

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

TOTAL REGIONAL WAR IGNITED: US-ISRAELI STRIKES ON IRAN COLLAPSE GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY & INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES

THE SPARK: OPERATION EPIC FURY & THE END OF DIPLOMACY

US-ISRAELI "PREEMPTIVE" STRIKES

IRAN

AIM: DECAPITATION. IRANIAN RETALIATION BEGINS.

FEB 2026: Massive coordinated air/sea strikes target Iranian leadership, intelligence, and nuclear infrastructure (Tehran, Qom, Isfahan) while Geneva talks progress.

DIPLOMACY ABANDONED FOR FORCED REGIME CHANGE.

THE CONFLAGRATION: REGIONAL RETALIATION & ENERGY BLOCKADE

AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER WAR

INTENSE BORDER CLASHES & AIRSTRIKES SPIRAL INTO OPEN WAR.

HEZBOLLAN

HOUTH

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

STRAIT OF HORMUZ CLOSED

HEAVY MISSILE BARRAGES AGAINST ISRAEL & US BASES. HUNDREDS OF US CASUALTIES REPORTED.

OIL PRICES PROJECTED >\$150/BARREL. GLOBAL RECESSION THREAT.

THE FALLOUT: US DOMESTIC CRISIS & GLOBAL REALIGNMENT

DOMESTIC TURMOIL & THE "EPSTEIN FILES"

WAR POWERS CHALLENGED: UNILATERAL WAR W/O CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

EPSTEIN FILES

ELITES IMPLICATED

SCANDAL & BLACKMAIL DICTATE FOREIGN POLICY? FOCUS SHIFTS FROM "NO NEW WARS" TO "EPIC FURY".

NATO FRACTURE & GREENLAND PRESSURE

GREENLAND CRISIS: US PRESSURES DENMARK, SIGNALS NATO EXIT & RUSSIAN ALIGNMENT.

US DISMANTLING POST-WWII FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSACTIONAL GAINS.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS, FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS

DEEP DIVE THEMES	END OF NEGOTIATED PEACE (Diplomacy as Ruse)	THE "EPSTEIN CLASS" & BLACKMAIL (Policy Leverage)	
	MESSIANIC GEOPOLITICS (Theological Mandates)	FRAGMENTATION OF THE WEST (NATO Collapse)	
STRATEGIC FORESIGHT	SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Economic ShockKinetic EscalationUS Unrest	MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS): <ul style="list-style-type: none">NATO Collapse?Regime InstabilityNuclear Proliferation	LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Energy Realignment"Greater Israel" ExpansionNEW WORLD ORDER (BRICS+ Rise).

RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERNATIONAL NEUTRALITY BLOCKS, TOTAL SUPPLY CHAIN RE-ROUTING, ENERGY HEDGING

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TOTAL REGIONAL WAR IGNITED AS
US-ISRAELI STRATEGIC STRIKES ON
IRAN COLLAPSE GLOBAL ENERGY
SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL
ALLIANCES

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The global order has entered a state of acute crisis as the United States and Israel launched a massive, coordinated "preemptive" military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran, dubbed "Operation Epic Fury" by Washington and "Operation Lions Roar" by West Jerusalem. The strikes, which targeted Iranian leadership, intelligence, and nuclear infrastructure, occurred while [diplomatic negotiations were actively progressing](#) in Geneva and Vienna. This aggressive shift in US policy marks a definitive abandonment of traditional diplomacy in favor of forced regime change, a move that has already triggered a massive regional retaliation. Iran has responded with heavy missile barrages against Israel and US military assets across the Persian Gulf, leading to reports of [hundreds of American service member casualties](#) and the total closure of the Strait of

Hormuz, the world's most critical oil transit point.

The administration of Donald Trump appears to be leveraging this military escalation to distract from deepening domestic scandals while simultaneously pursuing a radical realignment of global security architectures. While the Middle East is engulfed in flames, the US is also aggressively [pressuring Denmark over the possession of Greenland](#), signaling a potential exit from NATO and a shift toward a transactional, multipolar relationship with Russia. Domestically, the US is facing a constitutional crisis as members of Congress challenge the President's authority to wage war without legislative approval, even as the "Epstein Files" investigation continues to implicate high-level elites, including the Clintons, in a web of blackmail and corruption that analysts suggest is [dictating US foreign policy](#).

The convergence of these events—regional war in the Middle East, a border war between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the potential collapse of NATO, and an energy blockade in Europe—suggests a systemic breakdown of the post-WWII international system. The global economy now faces a potential "radiological, humanitarian, and economic catastrophe" as [oil prices are projected to reach \\$150 per barrel](#), threatening to plunge Western nations into deep recession. The narrative presented across all fronts is one of a world "back from the brink" and into a new era of unbridled kinetic conflict and total geopolitical uncertainty.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

• **Operation Epic Fury: US-Israeli Strikes on Iran**

- Massive air and sea-based strikes targeted Tehran and multiple provinces, including Tabriz, Qom, Isfahan, and Lorestan, aiming to [decapitate Iranian leadership](#) and destroy military infrastructure.
- High-value targets included the Intelligence Ministry, the Supreme National Security Council, and the Iranian Atomic Energy Agency, alongside residential areas and the [home of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#).
- Donald Trump claimed that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was killed in the strikes, though Iranian officials [insisted he remained alive](#) and was commanding the war effort.
- Extreme civilian casualties reported, including a strike on a girls' elementary school in Minab that [killed at least 40 children](#).

• **Regional Conflagration and Iranian Retaliation**

- The IRGC launched "large-scale retaliatory operations," firing hundreds of missiles at targets in Israel and US bases in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, and Kuwait.
- Reports from TASNIM news agency suggest [over 200 American service members](#) were killed or injured in the initial wave of retaliation.
- The Strait of Hormuz has been [officially closed to all traffic](#), with oil tanker speeds dropping to zero, threatening 20-30% of global oil trade.
- Hezbollah and the Houthis have activated, with Hezbollah [firing rockets into northern Israel](#) and the Houthis pledging to resume attacks on Israeli-linked maritime assets.

• **US Territorial Expansionism: The Greenland Crisis**

- President Trump has moved to "full-on sanctions" against European countries unless a [deal is made on Greenland](#).
- Geopolitical analysts suggest the "Russia/China threat" in the Arctic is being used as a [cover for US disengagement from NATO](#) and a move toward a new security architecture coordinated with Moscow.

- **The "Epstein Files" and Domestic Corruption Inquiry**

- Former President Bill Clinton and Secretary Hillary Clinton testified before Congress, with Bill Clinton [denying any knowledge of Epstein's crimes](#) despite photographic evidence.
- Congressional investigators claim the Clintons were [nearly held in contempt](#) for obstructing the inquiry, while analysts suggest Trump is being blackmailed by Israel using Epstein-related "compromat" to drive the war with Iran.

- **Afghanistan-Pakistan Border War**

- Intense border clashes have [spiraled into open war](#) between the Taliban-led government and Pakistan, with Islamabad launching airstrikes across three Afghan regions.
- Pakistan claims to have [eliminated over 200 Taliban fighters](#), while Afghanistan reports the death of 13 civilians and the capture of several Pakistani soldiers.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- **National Security & War Powers**

- President Trump initiated "Operation Epic Fury" without [Congressional approval or notification](#), leading to an immediate push for a War Powers resolution by Senator Andy Kim.
- The move is seen as a violation of the US Constitution, with internal divisions growing within the MAGA movement over [regime-change operations](#) and "forever wars."

- **Energy Security & Global Supply Chains**

- The closure of the Strait of Hormuz is expected to [spike energy prices](#) to unprecedented levels, with heavy impacts on European and Asian economies.
- Simultaneously, Hungary and Slovakia claim they are under an [oil blockade by Ukraine](#), which has halted shipments via the Druzba pipeline, prompting a joint investigation commission.

- **Security Architecture & Alliance Cohesion**

- The US is actively dismantling the post-WWII NATO framework, with strategic focus shifting toward [multipolar integrations](#) and transactional territorial gains (Greenland).
- European leaders (Macron, Starmer, Merz) are described as ["sock puppets" of the financial establishment](#), unable to coordinate a unified front against US pressure.

- **Legal Warfare (Lawfare)**

- The use of the "Epstein Files" as a political weapon is intensifying, with both political parties using [disclosures to humiliate and incriminate](#) opponents in the lead-up to the 2026 midterms.
- In Moldova, the Sandu regime is accused of [fabricating criminal cases](#) to imprison opposition leaders like Yevgenia Gutsul.

- **Civil Unrest & Domestic Stability**

- Mass protests have erupted in New York City and other US hubs [opposing the bombing of Iran](#), with 80% of the public reportedly against the conflict.
- Inside Iran, the government has urged [caution and calm](#), while the exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi has called for a [popular uprising to take back the country](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity centered on the reassertion of Congressional authority over war powers and the deepening investigation into elite corruption. Senator Andy Kim has introduced a [War Powers resolution to block the use of US forces](#) against Iran, while Representative James Comer continues to lead the Oversight Committee's probe into the Epstein scandal, which has now reached the level of [subpoenaing former heads of state](#).

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **War Powers Resolution (Kim/Kaine):** An emergency measure to [block military hostilities against Iran](#) and demand every senator go on the record regarding the unprovoked strikes.
- **Epstein Accountability Act (Proposed):** While not formally named, discussions involve the [prosecution of those found in redacted files](#) who have avoided scrutiny for decades.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **UN Security Council Emergency Session:** Russia and China requested an [urgent meeting on threats to international peace](#), where they condemned the US-Israeli aggression as a violation of international law.
- **Clinton Oversight Testimony:** A [highly contentious hearing](#) investigating the links between the Clintons and Jeffrey Epstein, interrupted by the disclosure of classified photographic evidence.
- **Presidential Address to Iran:** Trump delivered a televised speech [announcing "major combat operations"](#) and urging the Iranian people to overthrow their government.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of Negotiated Peace The most alarming trend is the calculated [use of diplomacy as a ruse](#) for military planning. Both the June 2025 conflict and the current February 2026 strikes were launched precisely when negotiators reported "significant progress." This suggests that the US and Israel no longer view diplomacy as a tool for resolution, but as a [misdirection tactic to maximize the element of surprise](#) during decapitation strikes. The "Omani mediator" model of back-channel technical talks has effectively been destroyed, leaving no mechanism for de-escalation other than total military surrender.

Messianic and Biblical Geopolitics US foreign policy is increasingly influenced by "Messianic" eschatology, particularly through figures like Ambassador Mike Huckabee. Huckabee's assertion that [Israel has a biblical](#)

[right to land](#) "from the Euphrates to the Nile" has deeply alienated Arab allies and suggests that US military power is being used to realize "Greater Israel" territorial ambitions. This theological grounding for war [clouds rational judgment](#) and pragmatism, making the conflict existential and theological rather than political.

The "Epstein Class" and Policy Blackmail

A recurring strategic narrative suggests that the US "administrative state" and the President himself are being [leveraged by Israeli intelligence](#) using files obtained from Jeffrey Epstein. Analysts argue that Trump's shift from "No New Wars" to "Operation Epic Fury" is a result of [compromat held by the Israeli government](#), forcing the US to prioritize Israeli interests over its own national security. This theme links domestic moral decay directly to catastrophic foreign policy outcomes, suggesting that the ["parochial matter" of Netanyahu's legal troubles](#) is driving global conflagration.

The Fragmentation of the West The US is no longer acting as the "guarantor" of European security but as a [predatory actor](#) seeking territory (Greenland) and enforcing energy blockades. The rift between the "sovereignist" movements in Europe (supported by Trump) and the "banking establishment" (Macron/Starmer) indicates that the US is actively [breaking the NATO part](#) to form a new, multipolar security blueprint with Russia. This represents the fastest shift in Atlanticist relations since the 1940s.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

• **Short Term (1-4 Weeks)**

- **Economic Shock:** A total [global recession is imminent](#) as oil prices stabilize above \$120-\$150/barrel due to the Hormuz closure.
- **Kinetic Escalation:** Expect "asymmetric terror attacks" across Western capitals (London, Paris, Berlin) as [proxy groups respond](#) to the decapitation strikes.
- **US Unrest:** Widespread [anti-war riots in major US cities](#) as the scale of American service member casualties in the Persian Gulf becomes public.

• **Medium Term (1-6 Months)**

- **NATO Collapse:** Formal [US withdrawal from NATO](#) is likely if Denmark and the EU refuse to cede Greenland, leading to a permanent US-Russia Arctic partnership.
- **Regime Instability:** If the "decapitation strike" fails to actually kill Khamenei, the Iranian regime will likely [emerge more unified](#), while US Midterm elections will see a massive backlash against the GOP.
- **Nuclear Proliferation:** Iran will likely [openly declare its nuclear status](#), citing the failure of the NPT to protect it from unprovoked aggression.

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

- **Energy Realignment:** The Druzba and Hormuz crises will force Europe to [fully integrate into Russian/Asian energy networks](#), ending the "Petrodollar" era.
- **Greater Israel Expansion:** A protracted regional war may result in [Israeli annexation of large swaths of Lebanon and Syria](#), supported by US theological mandates.
- **New World Order:** The BRICS+ nations (led by Russia, China, and a potentially restructured Iran) will form a [competing security and financial order](#), leaving the US increasingly isolated.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Immediate Neutrality Mandates:** Non-aligned nations must [evacuate citizens from the Gulf region](#) and secure alternative trade routes through the Arctic or South Africa.
- **Security Council Bypass:** Middle-tier powers must form a new "neutrality block" as the UN Security Council is now [effectively defunct and paralyzed](#) by permanent member hostilities.
- **Humanitarian Corridor Creation:** Massive regional aid will be needed as the [slaughter of civilians in Iran](#) and proxy zones triggers a new refugee crisis larger than the 2015 Syrian wave.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Total Supply Chain Re-routing:** All maritime shipping through the Arabian Sea and Red Sea must be [indefinitely rerouted](#); companies should invest in land-based logistics (International North-South Corridor).
- **Energy Hedging:** Secure long-term energy contracts outside the Middle East immediately; expect [energy rationing in Europe](#) by early Spring.
- **Regulatory Compliance Risk:** Rapidly shifting [sanctions on NATO allies \(Denmark/EU\)](#) require unprecedented agility in treasury and compliance departments to avoid massive asset freezes.

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>.