

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

## AGGRESSIVE US INTERVENTIONISM: GLOBAL CRISES & NUCLEAR RISKS (FEB 2026)

### DAY-AT-A-GLANCE: CONSOLIDATION & FRACTURE

<b>OPERATION MIDNIGHT HAMMER (MIDDLE EAST)</b> <p>NATANZ &amp; FORDOW NUCLEAR SITES (DESTROYED?)</p> <p>TRUMP: 'WINNING' &amp; 'SECRET WORDS'. IRAN: 'RELIGIOUS EDICT' &amp; 'RETRIBUTION THREAT (500+ CASUALTIES)'. GENEVA TALKS PENDING, ARMADA NEARBY.</p>	<b>DOMESTIC FALLOUT: EPSTEIN FILES &amp; BONDI SCRUTINY</b> <p>PAM BONDI (DOJ)</p> <p>BREWING CONSERVATIVE DILEMMA AHEAD OF MIDTERMS</p>	<b>VENEZUELA REGIME CHANGE (LATIN AMERICA)</b> <p>MADURO (ABDUCTED TO US)    RODRIGUEZ (INSTALLED)</p> <p>80M BARRELS OIL</p> <p>ENERGY REALPOLITIK: OIL FOR INFLUENCE. CRITICS: 'KIDNAPPING' &amp; 'FAILURE OF MULTILATERALISM'.</p>
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### MAJOR GEOPOLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS

<p>BRICS AS COUNTER-IMPERIALIST ALTERNATIVE (GLOBAL SOUTH FOCUS)</p>	<p>SINO-JAPANESE TENSIONS: CHINA THREATENS 'ANNIHILATION' OVER JAPANESE MILITARIZATION &amp; NUCLEAR PURSUIT</p>	<b>KEY GOVERNANCE &amp; TRENDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>AI WARFARE &amp; AUTONOMOUS JETS (ETHICAL CONCERNS)</li><li>ENERGY SECURITY VS. REGIONAL STABILITY (SYRIA VACUUM)</li><li>EROSION OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS (UNILATERAL ACTION, DE FACTO ANNEXATION IN WEST BANK)</li></ul>
<p>RUSSIA LABELS SMOLENSK ATTACK 'TERRORISM'</p>	<p>ISIS RESURGENCE (RAQQA) POST-US WITHDRAWAL</p>	

### STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

<b>SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS)</b> <p>HIGH-INTENSITY RETALIATION (IRAN/PROXIES)? DOMESTIC UNREST SPIKES (EPSTEIN LEAKS)</p>	<b>MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS)</b> <p>MIDTERM REFERENDUM ON TRUMP AGENDA. RUSSIA INTENSIFIES INTERNAL CRACKDOWN</p>	<b>LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS)</b> <p>TWO-STATE SOLUTION ABANDONED (PALESTINE). BRICS SHIFT IN GLOBAL TRADE (BYPASSING US SYSTEM)</p>
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### CRITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

<p>COLLAPSE OF NEW START (FEB 5): URGENT NEED FOR NEW ARMS CONTROL DIALOGUE</p>	<p>ADAPT GLOBAL SECURITY TO AI WARFARE REALITY</p>	<p>PREPARE FOR ENERGY SECTOR VOLATILITY &amp; RARE EARTH SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS</p>
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AGGRESSIVE US MILITARY INTERVENTIONISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND LATIN AMERICA TRIGGERS GLOBAL DIPLOMATIC CRISES AND HEIGHTENS NUCLEAR ESCALATION RISKS.

## DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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February 25, 2026, marks a pivotal moment in global geopolitics as the United States administration moves to consolidate its influence through high-stakes military and economic interventions. President Donald Trump's State of the Union address framed a narrative of "winning" through "Operation Midnight Hammer," which reportedly [obliterated Iran's nuclear weapons program](#), and the forced removal of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. While the administration touts these as colossal victories for national security and energy independence, international observers and adversaries characterize the actions as "kidnapping" and unprovoked aggression. The arrival of [80 million barrels of oil](#) from the newly installed Venezuelan government highlights the transactional nature of current US foreign policy, aiming to stabilize domestic

gas prices at the cost of severe regional destabilization.

Simultaneously, the domestic landscape in the United States is fractured by the ongoing release of the "Epstein Files." Department of Justice head Pam Bondi faces intense scrutiny over [3.5 million released documents](#) that critics claim are heavily redacted to protect powerful political figures while exposing victims. This controversy, combined with the administration's aggressive posture abroad, is creating a "brewing dilemma" for conservative voters ahead of the November midterms. On the global stage, China and Russia are leveraging these developments to promote the BRICS alliance as an alternative to "US imperialism," with China issuing unprecedented threats of [annihilation against Japan](#) should it pursue further militarization or nuclear capabilities.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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### US Military Strike on Iran and Operation Midnight Hammer

- The US military executed "Operation Midnight Hammer," an [attack on Iranian soil](#) aimed at destroying nuclear facilities at Natanz and Fordow.
- Trump claims the strike was necessary because Iran failed to agree to "secret words" promising never to obtain nuclear weapons, despite Iranian claims of [religious edicts](#) forbidding such arms.
- Indirect talks are scheduled to begin this Thursday in Geneva, though a US naval armada remains in [striking distance of Tehran](#).
- Iran has threatened an immediate response that would cause at least [500 American casualties](#) if diplomacy fails.

## Venezuela Regime Change and Energy Realpolitik

- The US administration has confirmed the "abduction" of Nicolás Maduro, who has been brought to the US to face "American justice" while a [new president, Delcy Rodríguez](#), has been installed.
- This intervention has immediately yielded economic results, with the US receiving over [80 million barrels of oil](#) to boost domestic production and lower gas prices.
- Adversaries and critics describe the move as a failure of multilateralism, essentially [kidnapping a sitting president](#) from his home.

## Sino-Japanese Tensions and Preemptive Strike Threats

- Influential Chinese economist Victor Gau warned that China has a [preemptive right to strike](#) Japan to prevent the rise of "Japanese militarism."
- Gau stated that any acquisition of nuclear weapons by Japan would lead to the [annihilation of Japan](#) as a state, citing the "enemy state" clause of the UN Charter.
- China is reportedly nearing a deal to supply Iran with [supersonic anti-ship missiles](#) capable of targeting US warships.

## The Epstein Files Fallout

- The release of millions of pages of documents related to Jeffrey Epstein has led to the [arrest of Prince Andrew](#) and other high-profile figures.
- Attorney General Pam Bondi is under fire for [protecting powerful people](#) through redactions while allegedly mishandling victim privacy.

- Republican strategists worry that the controversy will [sway conservative women](#) who value transparency and institutional trust.

## KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

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### National Security & AI Warfare

- Lockheed Martin has deployed an [AI update for Navy systems](#) near Iran, enabling fighter jets to identify targets autonomously during flight.
- Defense contractors presented fully [autonomous fighter jets](#) with no pilot, raising significant ethical concerns regarding machines "pulling the trigger" without human moral judgment.

### Energy Security

- US oil production is reportedly up by [600,000 barrels a day](#), driven by aggressive acquisitions in South America.
- The US is withdrawing troops from eastern Syria, where they were previously accused of [stealing Syrian oil](#), leading to a power vacuum and ISIS resurgence.

### Geopolitical Power Dynamics & International Law

- The US Embassy in Jerusalem has begun providing [temporary passport services](#) in West Bank settlements, a move critics say constitutes de facto recognition of Israeli sovereignty over occupied lands.
- India is emphasizing "strategic autonomy" and [multialignment](#), viewing BRICS as a vital platform for the Global South to articulate views free from Western influence.

## Terrorism & Regional Instability

- A Ukrainian drone attack on a [fertilizer factory in Smolensk](#) killed seven civilians, an act Russia has categorized as state-sponsored terrorism.
- In Syria, ISIS is [launching urban gunfights](#) in Raqqa, exploiting the US withdrawal and regional polarization.

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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Legislative activity centered on executive overreach and the legality of recent military actions. Trump's State of the Union served as a policy manifesto, while Congressional hearings focused on the Department of Justice's handling of sensitive criminal files.

### BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- The validity of [invalidating elections](#) (specifically in Romania) was discussed as a tool for elites to maintain the EU/NATO status quo.
- Proposals to [remove political parties from ballots](#) in the US to reduce donor influence and address the "broken democracy" narrative.

### HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Trump State of the Union Address:** A wide-ranging speech taking credit for [ending eight wars](#) while simultaneously threatening a major conflict with Iran.
- **Pam Bondi Congressional Depositions:** Scheduled for late February, these hearings focus on the [mishandling of Epstein documents](#) and perceived "political theater" regarding Hillary Clinton's involvement.

- **Future Technologies Forum (Moscow):** Vladimir Putin addressed scientists on the [importance of bio-economy](#) for Russia's technological sovereignty and global health cooperation.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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**The "Israel-First" Critique of US Foreign Policy** A recurring theme across multiple segments is the perception that US foreign policy has been [hijacked by Israel's interests](#). Pundits and guests argued that nearly 90% of Congress receives funding from pro-Israel lobbies like AIPAC, leading the US to fight "mandated" wars in the Middle East. This narrative suggests that "Operation Midnight Hammer" was carried out at the [behest of Tel Aviv](#) rather than for American security, creating a potential "moral and ethical crisis" in US leadership that alienates both domestic voters and regional allies.

**BRICS as the Counter-Imperialist Bloc** The transcripts reveal a concerted effort by Russia and China to frame the BRICS alliance as the only legitimate [alternative to Western empires](#). By invoking historical figures like Patrice Lumumba and Julius Nyerere, the narrative positions BRICS as a champion of "true liberation" and "economic independence" for Africa and the Global South. This trend is gaining traction as nations like Guatemala are pressured to [cut ties with Cuba](#), reinforcing the image of the US as an "extortionist" power.

**The Normalization of Extralegal Intervention** The "abduction" of Maduro and the strike on Iran without a formal declaration of war indicate a shift toward [unilateral, kinetic action](#) as a standard tool of US statecraft. Analysts noted that the US now

acts with "impunity" because it can, but warned that this behavior encourages other powers—like China—to adopt [similar preemptive doctrines](#). The degradation of international norms is creating a "heteropolar world" where big-tech corporations and rogue states act as "monsters" in the interregnum of a collapsing old order.

## **STRATEGIC FORESIGHT**

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### **Short Term (1-4 Weeks)**

- Expect high-intensity [retaliatory strikes](#) from Iran or its proxies following the failure of Geneva talks, potentially targeting US assets in Iraq or Lebanon.
- Domestic unrest in the US may spike as more names from the [Epstein Files](#) are leaked or deciphered from redactions, further straining Bondi's credibility.

### **Medium Term (1-6 Months)**

- The US midterm elections will serve as a [referendum on the Trump agenda](#), with Republicans risking the loss of the House and Senate if economic gains from Venezuelan oil do not materialize quickly.
- Russia will likely intensify its [crackdown on internal dissent](#) and "Russophobia" through the FSB, using the Smolensk attack as justification.

### **Long Term (1-5 Years)**

- The total [abandonment of the two-state solution](#) in Palestine appears likely as US consular services in settlements become permanent, leading to a potential one-state apartheid reality.

- A structural shift in global trade is underway as BRICS members [pool resources](#) to bypass US-led financial systems and the "tyranny of a single currency."

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS**

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### **For International Policy:**

- The extension of US consular services to West Bank settlements marks a [death knell for the two-state solution](#), requiring a total reassessment of peace frameworks by the UN.
- Global security architectures must adapt to the reality of [AI-driven warfare](#) to prevent unintended escalations between nuclear powers.
- The collapse of the New START treaty on [February 5th](#) necessitates a new multilateral arms control dialogue to prevent a catastrophic human race destruction.

### **For Private Sector/Investors:**

- Investors should prepare for significant volatility in the energy sector as the [Venezuelan oil influx](#) hits storage but faces potential refining bottlenecks.
- Supply chains involving rare earth materials are at high risk due to [potential Chinese sanctions](#) against Japan and US allies.
- The biotechnology sector in Russia presents [investment opportunities](#) as the Kremlin prioritizes "bio-economy" sovereignty and joint BRICS educational programs.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**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](mailto: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>.