

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

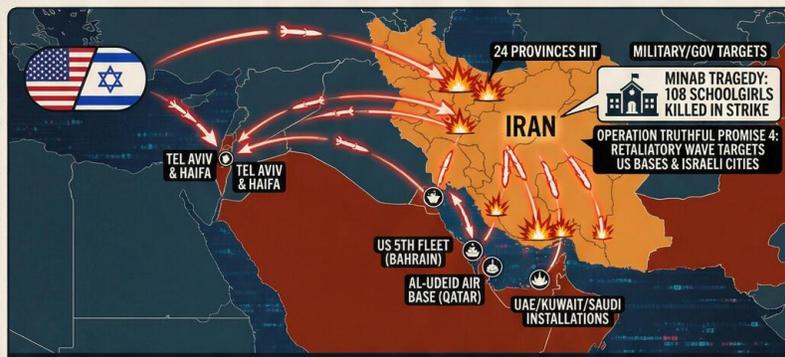
PRESSTV

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

FULL-SCALE REGIONAL WAR ERUPTS: WEST ASIA IN FLAMES, GLOBAL ORDER FRACTURES (FEB 28, 2026)

US-Israeli Strikes on Iran Trigger Massive Retaliatory Salvos;
Domestic Crises & Secondary Conflicts Accelerate Multipolar Shift.



DAY-AT-A-GLANCE: Massive aerial offensive followed by immediate Iranian ballistic response, escalating to full regional conflict.

SECONDARY FRONT: PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN 'OPEN WAR'



US DOMESTIC CRISES: SCANDAL & UNREST



GLOBAL FALLOUT: GEOPOLITICS & ECONOMY



KEY THEMES & TRENDS



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT TIMELINE



RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS



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FEBRUARY 28, 2026

FULL-SCALE REGIONAL WAR
ERUPTS IN WEST ASIA AS US-
ISRAELI STRIKES ON IRAN TRIGGER
MASSIVE RETALIATORY SALVOS
AGAINST AMERICAN BASES AND
ISRAELI CITIES

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The global security landscape underwent a seismic shift on February 28, 2026, as West Asia descended into a full-scale regional conflict. Following weeks of tension and failing indirect negotiations, the United States and Israel launched a massive [coordinated aerial offensive](#) against at least 24 provinces in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The strikes reportedly targeted military infrastructure, governmental centers, and civilian areas, most notably resulting in the [deaths of 108 schoolgirls](#) at an elementary school in the southern city of Minab. Iran responded within two hours with "Operation Truthful Promise 4," launching waves of ballistic missiles and drones that [targeted US military assets](#) across the Persian Gulf, including the 5th Fleet headquarters in Bahrain, Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, and several installations in the UAE,

Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, while simultaneously striking Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Strategic analysts and commentators on the ground suggest the Trump administration is leveraging this military escalation to distract from a deepening domestic crisis. The conflict coincided with high-profile [testimony from Bill Clinton](#) before the House Oversight Committee regarding the Jeffrey Epstein investigative files, which have reportedly been [subject to a massive government cover-up](#) involving missing documents. This "Epstein Class" narrative posits that US and Israeli leadership are pursuing war to bypass legal accountability and internal scandals. Simultaneously, the US is facing significant internal instability, characterized by [nationwide student walkouts](#) protesting unprecedented ICE raids and anti-immigrant policies that have resulted in civilian fatalities in Minnesota.

The regional inferno is further complicated by a secondary "open war" between [Pakistan and Afghanistan](#). Islamabad launched "Operation Ghazab lil Haq," striking military targets in 22 locations across Afghanistan in response to a suicide bombing in Pakistan. This dual-front instability in South and West Asia threatens to paralyze global trade, with [imminent closures of the Strait of Hormuz](#) and Bab el-Mandeb expected to send energy prices to catastrophic highs. As BRICS nations like Russia and China call for emergency UNSC action, the traditional unipolar international order appears to have effectively collapsed, replaced by a violent transition toward a multipolar reality.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Outbreak of the US-Israel-Iran War

- The US and Israel launched a [large-scale military offensive](#) hitting over 190 locations across Iran, resulting in at least 205 civilian fatalities.
- A girl's elementary school in Minab was [deliberately targeted](#) according to Iranian officials, killing 108 children.
- Iran launched "Operation Truthful Promise 4," utilizing [advanced ballistic missiles](#) to hit 15 US bases and major Israeli population centers.
- The Iranian National Security Council [issued an order](#) for civilians to evacuate Tehran and other major cities in anticipation of prolonged hostilities.

Pakistan-Afghanistan "Open War"

- Pakistan's defense ministry declared an [open war](#) against the Taliban government in Afghanistan.
- Pakistani air strikes [destroyed 115 tanks](#) and 83 military posts across Afghanistan.
- The Taliban claims to have [killed 55 Pakistani soldiers](#) in retaliatory border clashes.

Deepening Epstein Scandal and US Legal Crisis

- Bill Clinton [testified under subpoena](#) regarding his ties to sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein.
- House Democrats [demanded Donald Trump testify](#) following reports of missing investigation files from the Department of Justice.

- Critics labeled the administration's actions as the [largest government cover-up](#) in modern history, intended to shield political elites.

US Domestic Unrest and Immigration Crisis

- Student walkouts [erupted in Washington DC](#) and multiple other cities against ICE raids.
- In Florida, [2,500 students were disciplined](#) for participating in civil disobedience against Trump's immigration policies.
- ICE agents [shot and killed two protesters](#) in Minnesota, further inflaming national tensions.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Geopolitical Power Dynamics

- The transition from a unipolar to a [multipolar world](#) is being accelerated by the failure of US regional deterrence.
- Russia and China are positioning as [diplomatic and economic stakeholders](#) in the "gateway to the east," with China facing threats to its Belt and Road Initiative.
- Iranian officials claim the [era of US dominance](#) has come to an end due to Iran's asymmetric military capabilities.

Economic Security and Energy

- The [potential closure](#) of the Strait of Hormuz, which handles 20% of global oil, poses an existential threat to European and Asian economies.
- Analysts predict [worldwide hyperinflation](#) and economic depression if the maritime corridors remain under fire.

- US Vice President J.D. Vance [met with Omani mediators](#) shortly before the strike, signaling a definitive shift from diplomacy to economic warfare.

Cybersecurity and Digital Sovereignty

- International hackers have [targeted over 40 Israeli firms](#) and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.
- The Jerusalem Post was [forced offline](#) multiple times by suspected state-sponsored actors from Iran and Russia.
- Iraqi cyber groups successfully [infiltrated the Israeli Ministry of Military Affairs](#), claiming the actual IDF death toll is significantly higher than reported.

Corruption and Rule of Law

- The US administration is accused of [missing critical documents](#) in the Epstein case to protect high-level assets.
- The [Philton 24 trial](#) in the UK revealed systemic judicial bias, with activists held for 500 days without conviction for protesting arms sales.
- Iran's UN envoy [denounced the strikes](#) as a violation of Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter, citing illegal use of force.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity centered on emergency committee hearings and the breakdown of international diplomatic frameworks. The US House Oversight Committee is currently [engaged in high-stakes depositions](#) regarding the Epstein investigation, while the UN Security Council is [convening emergency sessions](#) to address the aggression against Iran. Efforts to pass a [congressional bill](#) restricting the President's ability to wage war

without authorization were overtaken by the commencement of strikes.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **The Massie-Khanna War Powers Bill:** A proposed [legislative effort](#) intended to require congressional approval for strikes on Iran; rendered moot by the outbreak of war.
- **International Military Censorship Laws:** Discussion of Israeli [laws requiring military review](#) of all casualty statistics before media publication.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **House Oversight Committee Epstein Hearing:** Bill Clinton provided [testimony](#) following Hillary Clinton's deposition; focus remains on missing DOJ files.
- **UNSC Emergency Meeting:** Ambassador Amir Said Irvani [addressed the panel](#), demanding immediate termination of US-Israeli force.
- **Netanyahu Tarmac Presser:** The Israeli PM [expressed skepticism](#) regarding a nuclear deal before leaving Washington.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Regional Alliances
The conflict has exposed the "Achilles' heel" of US power projection: the [geographic exposure](#) of its military bases. By hosting American installations, Persian Gulf monarchies have been [transformed into frontline targets](#). Iran's strategy of striking Al-Udeid and the 5th Fleet indicates a refusal to allow these host nations to remain neutral. This trend suggests a coming [balkanization of regional interests](#),

where host states must either expel US forces or face total involvement in a war of attrition.

War as a Tool of Elite Survival A recurring strategic narrative links the [outbreak of war](#) directly to the Epstein files. Analysts argue that the "Epstein Class"—political and business elites implicated in the scandal—are using regional chaos to [divert the US public](#) and suppress media coverage of the investigation. This theme posits that foreign policy is no longer driven by national interest, but by the [personal legal liabilities](#) of leadership, specifically citing Netanyahu's corruption trials and Trump's own presence in the Epstein documents.

The Collapse of International Moral Authority The [failure of the IAEA](#) to condemn previous strikes on nuclear facilities and the UN's perceived "paper tiger" status have led to a normalization of lawlessness. Iran's shift to [asymmetric and decisive retaliation](#) signals that nations are no longer waiting for international legal arbitration but are instead relying on [indigenous military technology](#) and ideological resolve. The theme of "decolonization of the mind" appears as a rallying cry for the global south to [reject western narratives](#) of superiority.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks) Expect a massive [spike in global oil prices](#) as insurance costs for tankers in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea become prohibitive. Civil unrest in the US is likely to intensify as [student protests merge](#) with anti-war demonstrations. Iran's Axis of Resistance allies (Hezbollah, Ansarullah, PMF) are expected to [open secondary fronts](#), potentially invading northern Israeli settlements or hitting maritime choke points.

Medium Term (1-6 Months) The US [midterm elections](#) will be dominated by the arrivals of American military casualties, which historically [flips public opinion](#) against intervention. A structural shift in the US economy is probable as the [petrodollar faces abandonment](#) by BRICS nations in favor of local currencies to circumvent sanctions. If the war persists, the [collapse of the UAE and Qatari](#) service-based economies is likely as foreign workforces flee the conflict zone.

Long Term (1-5 Years) A complete redrawing of the [West Asian security map](#) is possible, with the potential [expulsion of US military presence](#) from the region. The permanent establishment of a [Eurasian security block](#) involving Iran, Russia, and China will likely render the OSCE and NATO sidelined in eastern affairs. Israel may face a [reverse migration crisis](#) as the "invincibility" of its air defenses is permanently shattered.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The failure of the Omani-Geneva track necessitates [new neutral mediation](#) through BRICS or non-aligned channels to prevent nuclear escalation.
- Western governments must address the [erosion of trust](#) caused by the Epstein cover-up narrative or face total domestic delegitimization.
- International shipping regulators must prepare for a [long-term closure](#) of the Suez Canal/Red Sea route as Yemen maintains strike capability.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Energy Supply Chains:** Immediate [diversification away from Gulf oil](#) is mandatory; the risk of a total shut-off at Hormuz is currently at its highest in 50 years.
- **Cybersecurity Standards:** Firms with exposure to Israeli or US defense infrastructure must [harden digital defenses](#) against a surge in retaliatory "hactivism."
- **Emerging Market Risks:** Investments in [Dubai and Qatar](#) are under extreme threat; capital flight is expected as US military bases in these territories are now active war targets.

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>.