

Visual Essay

A Look at the U.S. International Transactions

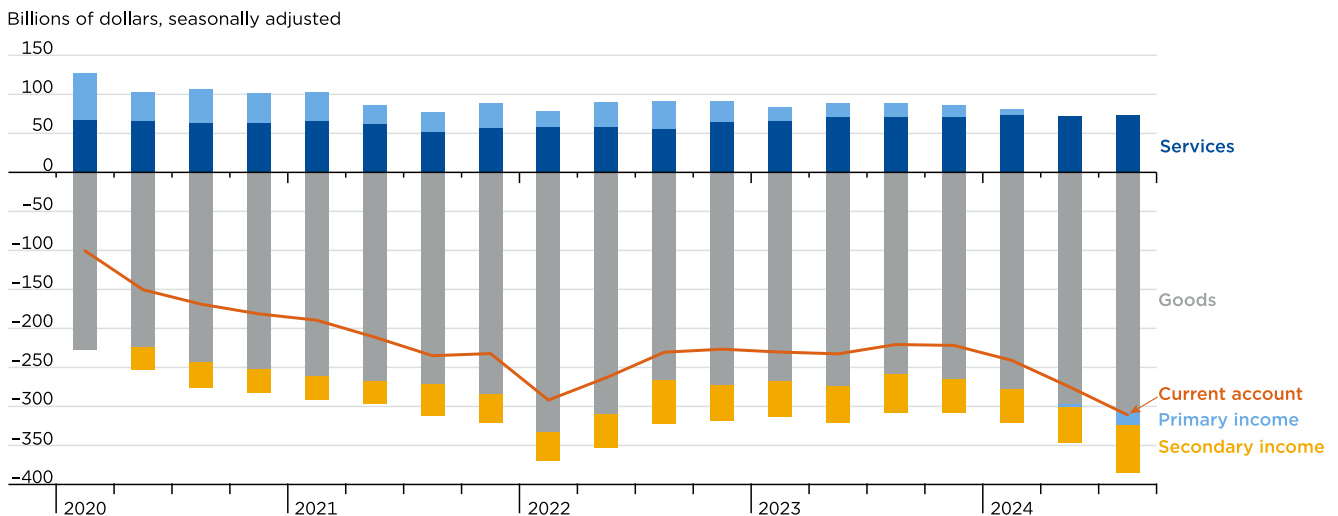
Third Quarter of 2024

By Elliot Berg and David Stein | January 29, 2025

This article highlights statistics on the U.S. International Transactions Accounts and the current-account deficit, which reflects the combined balances on trade in goods and services and income flows between U.S. residents and residents of other countries. These statistics are published by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) each quarter. Detailed statistics for U.S. international transactions and a description of the estimation methods are available on the BEA website. For the statistics, see [“International Transactions”](#) in BEA’s Interactive Data Application. For the methods, see [U.S. International Economic Accounts: Concepts and Methods](#).

Current-Account Overview

Chart 1. U.S. Current-Account Balance and Its Components

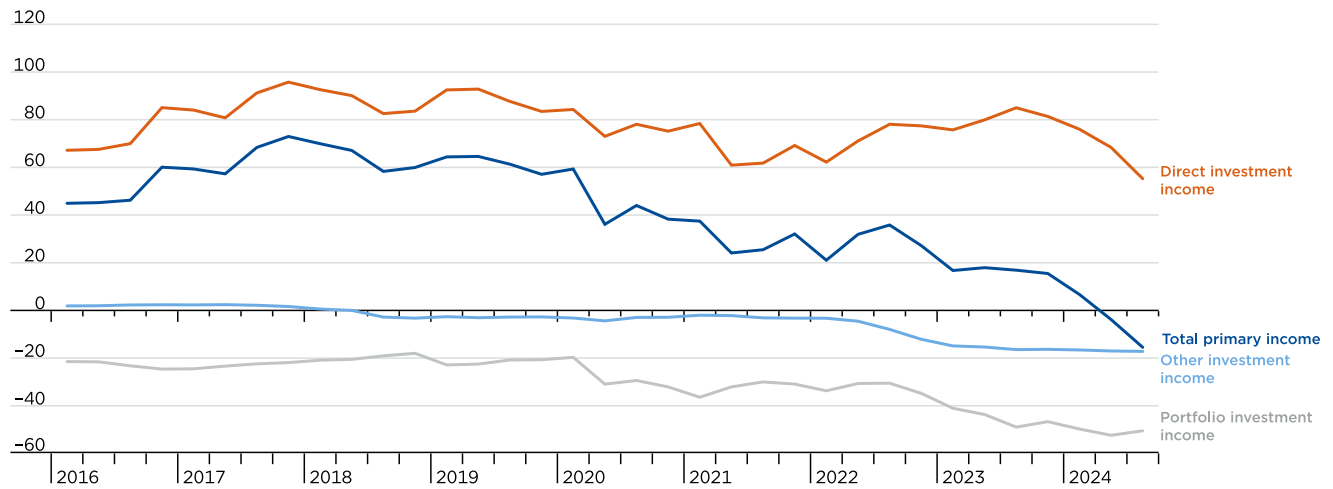


U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- The current-account deficit widened by \$35.9 billion, or 13.1 percent, to \$310.9 billion in the third quarter of 2024—the largest level on record.
- The third-quarter widening reflected expanded deficits on secondary income, primary income, and goods.¹

Chart 2. Primary Income Balances by Component

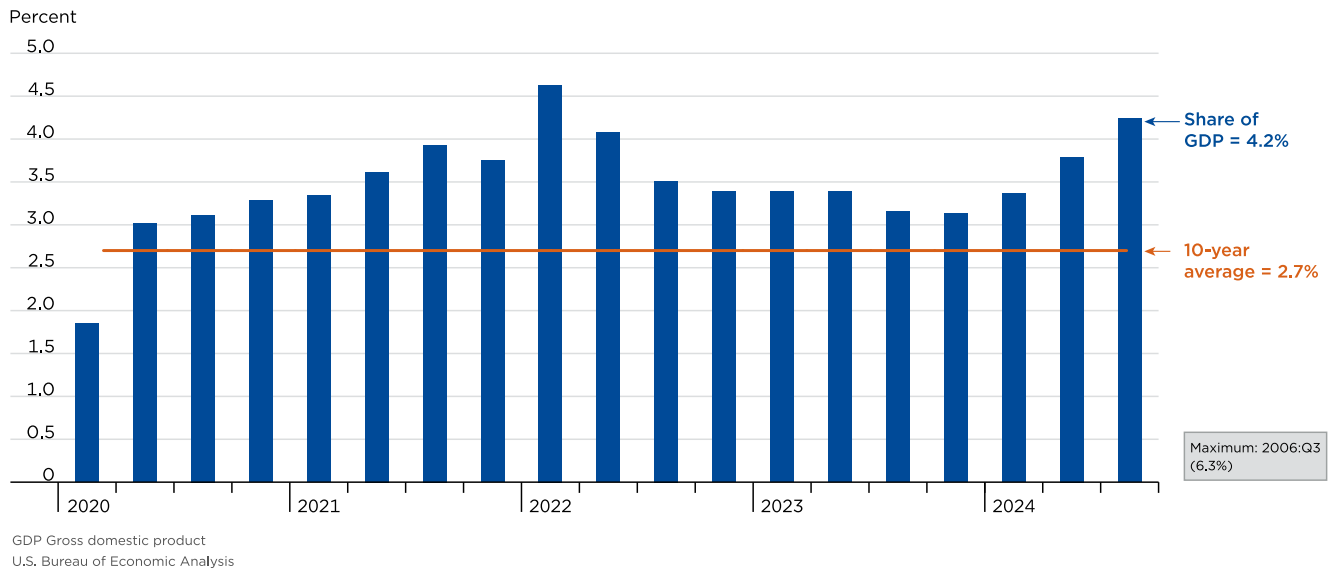
Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- The revised second-quarter 2024 primary income deficit is the first deficit since the third quarter of 2001. The deficit expanded to \$15.5 billion in the third quarter.
- The primary income deficit was due to decreasing balances on the three major functional categories of direct, portfolio, and “other investment.”
- The gradual reduction of the surplus suggests investments in the United States have been relatively more profitable than investments overseas in recent years.

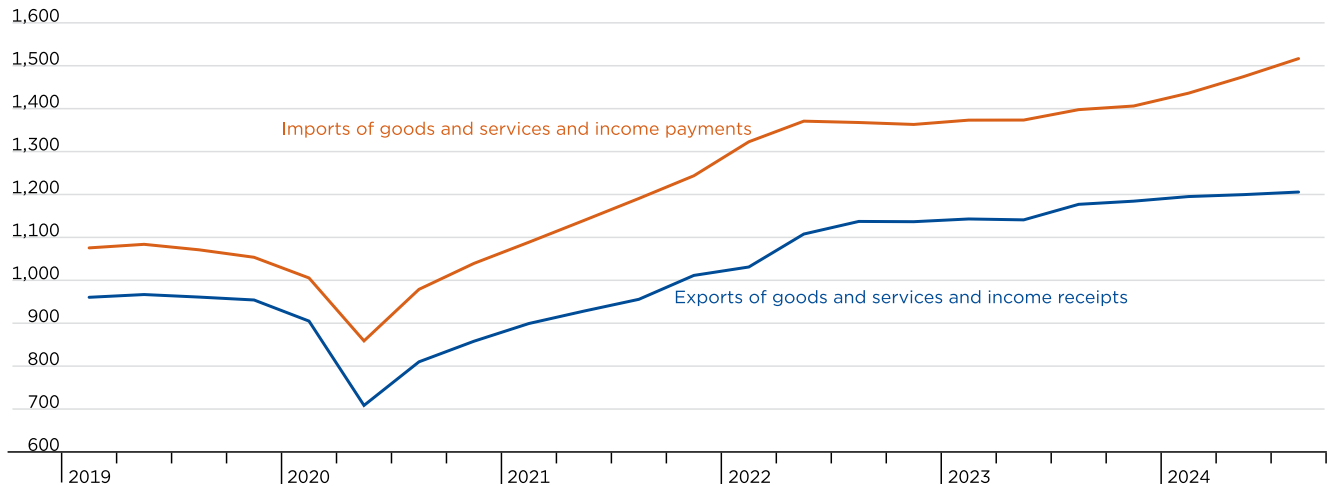
Chart 3. U.S. Current-Account Deficit Share of GDP



- The third-quarter deficit was 4.2 percent of nominal gross domestic product, up from 3.7 percent in the second quarter.
- The third-quarter percentage was higher than the 10-year average of 2.7 percent but below the record of 6.3 percent in the third quarter of 2006.

Chart 4. U.S. Current-Account Transactions

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



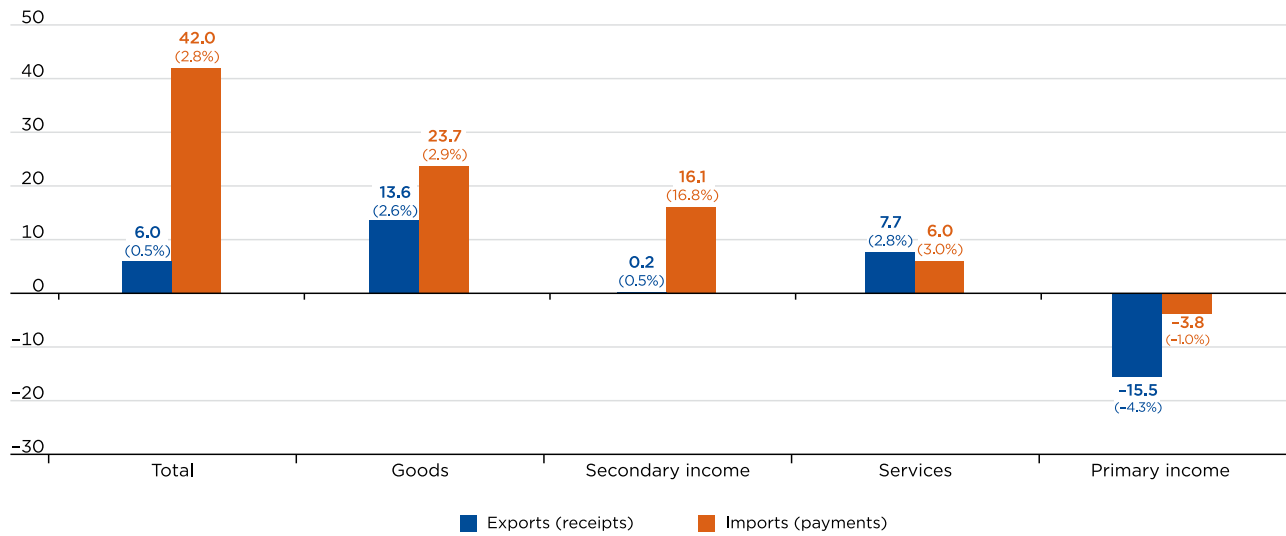
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- Exports of goods and services and income receipts increased \$6.0 billion, or 0.5 percent, in the third quarter, following a \$4.5 billion, or 0.4 percent, increase in the second quarter.
- Imports of goods and services and income payments increased \$42.0 billion, or 2.8 percent, following a \$38.6 billion, or 2.7 percent, increase in the second quarter.

Chart 5. Changes in Exports (Receipts) and Imports (Payments), 2024:Q3

Dollar change by major aggregate, quarterly

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
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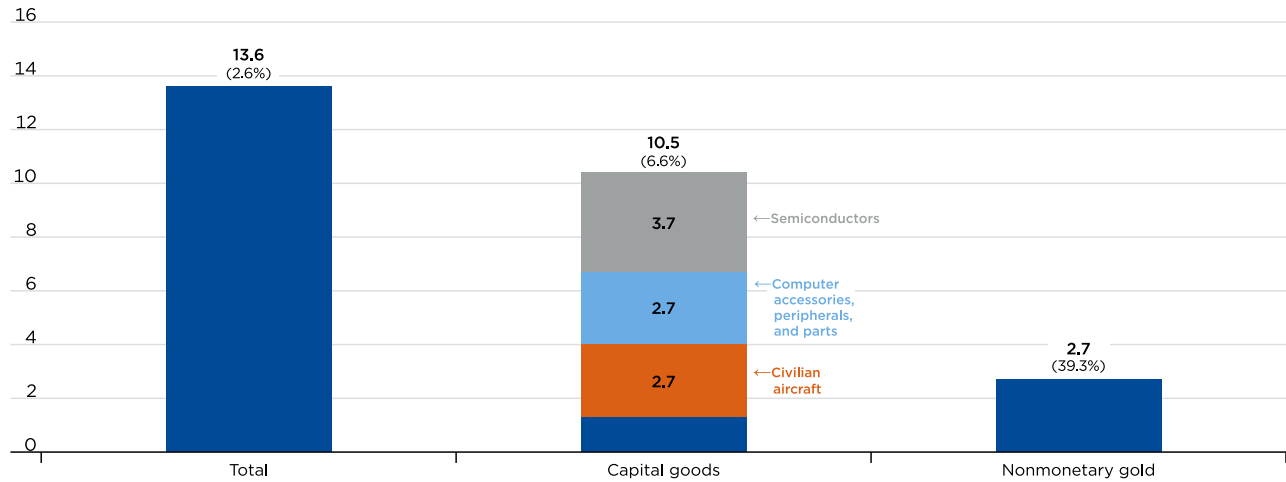
- The increase in exports of goods and services and income receipts was mainly due to goods and services exports but was partly offset by a decrease in primary income receipts.
- The increase in imports of goods and services and income payments was mostly due to goods imports and secondary income payments.

Goods and Services

Chart 6. Goods Exports, 2024:Q3

Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



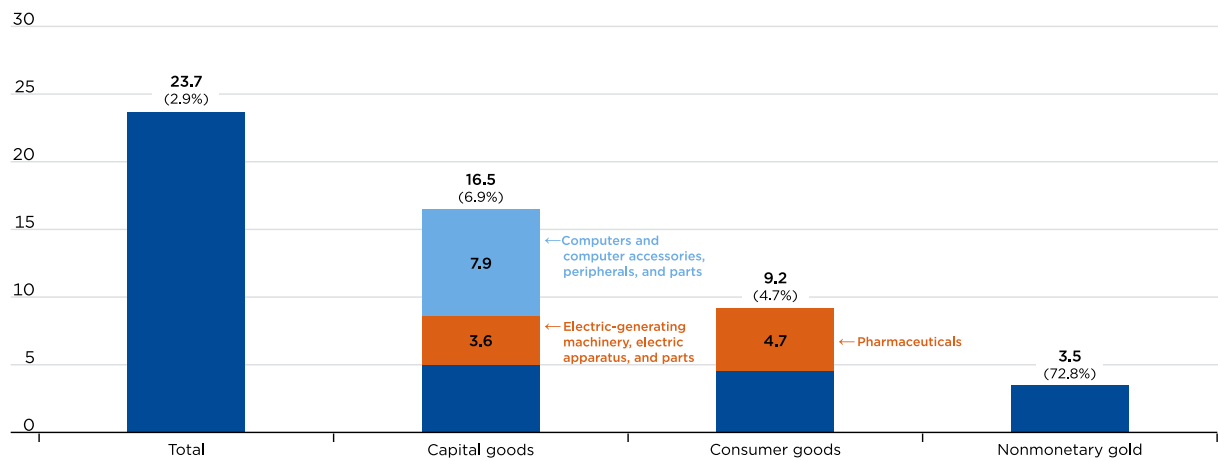
Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Exports of goods increased \$13.6 billion, or 2.6 percent.
- The increase was led by capital goods—mostly semiconductors; computer accessories, peripherals, and parts; and civilian aircraft.
- The next-largest increase was in nonmonetary gold.

Chart 7. Goods Imports, 2024:Q3

Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly

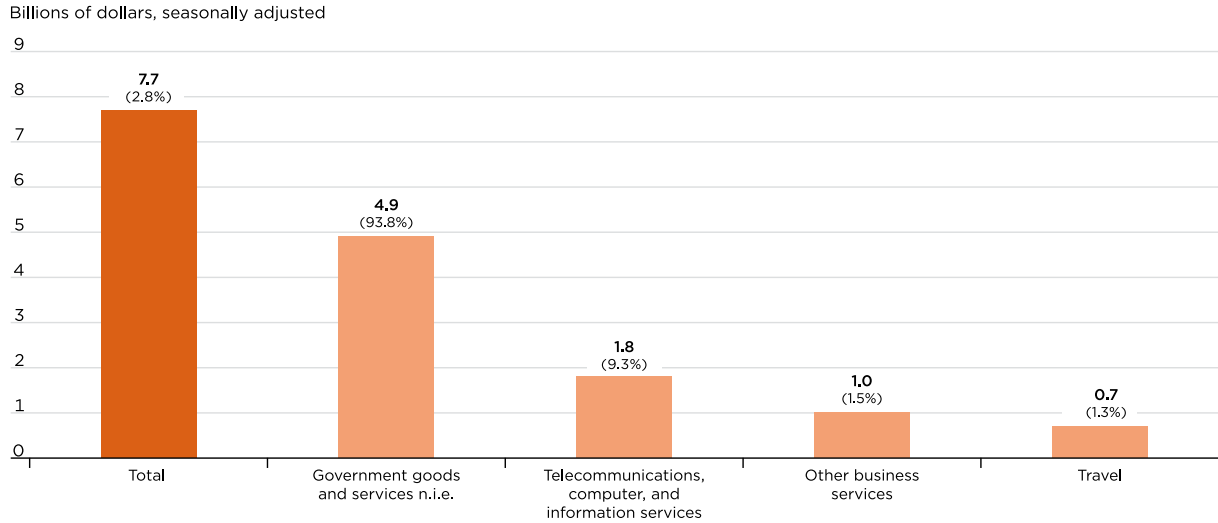
Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Imports of goods increased \$23.7 billion, or 2.9 percent.
- The increase was led by capital goods—mostly computers and computer accessories, peripherals, and parts; and electric-generating machinery, electric apparatus, and parts.
- Consumer goods, particularly pharmaceuticals, and nonmonetary gold also contributed to the increase.

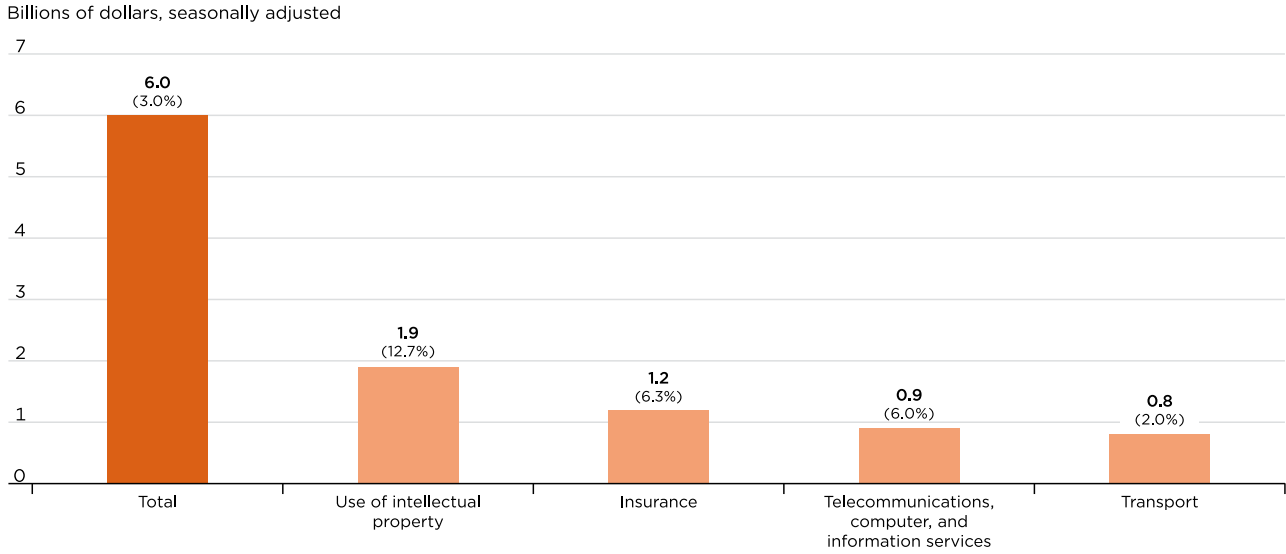
Chart 8. Services Exports, 2024:Q3
Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly



n.i.e. Not included elsewhere
Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

- Exports of services increased \$7.7 billion, or 2.8 percent.
- The increase was led by increases in government goods and services; telecommunications, computer, and information services; “other business services”; and travel.

Chart 9. Services Imports, 2024:Q3
 Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly



Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

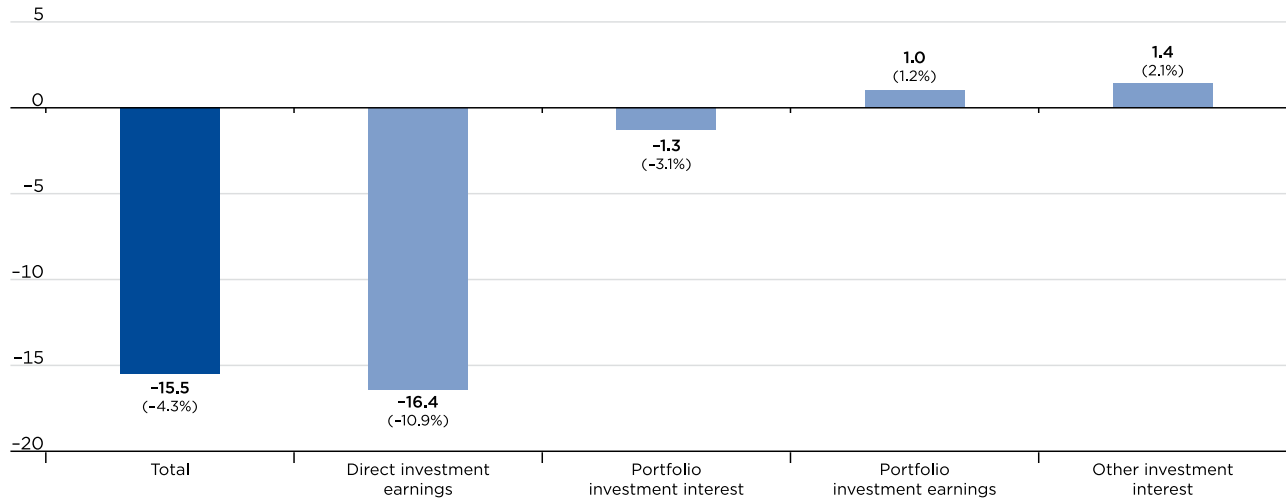
- Imports of services increased \$6.0 billion, or 3.0 percent.
- The increase was widespread by category, led by charges for the use of intellectual property.

Primary and Secondary Income

Chart 10. Primary Income Receipts, 2024:Q3

Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



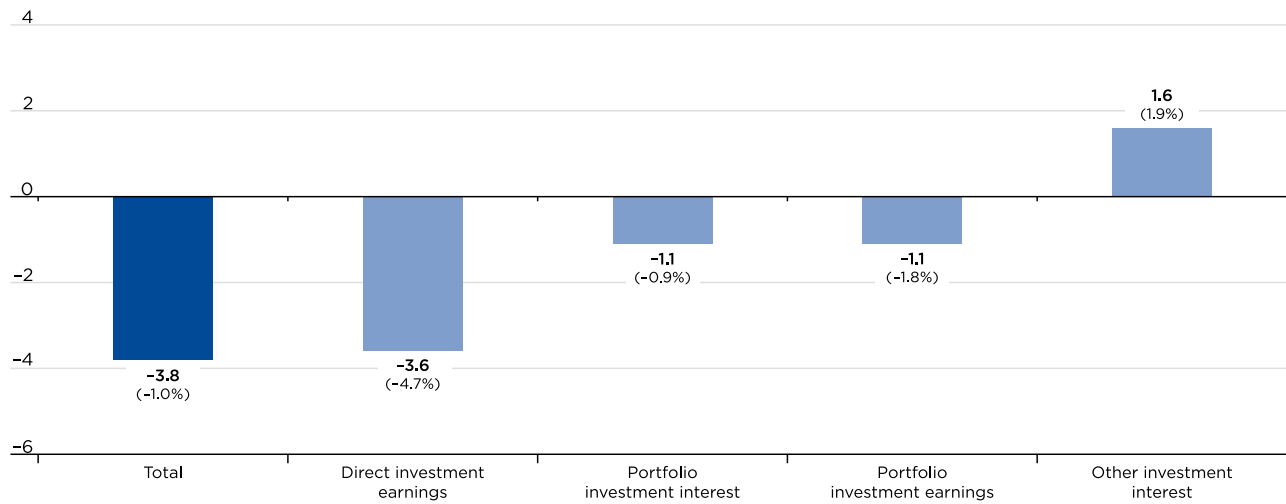
Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
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- Primary income receipts decreased \$15.5 billion, or 4.3 percent.
- The decrease was largely led by direct investment earnings, which was partly offset by increases in portfolio investment earnings and “other investment interest.”

Chart 11. Primary Income Payments, 2024:Q3

Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



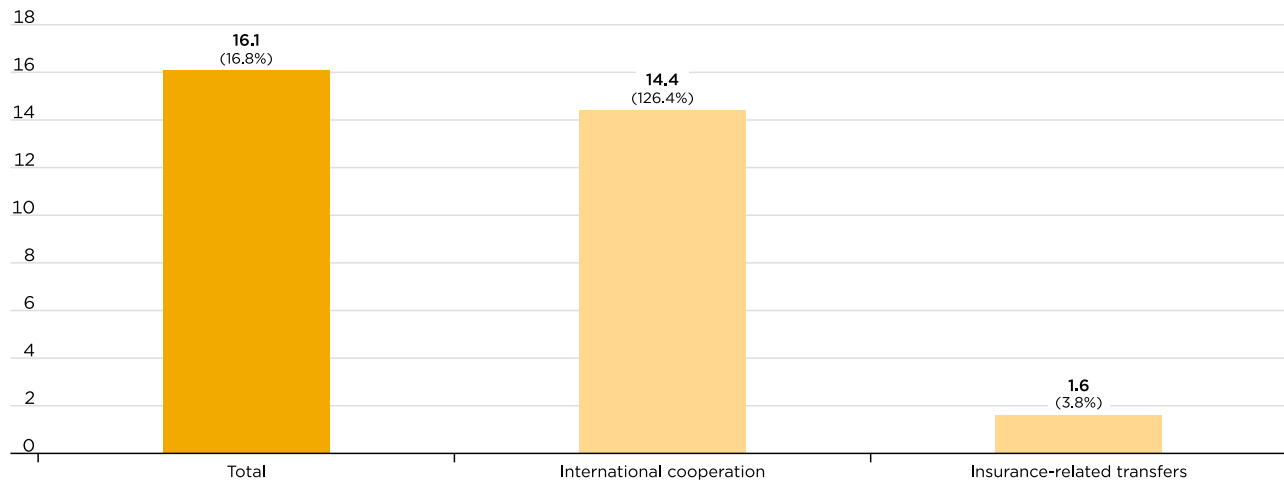
Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
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- Primary income payments decreased \$3.8 billion, or 1.0 percent.
- The decrease was led by a decrease in direct investment earnings, followed by portfolio investment interest and portfolio investment earnings, with other investment interest partly offsetting the decreases.

Chart 12. Secondary Income Payments, 2024:Q3

Component contributions to total dollar change, quarterly

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



Note. Percentages indicate percent change from the second quarter of 2024 to the third quarter.
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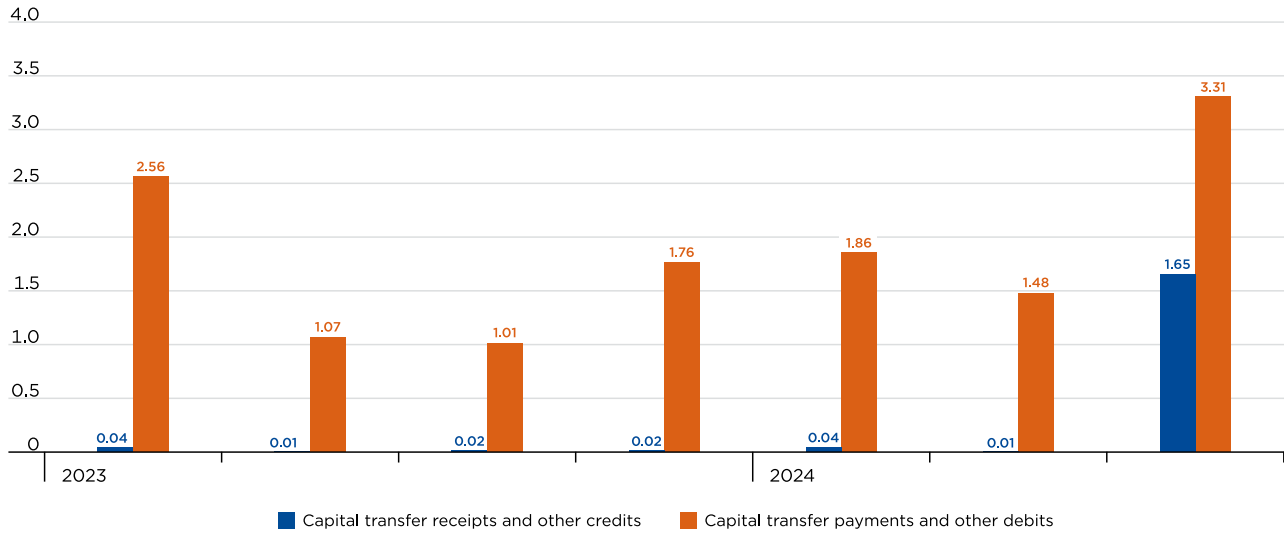
- Secondary income payments increased \$16.1 billion, or 16.8 percent, and was the second-largest contributor to imports and income payments in the third quarter.
- The increase was led by general government transfer payments, primarily international cooperation.

Capital Account

Chart 13. Capital-Account Transactions

Dollar level by major component

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted

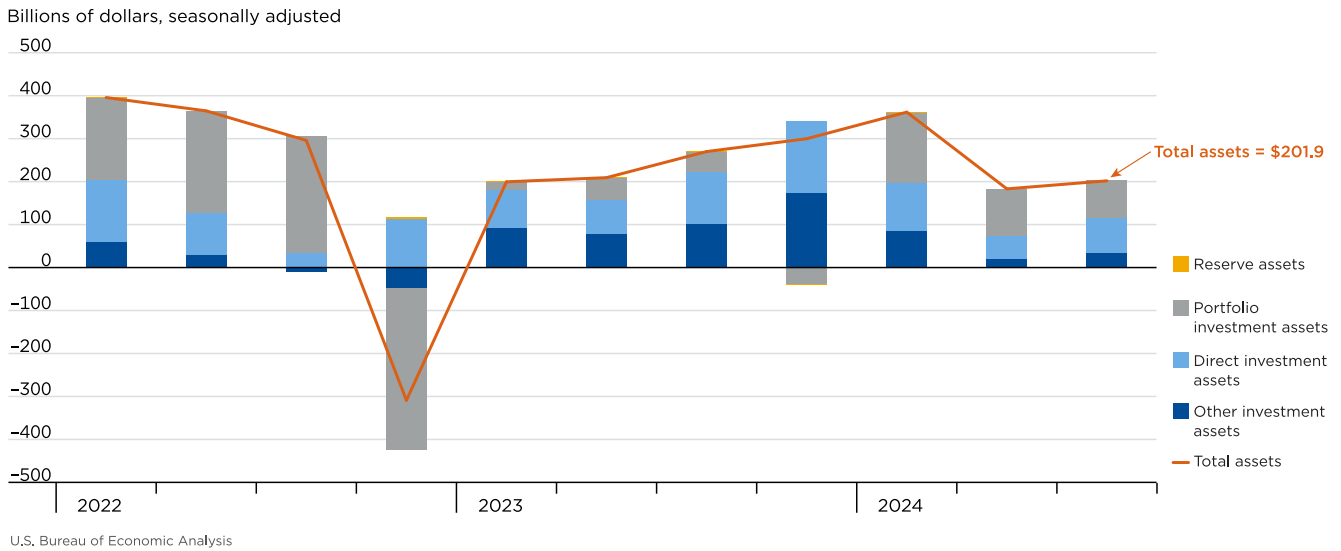


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- Capital-transfer receipts were \$1.6 billion, reflecting cross-border insurance claims related to Hurricane Helene.
- Capital-transfer payments increased \$1.8 billion to \$3.3 billion, reflecting an increase in infrastructure grants.

Financial Assets and Liabilities

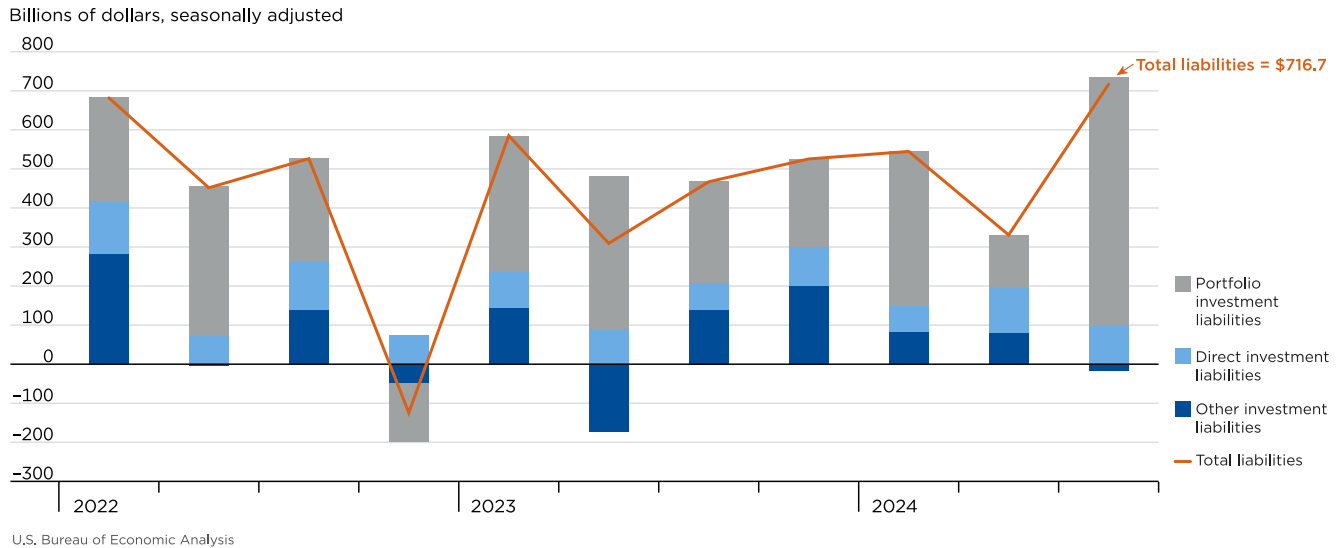
Chart 14. Transactions in Assets
Dollar level by major aggregate



- Total transactions in financial assets were \$201.9 billion in the third quarter, representing continued net U.S. acquisition of assets since the fourth quarter of 2022.
- Transactions in portfolio investment assets, led by equity and investment fund shares, was the leading contributor, followed by transactions in direct investment assets, mainly equity.

Chart 15. Transactions in Liabilities

Dollar level by major aggregate

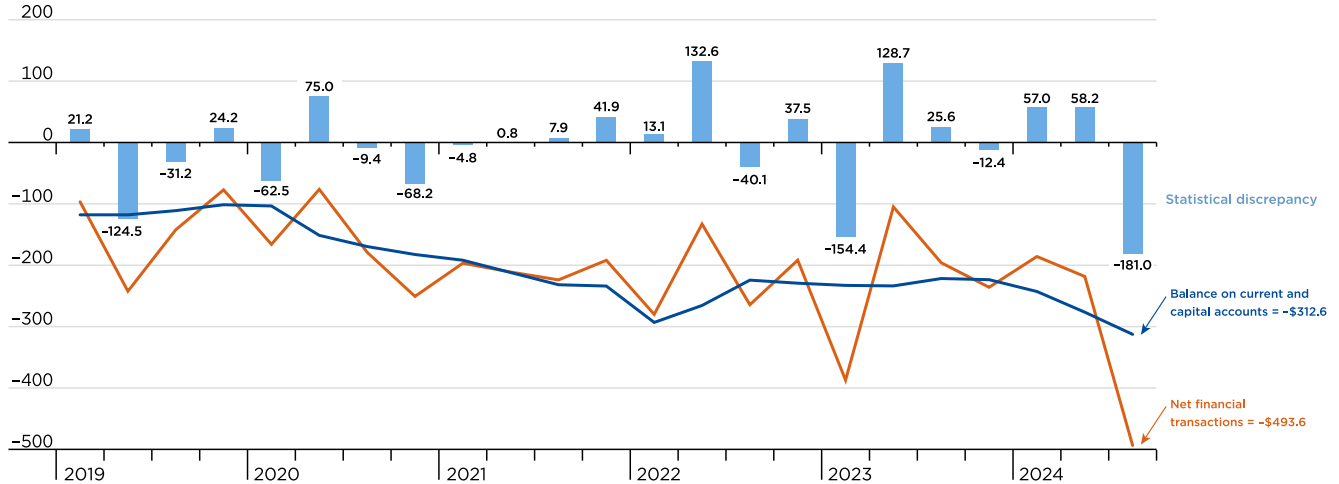


- Total transactions in liabilities were \$716.7 billion in the third quarter, representing continued net U.S. incurrence of liabilities since the fourth quarter of 2022.
- Transactions in portfolio investment liabilities, led by equity and long-term debt securities, were the leading contributor, followed by transactions in direct investment liabilities, mostly equity.
- The third quarter of 2024 reflects the fourth-largest net inflows on record. Only the first quarter of 2020 and the first two quarters of 2007 had stronger net inflows of liabilities.

Statistical Discrepancy

Chart 16. Statistical Discrepancy
Dollar level by major component

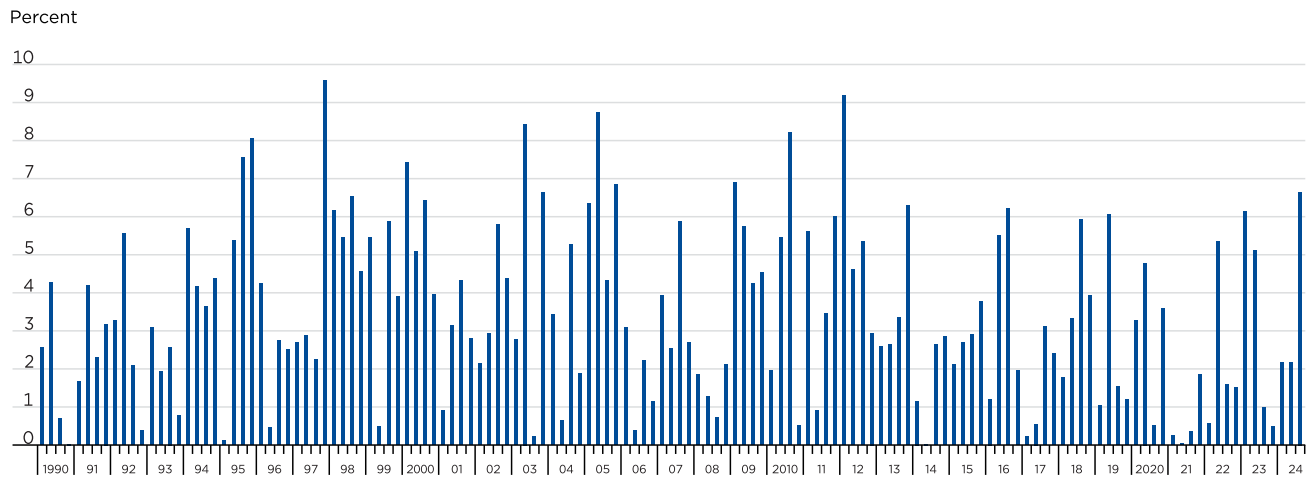
Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



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- The statistical discrepancy, shown as the difference between net financial transactions and the balance on the current and capital accounts, was $-\$181.0$ billion in the third quarter, following a revised $\$58.2$ billion discrepancy in the second quarter.²
- This is the highest quarterly discrepancy value in absolute terms on record.

Chart 17. Statistical Discrepancy Scaled by Total Trade and Income



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- The statistical discrepancy can be scaled by the sum of total trade and income transactions to account for growth in nominal values over time.
- When scaled, the third-quarter discrepancy falls within historical bounds.³

1. U.S. international transactions are presented in current dollars in accordance with international statistical presentation guidelines. For a comparison of current-dollar, or nominal, and inflation-adjusted, or real, measures of international transactions, see “SECTION 4 – FOREIGN TRANSACTIONS” of the [National Income and Product Accounts](#).
2. Timing, omissions, seasonality, and unsettled market conditions can contribute to a discrepancy. See Chapter 21 of *U.S. International Economic Accounts: Concepts and Methods* for more information.
3. For more information on statistical discrepancies and how they change over time as revisions are incorporated, see Thomas Anderson, “[Reliability of the International Accounts](#),” *Survey of Current Business* (December 17, 2024).



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