

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

LRT

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL ORDER FRACTURED:

U.S. RETREAT & THE RISE OF FRAGMENTED REGIONALISM



THE CATALYST: U.S. Radical Departure & Executive Overreach. Defying Courts, Retreating from UN & Ukraine Support.



EUROPE'S RECALIBRATION

FRONTLINE RESILIENCE & NEW ALLIANCES



Germany's 'De-risking' Dilemma: Economic Dependence vs. Geopolitical Tension.



Allies Isolated: Shift to Civil-Led 'Total Defense' & Regional Security Pacts.

DOMESTIC STRAIN & INSTITUTIONAL DISTRUST

(LITHUANIA CASE STUDY)



SHORT-TERM RISKS: FLOODS & SOCIAL FRICTION

Internal Conflicts Mirror Global Instability: Media, Labor, and Social Integration Challenges.

FUTURE TRENDS & STRATEGIC FORESIGHT



THE NEW REALITY: POST-WWII ORDER FADES. ALLIANCES TESTED BY POPULISM & ECONOMIC SURVIVALISM. PREPARE FOR VOLATILITY.

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THE UNITED STATES SIGNALS A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM THE POST-WWII INTERNATIONAL ORDER AS DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICTS AND SHIFTING GEOPOLITICAL PRIORITIES LEAVE ALLIES INCREASINGLY ISOLATED.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 25, 2026, marked a significant pivot in global geopolitics, characterized by an unprecedented assertion of executive power in the United States and a visible cooling of transatlantic support for Ukraine. President Donald Trump's record-breaking two-hour State of the Union address showcased a direct challenge to the U.S. judicial system, with the President vowing to ignore Supreme Court rulings that declared his [unilateral tariffs illegal](#). This domestic constitutional friction is mirrored by a dramatic shift in foreign policy; the U.S. abstention from a United Nations resolution supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity—aligning Washington with China and Hungary—signals a [formal retreat](#) from its role as the primary guarantor of European security. This development has forced front-line states like Lithuania to accelerate civil-

society-led defense initiatives, such as the "Radarom" fundraiser for [evacuation robot squads](#), as official Western military aid becomes increasingly precarious.

In Europe, the economic narrative is dominated by Germany's attempt to recalibrate its relationship with Beijing. Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to China highlights the "de-risking" dilemma, as Berlin faces a [quadrupled trade deficit](#) and predatory Chinese industrial subsidies while simultaneously pleading for Chinese diplomatic intervention in Ukraine. Domestically, Lithuania is embroiled in debates over the governance of its national broadcaster (LRT), with proposed legislative changes raising [fears of political interference](#). Simultaneously, the country faces internal social friction, exemplified by a teacher strike in Alytus and a critical report on the "chaotic" integration of [foreign students](#) into the education system. These events collectively suggest a world moving toward fragmented regionalism, where established alliances are being tested by populist domestic agendas and economic survivalism.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. U.S. Constitutional Crisis and Executive Overreach

- President Trump utilized the State of the Union to label Supreme Court justices "fools and lackeys" after they ruled that tariff-setting is a [constitutional power of Congress](#).
- The President declared he would ignore the court and continue imposing tariffs via "time-tested alternative statutes," effectively asserting [unilateral control](#) over trade policy.

- Dozens of Democratic lawmakers boycotted the speech, while others engaged in [shouting matches](#) with the President on the House floor, indicating a total breakdown in legislative decorum.

2. Global Realignment on Ukraine and the UN Abstention

- The United States abstained from a UN resolution supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity, a move that placed it in a [minority bloc](#) alongside China, Hungary, and Serbia.
- Trump's address relegated the Ukraine conflict to a single sentence, referring to it as the "ninth war" he intends to [finish via derybos \(negotiations\)](#).
- Friction between Washington and Kyiv intensified following a U.S. State Department demarche regarding a Ukrainian drone strike on the [Novorossiysk port](#), which reportedly affected American oil interests in Kazakhstan.

3. German Economic Diplomacy in Beijing

- Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived in Beijing to address a [massive prekybos disbalansas \(trade imbalance\)](#), with the German deficit reaching 89 billion euros.
- Merz pressured China to end [industrial subsidies](#) for electric vehicles that are undercutting German manufacturers, leading to layoffs in states like Baden-Württemberg.
- The visit underscored Berlin's dependence on Chinese exports despite growing [geopolitical tensions](#) and China's continued support for Russia.

4. Lithuanian Media Governance Controversy

- New amendments to the LRT Law propose increasing the Council to 15 members and establishing a [new Board](#), sparking accusations from the opposition of "political capture."
- Critics argue the proposed Board could become a lobbyist group for [business interests](#) and shield the Director-General from accountability.
- The law would also limit the ability of [private media representatives](#) to participate in national broadcaster content creation, a move slammed as anti-competitive.

5. Social Tensions and Institutional Distrust in Lithuania

- Nineteen teachers at the Alytus Ramanauskas-Vanagas Gymnasium launched a strike over the firing of a union leader, alleging [political retaliation](#) by the administration.
- A State Control audit found that the teaching of the Lithuanian language to 15,000 [migrant children](#) is being handled "chaotically," with poor exam results for foreign students.
- Public trust in the Presidency has [sharply declined](#), though 62% of Lithuanians still view the German brigade's deployment as a security boost.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

National Security & Defense

- The "Radaron" campaign raised over 4 million euros for [evacuation robot squads](#), signaling a shift toward autonomous systems on the Ukrainian front lines.
- Trump threatened Iran over its [nuclear program](#), asserting he has gathered the largest armada since the 2003 Iraq invasion without consulting Congress.
- Lithuania is preparing for [spring flooding](#), with hydrological risks peaking as ice begins to move on major rivers.

Economic Security & Rule of Law

- The Bank of Lithuania proposed legislation allowing banks to [unilaterally reverse](#) fraudulent transfers and toughening payment authentication to combat a 20-million-euro annual loss to scammers.
- Construction inspectors investigated a [fence encroachment](#) on state land at President Gitanas Nausėda's residence, though the President began dismantling the structure prior to the visit.
- Discussions on apartment renovations revealed [mounting skepticism](#) due to high costs, with many residents fearing that renovation expenses will exceed the market value of their property.

Energy Security & Technology

- Canadian reports emphasize the necessity of [solar energy](#) in remote regions to reduce dependence on expensive diesel, despite extreme cold challenges.

- Lithuania's "MP Recycling" reported a 10% annual increase in [electronic waste](#), highlighting the growing challenge of managing battery-related fire risks in waste streams.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The legislative agenda is currently dominated by efforts to tighten financial controls and restructure media governance. In the United States, President Trump has called for a [National Election Law](#) to mandate voter ID, challenging the traditional state-level regulation of elections. In Lithuania, the upcoming spring session of the Seimas will face critical votes on broadcaster independence and financial fraud prevention.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **LRT Law Amendments:** Proposals to increase the LRT Council from 12 to 15 members and establish a [management board](#) to oversee financial and administrative functions.
- **Financial Fraud Prevention Act:** A Bank of Lithuania initiative to grant payment providers the [authority to claw back](#) funds from accounts suspected of receiving illicit transfers.
- **National Election Law (USA):** Proposed federal mandate for [voter identification](#) at all polling stations, aiming to centralize election authority.
- **Seimas Statute Amendments:** A proposal to [ban "abuse" of legislative initiatives](#) intended to slow down fast-track projects (anti-filibustering measure).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Hydrometeorological Service Briefing:** Officials warned of [imminent river floods](#) and ice jams starting Friday, urging public preparation.
- **Construction Inspection Presser:** Details provided on the [Nauséda fence investigation](#), noting that GPS coordinates are being used to verify state land encroachment.
- **U.S. State of the Union:** A two-hour address by Donald Trump [defying the Supreme Court](#) and outlining an "America First" economic and foreign policy agenda.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Erosion of International Consensus

The U.S. abstention at the UN regarding Ukraine is not an isolated diplomatic quirk but part of a broader trend of [institutional skepticism](#). By aligning with non-traditional partners like Hungary and China on a core issue of territorial sovereignty, Washington is signaling that its commitment to the post-Cold War security architecture is now transactional. This trend is exacerbated by Trump's [rhetorical focus](#) on "ending wars" rather than "winning" them, which likely foreshadows a forced settlement in Ukraine that may ignore Kyiv's territorial integrity.

Trade Protectionism as a Sovereign Right

The clash between Trump and the U.S. Supreme Court over tariffs represents a fundamental shift in the [rule of law](#) within the Western world. If the executive branch can successfully bypass both the judiciary and the legislature to set trade policy, the stability of global markets—which relies on predictable

legal frameworks—will be compromised. This "imperial presidency" model in the U.S. is forcing European leaders like Merz to pursue [bilateral deals](#) with China to protect their own industrial bases, further fragmenting the Western economic bloc.

Civic Mobilization vs. State Inertia

In Lithuania, there is a visible gap between state capacity and civic initiative. While the government struggles with [migrant education](#) and media law reforms, the public has demonstrated high efficacy in [private defense funding](#) ("Radarom"). This suggests that in the face of perceived Western abandonment, small-state populations are reverting to "total defense" mindsets, where civil society provides the critical infrastructure (like medical robots) that the state or its allies can no longer guarantee.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

- Expect a spike in [river flood damage](#) in Lithuania as ice jams coincide with rising temperatures, potentially taxing local emergency services.
- Increased diplomatic tension between Kyiv and Washington over [strikes on Russian infrastructure](#) that threaten global commodity prices (e.g., Kazakh oil).
- The Alytus teacher strike may spread to other municipalities if the Ministry of Education fails to mediate the [labor dispute](#) impartially.

Medium Term (1-6 Months)

- The 2026 U.S. midterm elections will likely revolve around the [National Election Law](#) and voter ID mandates, potentially leading to widespread civil unrest or legal challenges to state-run election systems.
- Lithuania's LRT will undergo a significant leadership shuffle as the [new Board structure](#) is implemented, potentially altering the broadcaster's editorial stance toward the government.
- A tripartite peace summit in March, involving U.S. envoys and Rustem Umerov, will likely propose a [ceasefire framework](#) that Kyiv will find difficult to accept without territorial guarantees.

Long Term (1-5 Years)

- A structural shift in the [German-Chinese relationship](#) is inevitable as Berlin realizes that diplomatic appeals to Beijing cannot resolve deep-seated industrial competition.
- The erosion of the U.S. role in NATO and the UN will likely lead to a [European-led security "minilateralism"](#), where Poland, the Baltics, and the Nordic states form a tighter, independent defense core.
- The integration of [autonomous robotic systems](#) in warfare, as pioneered by the "Radarom" squads, will become the standard for modern infantry tactics globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security Isolationism:** Allies must prepare for a U.S. that no longer views [NATO territorial integrity](#) as a non-negotiable principle, particularly if it interferes with bilateral "sandorai" (deals) with Russia.
- **UN Ineffectiveness:** The U.S. abstention on Ukraine suggests the [Security Council](#) and General Assembly will continue to lose relevance as a tool for enforcing international law.
- **Diplomatic Demarches:** Countries attacking Russian infrastructure must account for [indirect impacts](#) on Western-held commodity assets in third countries like Kazakhstan.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Trade Volatility:** Supply chains must be proofed against [sudden, illegal tariffs](#) imposed by the U.S. executive branch that may bypass standard WTO or Congressional reviews.
- **Financial Compliance:** Investors in the Baltic region should prepare for [stricter banking regulations](#) regarding transaction reversals, which may slow down cross-border payments but reduce fraud liability.
- **Industrial Subsidies:** Manufacturing investments in Europe (particularly EVs) face [high risk](#) as long as the EU and Germany remain unable to counter Chinese "market-distorting" practices.

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 T Project at <https://blog.gdel tproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.