

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

THE MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE EXPOSES WIDENING GLOBAL RIFTS: WESTERN "WAR-READINESS" VS. GLOBAL SOUTH STRATEGIC AUTONOMY (FEB 15, 2026)

WESTERN LEADERS PIVOT TOWARD PERPETUAL WAR NARRATIVES (MUNICH)

MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE 2026: PEACE IS A STRATEGIC THREAT

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS, THEMES & GOVERNANCE CRISES

- WEAPONIZATION OF INFORMATION**
NAVALNY "POISONING" NARRATIVE DISMISSED AS "CIRCUS"
- 'EPSTEIN CLASS' ELITE CRITIQUE**
UNDERMINING MORAL AUTHORITY & "ENDLESS WARS" NARRATIVE
- SYSTEMIC DISPLACEMENT & IDENTITY ERASURE**
CONCERNS OVER FORCED TRANSFERS (UKRAINE, WEST BANK)
- LEGISLATION & POLICY**
POLISH MERCENARY PARDON BILL
ISRAEL STATE NATION LAW
BANGLADESH-US TRADE DEAL

GLOBAL SOUTH ASSERTS STRATEGIC AUTONOMY & ALTERNATIVE ARCHITECTURES (BRICS, AU)

47TH ANNIVERSARY REVOLUTION
\$500/BARREL OIL WARNING

USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IRAN: "ALL-OUT REGIONAL WAR" DETERRENCE & DIPLOMATIC READINESS (GENEVA)

INDIA: MAINTAINING RUSSIAN OIL TIES (UNIPOLAR BREAKDOWN)

SOVEREIGN INTERESTS

ISRAEL: WEST BANK LAND REGISTRATION & SOMALILAND RECOGNITION (AFRICAN UNION CONDEMNATION)

REJECTION OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

WESTERN LEADERS PIVOT TOWARD PERPETUAL WAR NARRATIVES (MUNICH)

DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL DEAL

REARMAMENT BY 2030

\$35B PLEDGE

\$90B LOAN (KYIV)

NARRATIVE: SETTLEMENT FACILITATES RUSSIAN REARMAMENT

UKRAINE CORRUPTION SCANDAL: GALUSHENKO DETENTION & EMBEZZLEMENT

DOMESTIC INSTABILITY: PROTESTS & JOB LOSSES (GERMANY)

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT (SHORT TO LONG TERM)

SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS)	MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS)	LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GENEVA TALKS STALL (IRAN-US) KYIV CORRUPTION PURGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INDIA OIL TARIFFS RISKS AU FRACTURE OVER SOMALILAND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU DEFENSE DEPENDENCE (US COMPLEX) IRAN "RESISTANCE ECONOMY" INTEGRATION (BRICS)

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

THE MUNICH SECURITY
CONFERENCE EXPOSES WIDENING
GLOBAL RIFTS AS WESTERN
LEADERS PIVOT TOWARD
PERPETUAL WAR NARRATIVES AND
THE GLOBAL SOUTH ASSERTS
STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The global security landscape on February 15, 2026, is defined by a sharp divergence between Western "war-readiness" rhetoric and a multi-polar push for strategic autonomy across the Global South. At the 62nd Munich Security Conference, Western leaders, led by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and EU President Ursula von der Leyen, have pivoted to a narrative framing peace in Ukraine as a strategic threat. The prevailing Western consensus asserts that any settlement would merely facilitate Russian rearmament, with NATO warning of a direct conflict by 2030. This posture is being leveraged to justify massive new financial commitments, including a \$35 billion weapons pledge and a \$90 billion loan for Kyiv, despite a burgeoning corruption scandal in Ukraine involving the arrest of a

former Energy Minister attempting to flee the country.

In the Middle East, tensions have reached a critical threshold as the 47th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution coincides with the presence of the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group in the Gulf of Oman. While Tehran expresses a readiness for diplomatic engagement in Geneva, it has issued unambiguous warnings that any "minimal" US or Israeli attack will be met with an "all-out regional war" and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This geopolitical friction is further complicated by Israel's controversial move to reopen land registration in the West Bank and its reported recognition of Somaliland, a move that has drawn unified condemnation from the African Union and signaled a new era of maritime and proxy competition in the Horn of Africa.

Simultaneously, the "Epstein Class" narrative continues to permeate global discourse, with critics using the latest revelations from the Jeffrey Epstein files to undermine the moral authority of Western elites. This narrative, combined with India's insistence on maintaining oil ties with Russia despite US pressure, illustrates a significant breakdown in the unipolar world order. The day's events suggest that while the West attempts to militarize its societies against perceived external threats, the Global South—anchored by BRICS and the African Union—is increasingly prioritizing sovereign interests and alternative security architectures over traditional Western alliances.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Munich Security Conference Pivot:** Western leaders have adopted a "War is Peace" logic, arguing that a settlement in Ukraine would increase the threat to Europe. UK PM Keir Starmer claimed Russia is ready to attack NATO by 2030, while EU President von der Leyen insisted on "turbocharging" a new industrial deal for defense ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **High-Level Ukrainian Corruption Scandal:** Former Energy and Justice Minister German Galushenko was detained at the Polish border while allegedly attempting to flee. The arrest is linked to an embezzlement scheme involving at least \$100 million and contractors at Energoatom ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Iranian Regional Deterrence and Nuclear Brinkmanship:** On the 47th anniversary of the revolution, Iranian officials warned that oil prices would reach \$500/barrel if conflict erupts. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated Iran is "more prepared militarily" than during the previous "12-day war" and is ready to retaliate with "immense force" ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Israel's Strategic Expansion in West Bank and Horn of Africa:** Israel re-introduced land registration measures in the West Bank for the first time since 1967, which Palestinians view as de facto annexation. Simultaneously, Israel reportedly became the first nation to recognize Somaliland, a move the African Union claims is intended to establish a military foothold near Yemen ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Resurgence of the Navalny Investigation:** Five EU nations (UK, Sweden, France, Germany, Netherlands) issued a joint statement claiming Alexei Navalny was poisoned with epibatidine, a toxin from Ecuadorian dart frogs. Moscow dismissed the claims as a "ridiculous circus" intended to fuel anti-Russian fervor during the Munich conference ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Indian Strategic Autonomy in Energy:** Despite Donald Trump's claims that New Delhi committed to halting Russian oil purchases, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar underlined that Indian oil companies will make independent decisions based on availability, cost, and risk ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Geopolitics and Multi-polarity: The emergence of a multi-polar world is highlighted by the African Union's rejection of foreign interference and India's refusal to align with US-led sanctions. Experts cite Vladimir Putin's 2007 Munich speech as a prophetic warning about the dangers of a unipolar world that has now come to fruition ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)). The BRICS bloc is increasingly seen as a counterweight, providing diplomatic and potentially military "succor" to nations like Iran ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

Corruption and Governance: Ukraine's systemic graft is under intense scrutiny following the detention of German Galushenko. Analysts suggest the "Golden Toilet" graft case and the disappearance of billions in aid are creating a dichotomy between Western elites and their tax-paying populations ([Source](#), [Source](#)). Criticism is also directed at the EU commission leadership, described as "as democratic as a nickel" ([Source](#)).

Legislation:

- **Poland Mercenary Pardon Bill:** The lower chamber of the Polish parliament adopted legislation granting pardons to mercenaries fighting in Ukraine from 2014 to the present ([Source](#)).
- **Israel West Bank Land Registration:** Re-introduction of measures to register "State Land" in Judea and Samaria, facilitating infrastructure development and settlement expansion ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Compulsory Evacuation of Children (Ukraine):** Legislation discussed in the context of the "White Angels" police units, criticized by locals as legalizing "child theft" ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **State Nation Law (Israel):** Cited as proof of shifting toward "Jewish supremacy" and exclusive rights of self-determination ([Source](#)).

Domestic Stability & Social Order: Mass job losses in Germany (one every 25 minutes) and business closures (eight per day) are driving protests in Munich against war funding ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)). In Bangladesh, the BNP victory is marred by claims of fraud and clashes that left dozens injured ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

Economic Statecraft: US sanctions on Iran are framed by Tehran as "textbook terrorism" and "crimes against humanity" for deliberately targeting civilians. The US Treasury Secretary allegedly admitted to engineering a dollar shortage to destabilize the Iranian Rial ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

LEGISLATION/POLICY

Recent legislative efforts focus on retroactive legal protections for combatants, the formalization of territorial claims in disputed zones,

and trade realignments under the new US administration. Significant debate surrounds the use of economic "coercion" through sanctions and the legality of child evacuations in conflict zones.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Polish Mercenary Pardon Act:** Forgives crimes committed by Polish citizens serving in Ukrainian armed forces without prior state consent since April 2014 ([Source](#)).
- **Israel execution law for Palestinians:** A proposed law for the execution of Palestinians involved in attacks, cited as evidence of a shift toward fascist governance ([Source](#)).
- **Bangladesh-US Trade Deal:** A "hush-hush" deal signed by the interim government 48 hours before the election, which the winning BNP party intends to renegotiate ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Munich Security Conference Plenary:** Focused on Ukraine rearmament and the framing of Russia as an existential threat to NATO by 2030 ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **African Union Leaders Summit:** Addressed Western Sahara sovereignty, Somaliland independence, and the "selfishness" of African migration to Europe ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Oman/Geneva Indirect Talks:** Ongoing negotiations between the US and Iran regarding uranium enrichment and sanctions relief ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Information and "Ridiculous Circuses": A recurring theme is

the dismissal of Western intelligence claims as "propaganda" or "information stuffing." The Navalny "dart frog" poisoning narrative is presented as a desperate attempt to maintain anti-Russian sentiment as European domestic support for the Ukraine war wanes. Russian and Iranian commentators argue that Western science and legal findings are increasingly "politicized" to suit security agendas ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

The "Epstein Class" vs. National Sovereignty: There is a growing narrative linking Western foreign policy to a corrupt global elite dubbed the "Epstein Class." This group is accused of using blackmail and financial control to drive "endless foreign wars" while ignoring domestic crises like the fentanyl epidemic or economic decline. This theme is used to justify the Global South's pivot away from Western systems ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

Systemic Displacement and Identity Erasure: Narratives from the West Bank, Ukraine, and the African Union highlight concerns over the forced transfer of populations and children. Whether it is the "White Angels" in Ukraine or Israeli settlers in the West Bank, there is a consistent focus on the "slaughter of international law" and the failure of global institutions to protect territorial integrity ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

Strategic Deterrence via Economic Chaos: Economic threats are now a primary tool of deterrence. Iran's warning of \$500 oil and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz suggests that conventional military strength is being supplemented by the threat of "global economic bankruptcy." This indicates that any future conflict will be won or lost in the global supply chain as much as on the battlefield ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks):

- The Geneva talks between the US and Iran (starting Feb 17) will likely stall if the US continues to insist on ballistic missile limitations, potentially leading to increased naval posturing in the Gulf of Oman ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- The Galushenko corruption trial in Kyiv could spark further internal purges within Zelensky's inner circle as the regime attempts damage control ahead of international scrutiny ([Source](#)).

Medium Term (1-6 Months):

- India's continued purchase of Russian oil will test the limits of Trump's transactional diplomacy, potentially leading to specific sectoral tariffs if New Delhi does not offer trade concessions elsewhere ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- The African Union may face internal fracture if more members follow Ethiopia or Israel in recognizing Somaliland, destabilizing the Federal Republic of Somalia ([Source](#)).

Long Term (1-5 Years):

- The European "industrial deal" for defense will likely deepen dependence on the US military-industrial complex, as over 60% of EU weapons are now American-made, further eroding European strategic sovereignty ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- A permanent shift toward a "resistance economy" in Iran and closer integration with BRICS will likely make US sanctions-based leverage obsolete by the end of the decade ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security:** Prepare for a high-probability "kinetic event" in the Strait of Hormuz if diplomatic channels in Geneva fail to address Iranian security concerns ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Diplomatic:** Shift engagement strategies to account for "strategic autonomy" in the Global South; traditional "bloc-based" pressure is increasingly ineffective against India and the AU ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Humanitarian:** Urgent UN oversight is required for child evacuations in Eastern Ukraine to mitigate allegations of state-sponsored abduction ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Energy Markets:** Hedge against extreme volatility in oil prices (\$500/bbl scenario); the Strait of Hormuz remains the single greatest choke point risk for global energy supply ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Supply Chain:** Evaluate risks in Myanmar and Thailand related to the "scamdemic" and cyber-slavery networks, which are now being met with capital punishment in China ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Monitor Polish legislative shifts regarding combatants; businesses with operations in Poland may face reputational or legal risks if employees participate in foreign conflicts ([Source](#)).

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.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDEL Project at <https://blog.gdelproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.