

# Futurist Jim Carroll's 2017 Predictions: How Accurate Were They?

A retrospective analysis comparing Jim Carroll's 2017 predictions about the United States with the reality of 2025



# Introduction: Predicting America's Future

In May 2017, futurist Jim Carroll published a thought-provoking analysis titled "Trends: What Comes Next with the Decline of an Empire?" In it, he outlined several predictions about how the United States' global position might change in response to shifting political and economic priorities.

This presentation examines each of Carroll's predictions and compares them to the reality of 2025, assessing their accuracy and implications.

## 2017 Predictions

Jim Carroll's original forecasts about America's changing global position

## 2025 Reality

What actually happened in each predicted area

## Accuracy Assessment

How well each prediction aligned with actual outcomes

# The Context of Carroll's Predictions

Carroll's 2017 predictions were made in response to significant geopolitical shifts, including:

- Angela Merkel's comments that "Europe needs to go it alone"
- Changing U.S. attitudes toward international cooperation
- Emerging trends in global R&D and innovation
- Shifts in climate policy and energy development

Carroll noted: "It's about time someone starts to talk about the future implications of the new world history that we are now watching unfold."



Carroll's analysis focused on how decisions being made in 2017 would "change the global economy in significant ways" with impacts that "likely won't be apparent for years to come."



# Prediction #1: Science and R&D Relocation

## 2017 Prediction

"The current anti-science mindset that is percolating throughout the US will only accelerate a trend that is already underway. A good chunk of the pure science research that drives future economic growth won't occur in the US."

## 2025 Reality

U.S. share of global R&D spending fell from 40% (2000) to under 31%, while China's surged from 5% to over 24%. Federal budget cuts included 57% reduction for NSF, 37% for NIH, and closure of EPA's research office.

China's effective R&D investment reached \$1.8 trillion, more than double the U.S. total of \$823 billion.

✓ Verdict: ACCURATE

# Prediction #2: Energy and Green Industries Investment

## 2017 Prediction

"If you make a decision not to align yourself to the fast innovation trends which are unfolding, you miss out on the jobs, growth and new companies which are appearing in this space. I expect that many companies in this sector will make economic development decisions that are influenced by an attitude that welcomes their innovation."

## 2025 Reality

U.S. withdrew from Paris Agreement and dismantled EV policy framework. China now dominates green technologies, controlling 75% of global lithium-ion battery manufacturing and 80% of solar module production.

Germany's "Energiewende" strategy positioned it as a leader in green hydrogen and renewables. The U.S. ceded leadership in a projected \$2 trillion market.



Verdict: ACCURATE

# Prediction #3: Travel Shifts

## 2017 Prediction

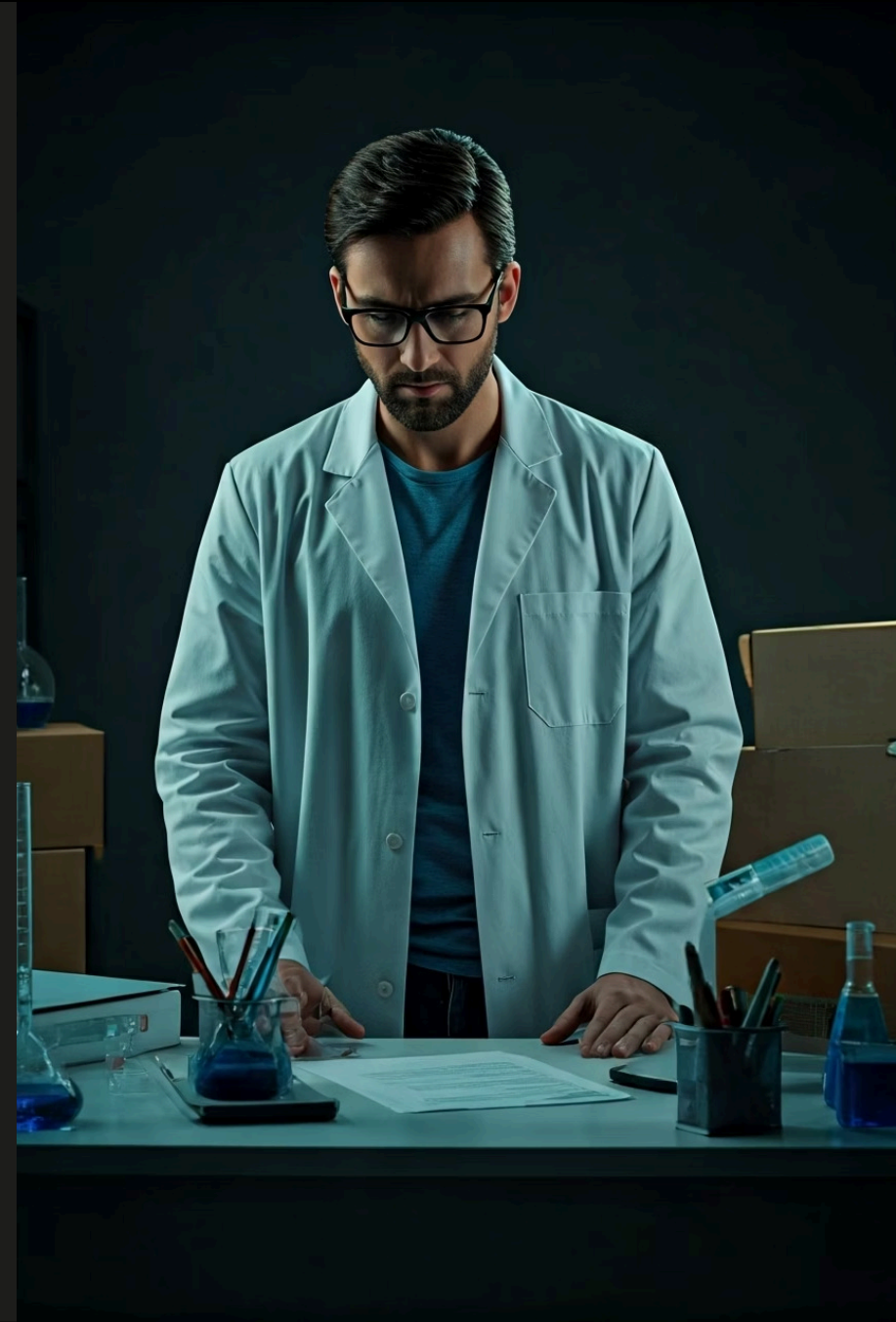
"Immigration bans, an increasing climate of hatred, the degradation of a climate of diversity, laptop bans. Quite simply, a greater percentage of the world's population will choose to visit other parts of the world."

## 2025 Reality

European research institutions reported a 35% increase in applications from U.S.-based scientists in early 2025 alone. The unwelcoming policy environment, combined with severe funding instability, created a quantifiable "brain drain."

Not only tourists and business travelers reconsidered, but the world's top scientific talent actively chose to go elsewhere.

✔ Verdict: ACCURATE







# Prediction #4: Meetings and Events Relocation

## 2017 Prediction

"The global meeting industry generates billions of dollars in economic activity. Quite simply, countless scientific and other conferences and events will choose to host future events in a more tolerant, idea-diverse location than the US."

## 2025 Reality

With top talent and research funding migrating to Europe and Asia, major gatherings followed. The U.S. withdrawal from international scientific bodies like the IPCC created a less central role in global scientific discourse.

While comprehensive data on event relocation is diffuse, the underlying drivers of this prediction intensified significantly.



Verdict: ACCURATE

# Prediction #5: Sporting Events Move


## 2017 Prediction

"I have a friend who has just been appointed to take a senior role at the Canadian Soccer Association, he has the initiative to pursue the hosting of a future World Cup event with a combined bid involving Canada, the US, and Mexico. Think about the chances of that happening in the current climate. Like, it won't."

## 2025 Reality

This specific example proved to be an outlier, as the joint bid for the 2026 FIFA World Cup was successful. The success may be attributed to the long-term, globally integrated nature of sporting organizations, which can sometimes operate on a different track than immediate geopolitical shifts.

However, the broader prediction about the U.S. becoming a less attractive global partner has been borne out in other realms.

 Verdict: INACCURATE



# Prediction #6: Minds That Matter Move

## 2017 Prediction

"If I were a PhD candidate, where might I choose to place the efforts of my mind today? Into an environment in which ideas matter! We are living in a modern-day era of Atlas Shrugged. Who is John Galt? He and she are out there, and they are making their decision."

## 2025 Reality

NIH funding cuts disproportionately impacted early-career researchers, creating what observers termed a "lost generation of scientists."

Competitor nations launched aggressive campaigns to recruit this demographic, such as Canada's "Canada Leads 100 Challenge" and Australia's "Global Talent Attraction Program."

The minds that matter were not just moving; they were being actively poached by countries that valued and funded their ideas.

✓ Verdict: ACCURATE

# Prediction #7: Skills Training Evaporates

## 2017 Prediction

"Countries worldwide are racing to enhance the skills of their workforce. Clearly, this will slow down in the US given the current environment. The eventual winners embrace new skills; the losers cling to old, outdated irrelevant skills."

## 2025 Reality

The competitive gap in skills training widened dramatically. While the U.S. focused on deregulation, competitor nations integrated massive human capital programs:

- Germany's High-Tech Strategy 2025 aligned education with technological change
- South Korea invested heavily in AI talent
- Japan built its innovation strategy on developing human resources

The U.S. acknowledged this weakness as a "critical national vulnerability."

✓ Verdict: ACCURATE





# Prediction #8: The U.S. Loses Its Dominance

## 2017 Prediction

"For the last 50 years, the California IT engine has dominated the accelerated innovation that comes from technology. That's now changing quickly: the new growth engines are 'Silicon Wadi' in Israel, the Shenzhen Hi-Tech Industrial Park in China, Canada's Technology Triangle centred on Kitchener."

## 2025 Reality

The era of singular U.S. dominance ended, replaced by a multipolar innovation world:

- China's "Made in China 2025" turned Shenzhen into a global powerhouse
- Israel's "Silicon Wadi" evolved into a "Scale-Up Nation" with the world's highest R&D intensity
- South Korea and Germany executed focused strategies to dominate specific high-tech sectors

✓ Verdict: ACCURATE



# Prediction #9: New Multinationals Become the Corporate Model

## 2017 Prediction

"The US Fortune 500 has dominated the global economy for a long time, but if you take all of these trends, growth will occur elsewhere. Companies will choose to realign themselves to growth. The new Fortune 500's will be headquartered in Germany, Singapore, China, and elsewhere."

## 2025 Reality

The rise of non-U.S. multinationals became evident:

- In EVs, China's BYD became a global force
- In telecommunications, Huawei achieved massive scale
- In green technology, Germany's Siemens leveraged "Energiewende" to become a world leader
- In semiconductors, South Korea's Samsung became dominant

These state-backed national champions emerged as the new face of global corporate power.

✓ Verdict: ACCURATE



# Prediction #10: Political Discourse Matures Elsewhere

## 2017 Prediction

"Long the beacon of democracy, it really seems we are witnessing its decline. Advanced economies are having discussions about the reality of climate change, skills retraining and more. Temper tantrums don't define future success; mature discussions do."

## 2025 Reality

The U.S. engaged in a "debilitating internal tug-of-war" with a "politically volatile approach to industrial policy" creating "strategic incoherence."

This stood in sharp opposition to the "long-term, state-directed, and heavily funded industrial strategies" of competitors.

The primary recommendation for the U.S. became the adoption of a "Coherent, Bipartisan National Industrial Strategy" - a direct response to this predicted failure of mature political discourse.

✔ Verdict: ACCURATE





# Summary: Carroll's Predictions Scorecard

9

## Accurate Predictions

Nine of Carroll's ten predictions proved remarkably accurate by 2025

1

## Inaccurate Prediction

Only the sporting events prediction (World Cup) proved incorrect

90%

## Overall Accuracy

Carroll's 2017 analysis demonstrated exceptional foresight about global trends

Carroll's predictions about the shifting global landscape proved to be remarkably prescient. His analysis captured fundamental trends that have reshaped the international order by 2025, with significant implications for U.S. competitiveness and global influence.



# Conclusion: The Power of Trend Analysis

Jim Carroll's 2017 predictions demonstrate the value of thoughtful trend analysis in anticipating major global shifts. By identifying underlying patterns and their potential consequences, Carroll accurately foresaw developments that would take years to fully manifest.

As we look to the future beyond 2025, these trends continue to evolve, presenting both challenges and opportunities for nations, businesses, and individuals willing to adapt to a changing world order.

To read Jim Carroll's original 2017 post, visit:

**<https://jimcarroll.com/2017/05/trends-what-comes-next-with-the-decline-of-an-empire/>**



"It's about time someone starts to talk about the future implications of the new world history that we are now watching unfold." - Jim Carroll, 2017