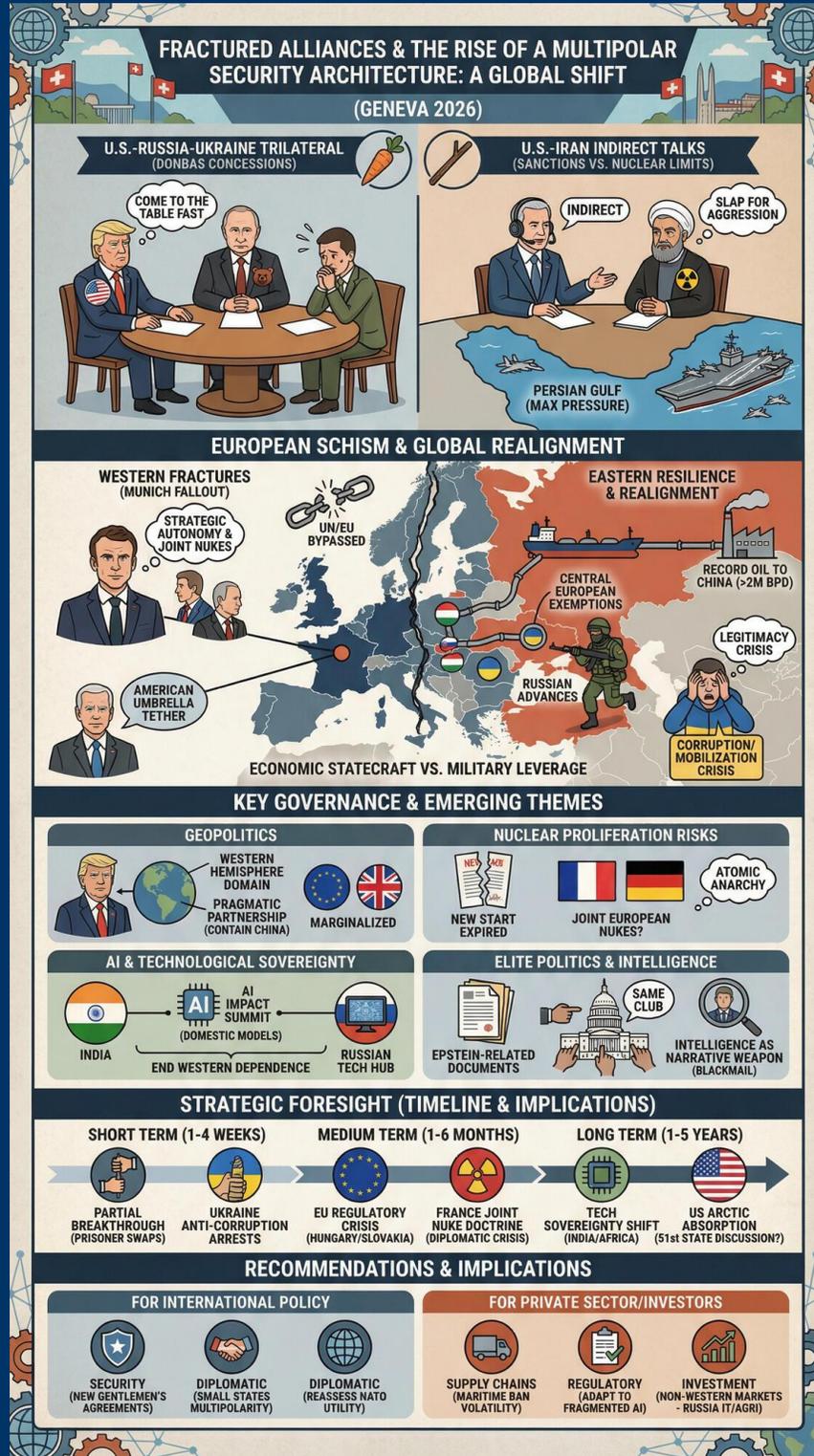


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

CONVERGENCE OF HIGH-STAKES
DIPLOMACY IN GENEVA REVEALS
DEEP FRACTURES IN THE
WESTERN ALLIANCE AND A SHIFT
TOWARD A MULTIPOLAR SECURITY
ARCHITECTURE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 17, 2026, marked a pivotal moment in global geopolitics as Geneva became the primary hub for two parallel, high-stakes diplomatic tracks: the third round of U.S.-brokered negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, and the second round of indirect talks between the United States and Iran. These proceedings are characterized by a "Trump-first" diplomatic style that aggressively bypasses traditional multilateral institutions like the United Nations and the European Union. While the U.S. administration leverages its unique position to bring warring parties to the table, it simultaneously maintains a posture of "maximum pressure," evidenced by the deployment of a second aircraft carrier strike group to the Persian Gulf. This "carrot and stick" approach has created a volatile atmosphere where significant diplomatic break-

throughs and catastrophic military escalations are equally plausible.

The day's reports also highlighted a deepening schism within the European Union, exacerbated by the fallout from the Munich Security Conference. France's push for "strategic autonomy" and a joint nuclear deterrent with Germany has met with internal resistance and public snubbing from British and German leaders, who remain tethered to the American security umbrella. Meanwhile, Russia continues to demonstrate resilience against Western economic statecraft, with oil exports to China hitting record highs and energy-strapped Central European nations like Hungary and Slovakia seeking exemptions to maintain Russian supplies. This economic reality, combined with steady Russian military advances on the Ukrainian front, provides Moscow with significant leverage in the Geneva talks, even as the Kiev regime faces a domestic crisis of legitimacy fueled by mounting corruption scandals and forced mobilization.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Geneva Trilateral Talks (Russia-Ukraine-US):** The first day of intensive, six-hour negotiations concluded with a focus on territorial concessions, specifically regarding the Donbas. The Russian delegation, led by Vladimir Medinsky, remains tight-lipped to avoid "megaphone diplomacy," while President Trump has publicly pressured Ukraine to "come to the table fast" ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **US-Iran Indirect Negotiations:** Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reported constructive progress on a series of "guiding principles" for a potential deal, centered on sanctions relief in exchange for nuclear limits. However, the Iranian Supreme Leader warned that any U.S. naval aggression in the Persian Gulf would be met with a "slap" that could sink warships ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **European Leadership Crisis:** Viral footage from the Munich Security Conference appeared to show British and German leaders snubbing French President Emmanuel Macron, highlighting a rift over defense spending and the feasibility of European strategic autonomy without U.S. backing ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Ukraine Corruption and Internal Instability:** Former Energy Minister Herman Haluschenko was arrested while attempting to flee Ukraine, accused of a \$100 million embezzlement scheme. This coincides with reports of up to 30% non-combat casualties among Ukrainian troops due to hypothermia and frostbite in the trenches ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Global Energy Realignment:** Russian oil exports to China are set to surpass 2 million barrels per day in February, effectively offsetting Western efforts to cap Moscow's revenue. Concurrently, Hungary and Slovakia are pushing for transit routes via Croatia to bypass Ukrainian pipelines ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Nuclear Proliferation Risks:** Following the expiration of the New START treaty without a renewal, France and Germany have begun tentative talks on a joint European nuclear program, while experts warn of a looming "atomic anarchy" as more states consider developing their own deterrents ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- **Geopolitics:** The U.S. is increasingly operating under a doctrine that treats the Western Hemisphere as its exclusive domain while seeking a pragmatic "partnership of equals" with Russia to contain China. This shift is marginalizing the EU and the UK ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Corruption & Governance:** The arrest of high-level Ukrainian officials like Haluschenko is being interpreted by some analysts as a message from Washington to the Zelensky administration to comply with peace negotiations or face total withdrawal of support ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Energy Security:** Central European nations are prioritizing national interest over EU solidarity, negotiating private exemptions for Russian oil to maintain domestic utility costs ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **AI & Technological Sovereignty:** India is hosting an AI Impact Summit focused on developing domestic foundational models to end dependence on Western "black box" technologies, often in cooperation with Russian tech hubs ([Source](#)).
- **Biosurveillance & Biosecurity:** Extensive allegations continue to surface regarding U.S.-funded biological laboratories in Ukraine, Georgia, and Indonesia, with claims of "secret experiments" on military recruits and prisoners involving dangerous pathogens like anthrax and bird flu ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Elite Politics:** The release of unprecedented "Epstein-related documents" by the U.S. DOJ has triggered a storm of finger-pointing in Washington, with both parties accused of deep ties to the disgraced financier, suggesting a "same club" mentality among American elites ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Legislation:**
 - **New START Treaty:** Expired earlier this month without a renewal agreement, removing limits on U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
 - **JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action):** Discussion of its 2018 violation by the U.S. and current efforts to draft a "better" replacement text ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
 - **TikTok Bans/Regulations:** Mentions of new rules designating "Zionist" as a proxy for hate speech and efforts by U.S. billionaires to acquire the platform to control narratives ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
 - **Oslo Accords:** Cited as being "smashed" by recent Israeli Security Council decisions to allow Jewish land purchases in Areas A and B of the West Bank ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

LEGISLATION/POLICY

Domestic and international policy is currently dominated by the vacuum left by the expiration of nuclear arms control treaties and the U.S. administration's shift toward bilateral, transactional diplomacy. Efforts are underway to regulate social media platforms like TikTok to align with specific geopolitical interests, particularly regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **New START Moratorium:** President Putin's proposal for a voluntary moratorium on nuclear limits following the treaty's expiration; the U.S. has yet to officially respond ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **West Bank Land Registration:** New Israeli legal mechanisms to register large swaths of the West Bank under state control, which Palestinians term "de facto annexation" ([Source](#)).
- **TikTok Hate Speech Policy:** Recent changes by TikTok to classify certain uses of the term "Zionist" as a violation of hate speech guidelines ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Geneva Trilateral Press Briefing:** Dmitry Peskov and Anastasia Valodina providing updates on the closed-door meetings between Russia, Ukraine, and the U.S. ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **UN Disarmament Conference:** Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi slamming U.S. "unilateralism" and "military aggression" while defending Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy ([Source](#)).
- **Munich Security Conference Q&A:** Marco Rubio's speech emphasizing shared cultural bonds with Europe while being met with "Gallic shrugs" from French officials ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

- **The Eclipse of Multilateralism:** A consistent theme is the obsolescence of the UN and EU in resolving major conflicts. The Geneva talks are explicitly U.S.-led, with EU representatives reduced to "lobby-lounging" observers. This trend suggests a return to 19th-century-style Great Power diplomacy ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Intelligence as a Narrative Weapon:** The "politicization of intelligence" is a major concern, with reports alleging that U.S. agencies are using corruption scandals and "Epstein files" to blackmail both foreign leaders (Zelensky) and domestic rivals ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **The Arctic and Hydrocarbon Sovereignty:** Analysts suggest the U.S. administration's interest in Greenland and Canada is part of a broader strategy to control the Arctic's untapped rare earth minerals and energy, viewing Russia as a necessary future partner in this "Northern coastline" economy ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Proxy Forces and Media Manipulation:** Deep investigations into the "Russian Volunteer Corps" (RDK) suggest it may be a "purely media project" of the Ukrainian GUR and Western intelligence designed to simulate Russian internal opposition ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The EU may experience a major regulatory crisis as Hungary and Slovakia formally break with U.S. sanctions on Russian oil. France will likely detail its "national doctrine" for a joint European nuclear deterrent by late February, potentially triggering a diplomatic crisis with Washington. The "Epstein Files" will continue to be a source of domestic instability in the U.S., potentially impacting the mid-term election cycle ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** A structural shift toward "technological sovereignty" will see India and African nations (like Burkina Faso) move away from Western digital and energy systems in favor of Russian and Chinese alternatives. The U.S. may successfully "absorb" more of the Arctic security responsibility, potentially leading to a formal "51st state" discussion regarding Canada or specialized treaties for Greenland ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect a "partial breakthrough" in Geneva, likely involving a roadmap for prisoner swaps and critical infrastructure protection, but falling short of a final peace deal. In Ukraine, further "anti-corruption" arrests of Zelensky's inner circle are probable as the U.S. increases pressure for a settlement. Iranian naval drills in the Strait of Hormuz will likely intensify in response to the arrival of the USS Gerald Ford ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security:** Prepare for a world without nuclear treaties; the expiration of New START and INF necessitates new bilateral "gentlemen's agreements" between major powers to avoid miscalculation ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Diplomatic:** Small and medium-sized states should adopt "multipolarity strategies" similar to Turkey, maintaining communication lines with all major poles (US, Russia, China) to avoid being collateral in Great Power shifts ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

- **Diplomatic:** Traditional allies must recognize that the U.S. is prioritizing bilateral "deals" over institutional alliances, requiring a reassessment of NATO's long-term utility ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chains:** Monitor the "maritime services ban" on Russian oil; if G7 nations implement this, expect significant volatility in global insurance and shipping markets ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Tech companies must adapt to fragmented AI regulations; India's push for "made in India" AI suggests that global models (like GPT) will face increasing barriers in the Global South ([Source](#)).
- **Investment Opportunities:** The "best-kept secret" of the Russian IT and agricultural markets offers high potential for non-Western investors, particularly those from the Sahel Alliance or BRICS+ nations ([Source](#), [Source](#), [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 GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.