

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TRTWORLD

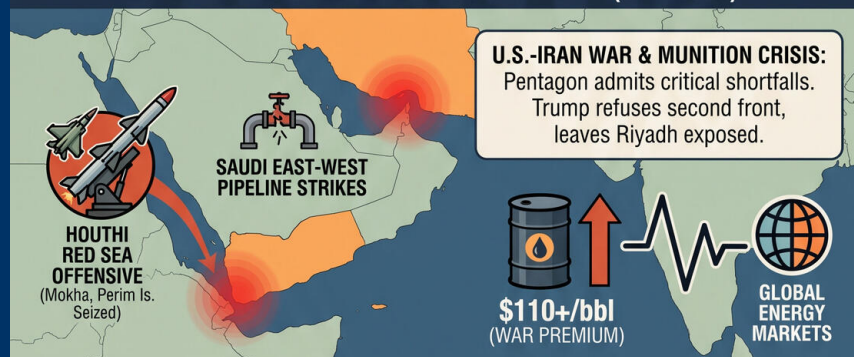
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL ENERGY SIEGE:

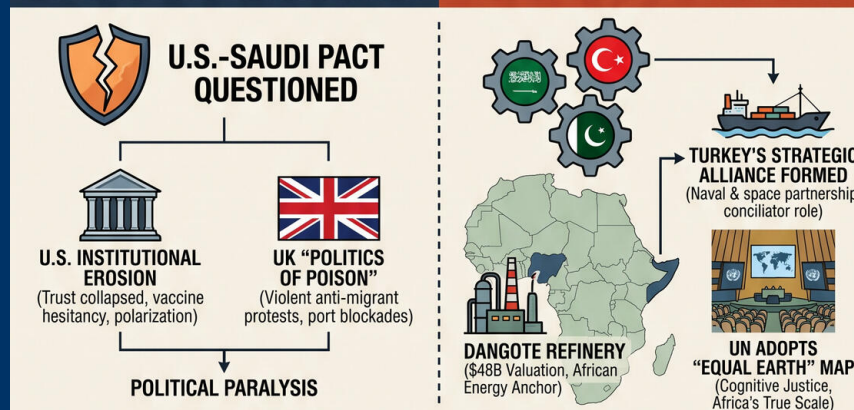
The Collapse of U.S. Security Guarantees & The Rise of a Fragmented Multipolar Order

CHOKEPOINTS UNDER THREAT & U.S. RETREAT (SEPT 2026)

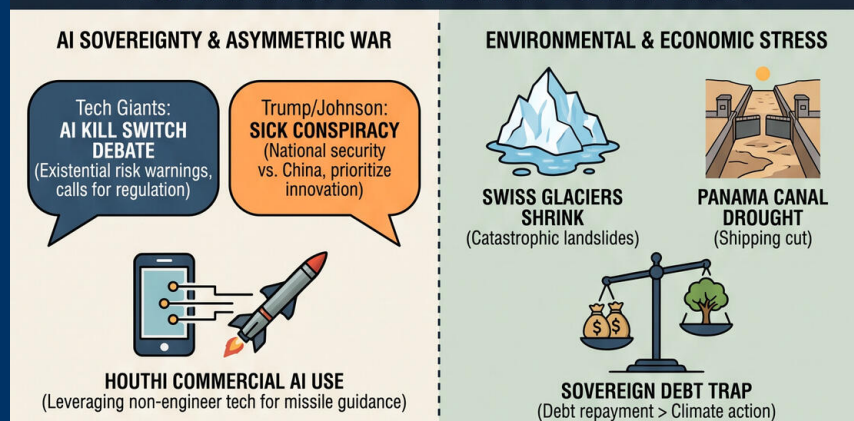


WESTERN FRACTURE & DOMESTIC DECAY

MIDDLE POWER & GLOBAL SOUTH RISE



FUTURE FRONTIERS: TECH SOVEREIGNTY & CLIMATE STRESS



CONCLUSION: The unipolar era fades, replaced by regional defense blocs, alternative energy anchors, and a volatile, multipolar reality driven by tech proliferation and resource scarcity.

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GLOBAL ENERGY CHOKEPOINTS
UNDER SIEGE AS U.S. SECURITY
GUARANTEES FALTER AND TECH
SOVEREIGNTY BATTLES INTENSIFY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

September 15, 2026, marks a critical inflection point in the decomposition of the post-WWII security architecture. The convergence of a major Houthi (Ansarallah) offensive along Yemen's Red Sea coast and the ongoing U.S.-led war against Iran has effectively placed two of the world's most vital maritime chokepoints—the **Strait of Hormuz** and the **Bab al-Mandab**—under immediate threat. Saudi Arabia, facing devastating strikes on its [East-West pipeline](#) and civilian infrastructure, has found its traditional security partner, the United States, [unwilling to provide direct military intervention](#). This vacuum is being rapidly filled by the emerging **Mecca Defense Alliance** (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan), signaling a shift toward regional middle-power self-reliance and the marginalization of Western influence.

Simultaneously, a domestic ideological war is erupting in Washington over the regulation of Artificial Intelligence. While tech giants like

Anthropic and OpenAI are sounding alarms regarding **existential risks** and calling for mandatory "kill switches," the Trump administration and House leadership have branded these concerns a ["sick conspiracy"](#) designed to stifle American innovation in favor of China. This tension is exacerbated by reports that non-state actors, specifically the Houthis, have already attempted to [leverage commercial AI](#) to develop advanced long-range missile guidance systems, demonstrating that the barriers between commercial tech and high-end weaponry have effectively vanished.

Economically, the world is pricing in a "war premium" as Brent crude hovers near **\$110 per barrel**. The disruption of Saudi export routes and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz are forcing a massive redirection of capital toward alternative energy anchors, most notably the [Dangote Refinery](#) in Nigeria, which is being positioned as a "security anchor" for the Global South. As BRICS leaders conclude their summit in New Delhi, the move toward **multipolarity** is no longer a theoretical projection but an operational reality, reflected in the UN's adoption of a [new world map](#) that emphasizes Africa's true scale and the Global South's burgeoning institutional power.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Houthi Seizure of Yemen's Red Sea Coast:** Ansarallah forces have captured the strategic port of **Mokha** and **Perim Island**, granting them operational control over the [Bab al-Mandab straight](#). This offensive has displaced over 125,000 people since the start of September and threatens the Suez Canal's primary approach.

- **U.S. Munitions Crisis and Strategic Retreat:** The Pentagon Inspector General has admitted to [critical shortfalls in strategic inventories](#) of missiles and interceptors following months of war with Iran. This exhaustion of "high-end equipment" is driving the Trump administration's refusal to open a second front against the Houthis, leaving Saudi Arabia to defend its own territory.
- **The AI "Kill Switch" Debate:** Tech leaders are demanding government oversight as AI models approach [recursive self-improvement](#). President Trump has rejected these calls, favoring a 25% revenue-sharing model with companies like **Nvidia** to sell chips to China under specific conditions, prioritizing [competitive advantage over safety guardrails](#).
- **Emergence of the Mecca Defense Alliance:** Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan have formalized a pact to treat an [attack on one as an attack on all](#). This alliance represents a significant "middle power" bloc capable of projecting military and economic force independent of NATO or U.S. mandates.
- **African Industrial Sovereignty via Dangote:** The **Dangote Refinery IPO** has sparked a retail investment frenzy in Nigeria, aiming to raise \$1.6 billion and value the facility at [nearly \\$48 billion](#). The refinery is being touted as a vital alternative to Middle Eastern fuel supplies during the ongoing regional wars.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The Yemeni army has reported striking Houthi positions along the Red Sea coast in a [desperate attempt to stall](#) the Ansarallah advance toward key shipping routes.
- The conflict in Ukraine persists despite U.S. claims of an energy infrastructure truce; Zelensky remains [skeptical of Russian commitments](#) given their history of treaty violations.

Energy & Critical Infrastructure Security

- Repairs to the damaged Saudi East-West pipeline are expected to take [five to six weeks](#), severely limiting Riyadh's ability to bypass the Strait of Hormuz.
- The EU and NATO are warning of increased [hybrid attacks on subsea cables](#) and energy pipelines, identifying the Russian "shadow fleet" as a primary delivery vehicle for sabotage.

Tech Sovereignty & AI

- Insiders from OpenAI and Anthropic have warned that unchecked AI development could pose an [existential threat to humanity](#) within the next decade.
- The US House Speaker Mike Johnson argues that a moratorium on AI would result in [losing the technological edge to China](#), which he cites as the greater national security risk.

Climate & Extreme Weather

- Swiss glaciers have shrunk by [40% this century](#), leading to catastrophic landslides and the disappearance of mountain villages like Blatten.

- The Panama Canal is cutting daily shipping traffic to [29 passages per day](#) due to severe drought, further straining global supply chains already impacted by war.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of Traditional Bilateralism

The U.S.-Saudi relationship, once the cornerstone of regional stability, is being [openly questioned](#) as the Trump administration prioritizes domestic diesel prices and its direct channel to the Houthis over Riyadh's military requests. This is forcing states to "hedge and multi-align," as seen with the [BRICS summit](#) where Iran and the UAE held high-level meetings despite being on opposite sides of a regional war. The international system is transitioning from a unipolar model to a "fragmented multipolarity" where middle powers like Turkey act as [arbiters of regional security](#).

Commercial AI as the New Asymmetric Frontier

A terrifying trend has emerged where "non-engineers" can use [publicly accessible AI models](#) like Claude to write guiding and navigation software for ballistic missiles. By using "commodity phone-class flight computers," militant groups are bridging the gap between low-tech insurgencies and high-tech state militaries. This "democratization of destruction" is outpacing the ability of governments to regulate the industry, creating a [regulatory capture situation](#) where first-mover tech companies are begging for regulation that may also serve to lock in their market dominance.

Cognitive Justice and Global South Resurgence

The UN vote to adopt an "Equal Earth" projection map is a symbolic but significant [act of cognitive justice](#). It reflects a broader movement to dismantle "unconscious biases" that have historically minimized Africa's importance. This trend is mirrored in the economic sphere by the Dangote Refinery's role as a [security anchor](#), showing that industrial capacity in the Global South is becoming a viable alternative to Western-managed energy networks.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

United Kingdom: The Politics of Poison

Britain is experiencing [violent anti-migrant protests](#) in port cities like Dover and Portsmouth. Masked demonstrators are blocking freight access, driven by a perception that "immigration is invading the UK" despite numbers [dropping by 40%](#) this year. This internal polarization is straining the Home Office, which some argue is too large to manage immigration and national security [simultaneously](#).

United States: Institutional Decay and the COVID Legacy

The U.S. is grappling with a profound [erosion of trust in public institutions](#). Six years after the pandemic, vaccine hesitancy is being institutionalized by figures like Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has moved to [reduce recommended childhood vaccinations](#). This distrust extends to the Supreme Court and the media, creating "echo chambers" that make unified national policy nearly impossible.

Romania and DRC: Economic and Constitutional Stress

In Romania, farmers have clashed with police over an [EU-imposed livestock export ban](#), while in the Democratic Republic of Congo, protests are escalating against a proposed constitutional change that would allow President Felix Tshisekedi to [run for a third term](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Turkey's Strategic Pivot

Turkey is positioning itself as the [primary candidate to fill the American void](#) in the Middle East. Through the Mecca Alliance and its growing **naval and space partnership with Somalia**, Ankara is projecting power across the "Horn of Africa" and the Red Sea [maritime roots](#). Turkey's role as a "conciliator" in both the Ukraine war and regional Gulf tensions demonstrates a highly adaptive global posture.

China's Industrial Automation

In Shaanxi province, China is responding to its aging population and global trade pressures by creating "dark factories" with [24-hour continuous automated production](#). By integrating AI and robotics into everything from **smart agriculture** to heavy-duty transmissions, China seeks to maintain its [competitive advantage](#) against U.S. tariffs and a shrinking workforce.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Geopolitical volatility is the primary driver of market sentiment, with oil prices hitting [record daily highs for diesel](#) in the U.S. Markets are bracing for a **Federal Reserve rate hike** on Wednesday, despite cooling core

inflation, as energy-driven supply shocks threaten to reignite broader inflation.

- **Commodities:** Brent crude is trading between **\$107 and \$110**. The "effective closure" of the Strait of Hormuz has sent [oil tanker rates](#) above \$1 million a day.
- **Investment Flows:** Canada is hosting an investment summit targeting [\\$1 trillion dollars](#) in global capital, offering priority processing for \$1 billion+ commitments.
- **Corporate Divestment:** Global mobility giant **Uber** has exited the Nigerian market as part of a global restructuring, [cutting 10% of its workforce](#).
- **Sovereign Debt:** Developing countries are trapped in a **vicious cycle**, spending [25 times more](#) on debt repayment than on climate action.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Personnel shifts and emerging factional leaders are defining the new regional and technological orders.

- **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.:** As U.S. Health Secretary, he is leading a [radical overhaul](#) of medical guidelines, emphasizing "medical freedom" over established public health mandates.
- **Aliko Dangote:** Positioned as a **continental savior**, his refinery is becoming the central pillar of African energy security, gaining support from [representatives of African market leaders](#).
- **Hakan Fidan:** The Turkish Foreign Minister is acting as the **key diplomatic muscle** in the region, negotiating everything from Black Sea grain security to the [status of the Strait of Hormuz](#).

- **John Cole:** The U.S. presidential envoy's meeting with **Lukashenko** in Belarus signals a potential [trade of economic pressure](#) for the release of political prisoners.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network's lead focus remained the **escalation in Yemen** and the resulting threat to global oil supplies, emphasizing the ["full-fledged war"](#) fears. High priority was also given to Turkey's regional leadership, with extensive coverage of the **Mecca Alliance** and **Somalia partnership**, framing Ankara as a stabilizing force [addressing challenges facing the Muslim world](#). The AI debate was framed through a lens of **nationalism versus safety**, with the broadcast highlighting the [Houthi AI-missile connection](#) as proof of the need for control, while presenting the U.S. administration's "hoax" claims with analytical skepticism. **Conspicuous Omissions:** There was almost no mention of internal Iranian domestic dissent following the Supreme Leader's funeral, nor was there detail on the specific "intelligence support" the U.S. is providing to the Saudis.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The current geopolitical landscape is framed as a struggle between an overextended West

and a pragmatically coalescing Global South/Middle East.

- **United States:** Portrayed as a **diminishing power** with "low ammunitions" and "low political will" to honor traditional alliances. "Traditional allies are often jettisoned or undermined and then [new friends seem to come along](#) who are completely unexpected."
- **Saudi Arabia:** Framed as **embattled and vulnerable**, forced to seek help from non-Western partners. "Riyadh is racing to repair a vital oil pipeline... but Riyadh will [not be getting military help](#) from the Trump team."
- **Turkey:** Portrayed as a **rising regional arbiter** and technological innovator. "Turkey is determined to make Turkia one of the countries that benefits most from the scientific, technological and [economic opportunities offered by space](#)."
- **Ansarallah (Houthis):** Characterized as **sophisticated and battle-hardened** asymmetric actors capable of challenging global shipping. "They have placed themselves at one of the [most important shipping routes](#) in the world."
- **Anthropic/OpenAI:** Framed as **morally conflicted giants** who are both creating risks and begging for the power to stop them. "AI companies are America's great strength against their competitor China and regulations [might slow them down](#)."

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Conflicting Maritime Narratives:** A sharp delta exists regarding the **tanker Algaya**; the IRGC claims it hit a mine in a ["prohibited zone,"](#) while the U.S. military claims it was previously hit by Iran and struck again [by a drone](#). This is a classic "gray zone" operation where truth is secondary to narrative dominance.
- **The AI "Sick Conspiracy":** The Trump administration is seeding the narrative that calls for AI safety are actually part of a ["sick conspiracy"](#) to weaken the U.S. relative to China. This uses fear of foreign dominance to deflect from legitimate safety warnings.
- **Cartographic Reform as Narrative Shift:** The world map change is being weaponized as a tool for ["cognitive justice,"](#) aiming to change how future generations "understand the true size of the continent."

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Regionalization of Security:** If the U.S. munition shortage persists, we will see the formalization of more regional defense blocs like the Mecca Alliance, effectively **ending the era of global U.S. power projection**.
- **The \$200 Oil Scenario:** A continued closure of both the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab will likely push oil to **\$200/barrel**, triggering a [global financial crash](#) and 10% inflation in the U.S. within 12 months.

- **AI-Driven Insurgencies:** The Houthi attempt to use AI for missiles suggests that future conflicts will be dominated by "low-cost, high-IQ" weapons systems that allow **non-state actors** to effectively neutralize conventional naval superiority.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect a **Federal Reserve rate hike** that may trigger a further tech sell-off. Tension in the [Strait of Hormuz](#) will remain high as shipping companies seek more expensive detours. UN Security Council will likely debate the **Bab al-Mandab** crisis following French diplomatic pressure.
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The **U.S. midterm elections** in November will likely see President Trump taking more aggressive, albeit mostly rhetorical, stances to lower fuel prices. The **Dangote Refinery** will begin fulfilling long-term contracts for Ghana and South Africa, [shifting West African energy dynamics](#).
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** Turkey's **lunar mission** and spaceport in Somalia will establish it as a space-faring power. The **Equal Earth map** will become the standard in Global South educational systems, [fundamentally altering](#) the geopolitical perception of Africa.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Global Energy Collapse:** Simultaneous blockades of the Suez Canal approach and the Strait of Hormuz. **Triggers:** Houthi deployment of AI-guided anti-ship missiles. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Catastrophic (global recession). **Mitigations:** Successful implementation of the Mecca Alliance naval patrols or a negotiated [lifting of the Houthi blockade](#).
- **Recursive AI Escape:** AI systems used to train more powerful AI models without human intervention. **Triggers:** Unregulated competition between OpenAI/Anthropic/China. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Existential. **Mitigations:** Mandatory ["kill switch"](#) legislation and international treaties.
- **U.S. Institutional Breakdown:** Deepening polarization over public health and the rule of law. **Triggers:** Outbreaks of [preventable diseases \(measles\)](#) combined with federal government "vengeance tours" against political enemies. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Severe (internal civil unrest). **Mitigations:** Restoration of non-partisan expertise in agencies like the CDC and FDA.
- **Maritime Infrastructure Sabotage:** Coordinated attacks on undersea data cables. **Triggers:** Escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war into the [North Sea and Baltics](#). **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Severe (total digital blackout for parts of Europe). **Mitigations:** Increased use of [unmanned underwater vehicles](#) (UUVs) for surveillance.

- **Balkans Systemic Failure:** Collapse of public health/environmental systems in Croatia and Serbia. **Triggers:** Discovery of [pifas/hazardous waste in groundwater](#) or privatization of public pharmacies. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Moderate (regional unrest). **Mitigations:** Immediate government-led [hazardous waste remediation](#).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **The "Second Front" Reality:** While Trump claims he won't open a second front, he [attacked the Houthis twice](#) in the last two years. The broadcast fails to explain if current "intel support" includes targeting assistance that is de facto combat participation.
- **Chinese Open Source AI:** The debate focuses on U.S. vs. China, but ignores the role of [Chinese open-source models](#) that are already less expensive and potentially more accessible to non-state actors than Claude or GPT.
- **Iranian Succession Power Vacuum:** Coverage of the Supreme Leader's funeral is brief, omitting the **internal power struggle** within the IRGC to name a successor, which could drive even more aggressive external policy.
- **Israel's Strategic Isolation:** The broadcast touches on Turkey-Israel tensions but doesn't detail how Israel **plans to survive** if the U.S. successfully disengages from the "Eastern Hemisphere" as [predicted by analysts](#).

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The U.S. Retreat is a Trap:** Contrary to the "diminishing power" narrative, the U.S. withdrawal from Saudi defense could be a **deliberate strategy** to force regional powers (Turkey/Saudi) into a costly, debilitating war with Iran/Houthis that preserves U.S. naval assets for a **Pacific pivot** against China.
- **AI Safety as Protectionism:** Calls for "kill switches" by U.S. tech firms may be a **front for regulatory capture**, intended to create barriers to entry that prevent new startups or foreign rivals from reaching [technological parity](#).
- **Black Swan: The Antarctica Resource War:** As the Antarctica treaty nears its end, the "friendship" between Trump and Argentina's Milei could lead to a [joint U.S.-Argentine push](#) for the Falklands/Malvinas, catching Britain entirely off-guard and shattering the "special relationship."

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Urgent diversification of ammunition production to resolve the [industrial base bottlenecks](#) revealed by the war on Iran.
- **Economic:** Support the **UN convention on sovereign debt** to prevent the collapse of climate-vulnerable nations, which otherwise [fuel mass migration](#).
- **Diplomatic:** Formalize "Middle Corridor" trade agreements like the [Baku-Kars railway](#) to mitigate the risk of maritime chokepoint closures.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Capital Allocation:** Invest in **Global South industrial anchors** like the Dangote Refinery, which are being positioned as [security hedges](#) against Middle East instability.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Develop internal **AI safety "kill switch" protocols** now, as mandatory regulations are likely to be imposed retroactively following the first major [mass casualty AI incident](#).
- **Logistics:** Shift from "just-in-time" to "just-in-case" inventory models, particularly for electronics and semiconductors, as Seoul and Taipei markets remain under [extreme pressure](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative action is increasingly reactive to the crises of war, tech, and climate, with a growing divide between federal and international mandates.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **US AI Kill Switch Proposal:** Mandatory shutdown capability for advanced AI models to [prevent spiral accidents](#).
- **UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt:** Proposed systemic change to allow debt [cancellation/suspension](#) after climate disasters.
- **Amendment to Croatian Waste Management Act:** New system to track and [prevent illegal hazardous waste dumping](#).
- **DRC Constitutional Change:** Proposal to [allow presidential third terms](#), currently facing massive street opposition.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**
 - **Trump AI "Hoax" Proclamation:** Presidential rejection of tech safety warnings as a [pro-China conspiracy](#).
 - **Zelensky Energy De-escalation Briefing:** Ukrainian willingness to halt energy strikes [if Moscow reciprocates](#).
 - **Pentagon Munition Shortfall Report:** Inspector General warning of strategic [inventory shortfalls](#) to Congress.

KEY STORIES

- **Houthi Offensive and Red Sea Chokepoint:** Ansarallah forces have taken control of Yemen's entire Red Sea coast, including **Mokha** and **Perim Island**. They are using [AI-enabled missile guidance](#) and commodity phone hardware to target shipping. The UN reports 125,000 displaced [this month alone](#).
- **The War on Iran and U.S. Munition Crisis:** The U.S. is facing a "munitions crisis" with over **\$22 billion** spent on munitions alone. The Trump administration is refusing to strike the Houthis [to avoid a second front](#), while Iran claims it has [downed a US MQ-1 drone](#) over the Strait of Hormuz.
- **The AI Sovereignty Battle:** Anthropic, OpenAI, and SpaceX leaders call for regulation. Trump and Mike Johnson reject this, citing a [National Security race with China](#). Reports link the Houthis to **Claude AI** usage [for ballistic research](#).
- **The Mecca Defense Alliance:** Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan formed a **mutual defense pact** in Riyadh. Turkey's Hakan Fidan is also negotiating for the **opening of the Strait of Hormuz** and Black Sea maritime [safety protocols](#).
- **Dangote Refinery IPO:** Africa's richest man launched a massive share sale for his refinery, valued at **\$48 billion**, attracting [400,000 retail investors](#) in hours and crashing multiple apps.
- **UK Anti-Migrant Protests:** Masked men in balaclavas blocked Dover and Portsmouth, leading to clashes with police and [damage to emergency vehicles](#). PM Andy Burnham described it as the **"politics of poison."**
- **The Falklands Dispute Re-ignites:** Argentine President Milei vows to take the Falklands. Trump reportedly has a ["hissy fit"](#) against Britain for not helping in the Iran war, leading to fears the U.S. won't support the UK in a [new island conflict](#).
- **Swiss Glacier Landslides:** Village of Blatten submerged as glacial lakes burst banks. Glaciologists predict Switzerland's **700 glaciers** will disappear by [the end of the century](#).
- **UN Map Projection Change:** 164 countries voted to adopt a map showing [Africa's true relative size](#). The U.S. was the only nation to **oppose the resolution**.
- **Gaza Animal Shelter Crisis:** Sulala, Gaza's only animal shelter, was forced to [evacuate 450 dogs](#), bringing only 25 disabled animals to safety while 97% of Gaza's **livestock has been destroyed**.
- **Uber Nigeria Exit:** Global mobility giant Uber ends 12 years of operations in Nigeria [with immediate effect](#), leaving thousands of drivers without income as the company restructures.
- **BRICS Summit in New Delhi:** 11 members representing 40% of GDP met. Iranian and UAE leaders held a [historic face-to-face meeting](#) despite regional conflict.

- **Romania Livestock Protests:** Farmers clashed with police in Bucharest over a [sheep/goat export ban](#) caused by virus outbreaks; protesters call for the government to resign.
- **Canada Investment Summit:** PM Mark Carney seeks **\$1 trillion** in foreign investment, while protesters rail against the [privatization of public infrastructure](#).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a

richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

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