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Regarding: Earth

Earth hasn't changed much since the Mass Exudes that began in 2010. The United States of America is still considered the dominant 1st world power. Japan and China bicker like school children. Terrorism rears its ugly head from time to time; suicidal fanatics carry out destructive acts in the name of religion. The microwave is still widely used in kitchens and new, more compact versions of home entertainment systems come out every few years.

Space travel is officially used in the name of research. A small colony has been established on the moon, which is inhabited strictly by air force personnel. Mars is visited occasionally but colonies there have proven too costly to keep up.

Four Countries have developed their own versions of Slip Stream drives. Although none of which have been able to establish other world colonies (Not for the lack of trying). Currently those four countries (China, Japan, Russia, and the US), trade within the colonies for certain metals and technology.

Select countries have discovered a small number of alien civilizations but luckily none are hostile towards humanity. Since Earth hasn't been able to reach out as far as the colonies, those governments have much less knowledge about what's truly out there. The public is kept in the dark about the existence of the colonies and any other races that their government has interacted with. Not even the governments themselves share this information.

