions

The anticipated Global Trends 2025 report's absence coincides with significant organizational changes and personnel actions within the intelligence community under DNI Gabbard's leadership.

In May 2025, Gabbard dismissed two senior officials from the National Intelligence Council weeks after they authored an assessment contradicting President Trump's justification for invoking the Alien Enemies Act against suspected Venezuelan gang members.

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This action represents a direct intervention in the analytical process that traditionally produces Global Trends assessments, potentially undermining the institutional capacity required for such comprehensive strategic analysis.

Christopher Kojm, a former NIC chairman, characterized these dismissals as representing "a serious error in judgment," noting that firing analysts for producing unwelcome conclusions exemplifies the politicization that intelligence professionals seek to avoid.

The targeting of NIC leadership is particularly significant given that this organization serves as the principal body responsible for evaluating classified information and delivering strategic assessments to senior policymakers.

Jonathan Panikoff, a former deputy national intelligence officer, emphasized that the NIC has traditionally served as "the heartbeat of apolitical U.S.-source analysis," drawing together the intelligence community's best analysts to tackle challenging issues.

## Structural and Administrative Changes

Beyond personnel actions, Gabbard has initiated broader structural changes that may impact the intelligence community's analytical capabilities. She has announced plans to relocate both the President's Daily Brief preparation office and the National Intelligence Council from CIA facilities to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence campus.

While such relocations have been contemplated previously, the timing amid other disruptive changes suggests potential efforts to centralize control over intelligence products and their presentation to senior officials.

Additionally, Gabbard has implemented sweeping policy changes, including the elimination of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs across the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, claiming annual savings of approximately \$20 million. She has also closed the Human Capital Office, describing it as operating as a "slush fund for DEI initiatives".

These administrative actions, while not directly related to analytical products, indicate a broader transformation of intelligence community operations and priorities that may affect the resources and focus available for strategic assessment projects like Global Trends.

## Speculation and Expert Analysis

Independent analysts have noted the significance of the Global Trends delay, with one expert observing that it occurs "during a period of exceptional global economic uncertainty and geopolitical complexity that are necessarily challenging, and an environment that is less tolerant of independent ideas".

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This assessment suggests that the current global strategic environment, rather than facilitating comprehensive analysis, may be creating conditions that discourage or complicate the production of forward-looking intelligence assessments.

Intelligence community observers have raised questions about whether the absence represents a temporary delay or a more fundamental cessation of the Global Trends series.

The fact that similar reports were produced during the previous Trump administration suggests that political factors alone may not explain the current situation, though the specific personnel and policy changes implemented by Gabbard represent unprecedented disruptions to traditional intelligence community operations.

### Implications for Strategic Intelligence

The absence of Global Trends 2025 carries significant implications for strategic planning and policy development across the national security establishment. These reports have traditionally provided essential analytical frameworks for understanding long-term challenges and opportunities, helping policymakers navigate complex global dynamics.

Without this comprehensive assessment, senior officials may lack the systematic analysis of emerging trends that has informed strategic decision-making for nearly three decades. The disruption also raises broader questions about the independence and integrity of intelligence analysis under political pressure.

The Global Trends series has maintained its value precisely because it has provided unvarnished assessments of global developments, regardless of their alignment with current policy preferences.

The current situation suggests potential erosion of this analytical independence, with concerning implications for the quality and reliability of intelligence products more broadly.

### Conclusion

The absence of Global Trends 2025 represents more than a missed publication deadline; it symbolizes broader tensions within the intelligence community regarding analytical independence, institutional continuity, and political influence over intelligence products.

While the specific reasons for the delay remain unclear, the context of personnel changes, structural reorganization, and policy shifts under DNI Gabbard's leadership suggests systematic disruption of traditional intelligence community operations.

The ultimate resolution of this situation will likely serve as an indicator of the administration's commitment to maintaining the independence and analytical rigor that have traditionally characterized American strategic intelligence assessment.

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As global challenges continue to evolve rapidly, the absence of this critical analytical resource leaves policymakers and the broader national security community without a key tool for understanding and preparing for future strategic environments.