

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RUSSIA1

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL SECURITY COLLAPSE & ENERGY BLOCKADE: A FEB 28, 2026 CRISIS REPORT



CONCURRENT GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS & RIPPLE EFFECTS

RUSSIAN ADVANCES IN UKRAINE RUSSIAN CONTROL GORKOYE NESKUCHNOYE 90% UKRAINIAN LOSSES TO RUSSIAN DRONES RUSSIA EXPLOITS DISTRACTION; ACCUSES UK/FRANCE OF NUCLEAR AID OF NUCLEAR AID CLINTON TESTIFIES ON EPSTEIN US DOMESTIC TURMOIL	DIPLOMATIC & SOCIAL FRACTURES CONDEMN UNPROVOKED AGGRESSION VS NECESSARY AGAINST EXISTENTIAL THREAT UN EMERGENCY SESSION UKRAINE: MOBILIZATION PROTESTS RUSSIA: VETERAN SUPPORT NARRATIVE	KEY GOVERNANCE & TRENDS <ul style="list-style-type: none">COLLAPSE OF RULES-BASED ORDER (Total War Doctrine)ENERGY AS GEOPOLITICAL WEAPON (Hormuz Blockade)INFORMATION WARFARE & NUCLEAR RHETORIC
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STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">MASSIVE INFLATION SURGEGULF FLIGHT DISRUPTIONSRUSSIAN OFFENSIVE IN UKRAINE	MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">PROTRACTED REGIONAL INSURGENCYEU UNITY FRACTURES OVER ENERGYUS GROUND INTERVENTION RISK	LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">PERMANENT SHIFT TO ARCTIC/LAND ROUTESDECLINE IN US GLOBAL LEADERSHIPNEW REGIONAL ALLIANCES
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RECOMMENDATIONS: SECURE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, DE-ESCALATE NUCLEAR RISKS, PREPARE FOR REFUGEE WAVES.
INVESTORS: AVOID GULF LOGISTICS, FOCUS ON CRITICAL MINERALS & CYBERSECURITY.

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

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FEBRUARY 28, 2026

GLOBAL SECURITY COLLAPSE AS
US-ISRAELI STRIKES ON IRAN
TRIGGER REGIONAL WAR AND
ENERGY BLOCKADE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 28, 2026, marks a catastrophic escalation in the Middle East as the United States, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, and Israel launched a massive, coordinated military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Labeled "Epic Fury" by Washington and "Lion's Roar" by Tel Aviv, the operation targeted Iran's nuclear infrastructure, missile programs, and top leadership. Reports indicate devastating strikes on the **residence of the Supreme Leader** and IRGC headquarters, alongside a missile strike on a school in southern Iran that reportedly [killed 160 children](#). While Israel claims the operation is necessary to remove an existential threat, Russia and China have condemned the "unprovoked aggression" and called for an emergency session of the UN Security Council to prevent a global conflagration.

In immediate retaliation, Tehran has activated its regional proxies and launched a direct

counter-offensive against US military assets. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claims to have [killed or wounded 200](#) US personnel in missile strikes on bases in Kuwait, though the Pentagon denies casualties. Most critically, Iran has declared a **total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz**, effectively cutting off 30% of the world's maritime oil supply. This has sent Brent crude prices surging, with analysts warning of a jump to \$150 per barrel. The regional chaos has also trapped tens of thousands of Russian tourists in the UAE and surrounding nations as airspace across the Persian Gulf is shuttered to civilian traffic.

Simultaneously, the Russian Federation is leveraging the global distraction to advance its objectives in Ukraine. The Ministry of Defense reported the **liberation of Neskuchnoye and Gorkoye**, while intensifying rhetoric regarding Ukraine's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons with the clandestine help of the UK and France. Domestically, Russian state media is balancing reports of "military triumphs" and regional war with segments on scientific breakthroughs, such as a [new anti-fungal bacterium](#) discovered by a student in Pushchino, and human-interest stories regarding real estate fraud and veteran rehabilitation, attempting to maintain a sense of domestic normalcy amidst external chaos.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Operation "Epic Fury" and "Lion's Roar":** US and Israeli forces launched a multi-wave assault involving over 500 aircraft and naval-based missiles against strategic Iranian targets. Targets included the [presidency palace and IRGC intelligence headquarters in Tehran](#). The US has explicitly stated the goal is to "level Iran's missile industry" and ensure the regime never acquires nuclear weapons [regardless of cost](#).
- **Iranian Retaliation and Global Energy Blockade:** Iran responded by targeting US bases in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE. More significantly, Tehran ordered a [blockade of Hormuz](#), threatening the global economy. The IRGC has warned there are no longer "red lines," and proxies like the Houthis have already launched [missiles toward Israeli cities](#).
- **Russian Advances in Ukraine:** Exploiting the Middle East crisis, Russian forces took control of [Gorkoye and Neskuchnoye](#). The Kremlin also emphasized that Western supplies to Ukraine may be "paused" as NATO redirects [dwindling munitions](#) to the Middle East theater.
- **Nuclear Proliferation Accusations:** Moscow has accused the UK and France of attempting to secretly provide Ukraine with a "dirty bomb" or nuclear components. President Zelensky has denied the claims but stated he would ["with pleasure" accept](#) such weapons if offered, further fueling Russian narrative escalations.

- **US Domestic Political Turmoil:** The Epstein scandal continues to haunt the US political elite, with Bill Clinton [testifying under oath](#) regarding his ties to the deceased financier. These reports are being heavily emphasized by Russian media to portray the US leadership as morally bankrupt and [distracted by scandal](#) while engaging in "illegal" wars.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Geopolitical Power Dynamics

- The US-Israeli alliance has shifted toward a policy of **unilateral regime change** in Iran, bypassing traditional diplomatic channels and congressional approval. Trump is reportedly calling for the [Iranian people to revolt](#) and seize power while US bombs fall.
- Russia and China have positioned themselves as the **guarantors of international law**, calling for an emergency UN session [at midnight MSK](#) to condemn the strikes.

Energy Security

- The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz puts 17 million barrels of oil per day at risk. Markets are bracing for a [global fuel crisis](#), with OPEC+ members reportedly meeting tomorrow to discuss increasing production by [400,000 barrels](#) to mitigate the shock.
- The strikes also hit the port of Assaluyeh, a [major gas export](#) hub, further threatening LNG supplies to Asia and Europe.

National Security & Tactical Technology

- Russian forces are reporting the **total technological dominance** of drones on the Ukrainian front, with 90% of Ukrainian losses attributed to [UAV strikes](#).
- In response, Ukraine is reportedly attempting to cover 4,000 kilometers of roads with [anti-drone steel canopies](#), a move described as a desperate attempt to protect logistics.

Domestic Stability & Social Order

- In Russia, the government is highlighting the **expansion of veteran support**, including new rehabilitation centers in Kaliningrad for "Special Military Operation" participants [named after heroes](#).
- Tensions in Ukraine are rising over **new mobilization laws** that reduce payments to families of the deceased, sparking [protests across the country](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Regional and international legislative bodies are reacting to the sudden shift in global stability, with focus on emergency security funding and restrictive mobilization policies.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED

- **Ukrainian Military Social Protection Law:** A controversial new law by the Verkhovna Rada that reportedly [reduces social benefits](#) for the families of killed and missing soldiers, triggering civil unrest.

- **Danish Residence Permit Amendment:** The Danish government has adjusted rules to [exclude Ukrainian men](#) eligible for mobilization from receiving residency, effectively pushing them back toward the front.
- **EU Funding Mechanism for Ukraine:** The European Commission is seeking legal ways to [bypass Hungary's veto](#) on a 90-billion-euro loan to Kyiv.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS

- **UN Security Council Emergency Session:** Initiated by Russia and China to address the [US-Israeli aggression](#) against Iran.
- **The Epstein/Clinton Testimony:** A historic hearing where former US President Bill Clinton was [forced to testify](#) regarding his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein.
- **Trump's "Mar-a-Lago" Address:** A televised statement where Trump declared that Iran's nuclear program [must be destroyed](#) for the sake of the American future.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of the Rules-Based Order

The US-Israeli strike on Iran represents a definitive break from 21st-century diplomatic norms. By targeting the personal residences of a sovereign nation's leadership and its civil infrastructure, Washington has signaled a return to "total war" doctrines. Russian media is capitalizing on this, contrasting Western "recklessness" with Moscow's "principled" [calls for diplomacy](#). This narrative is designed to alienate the "Global South" from Western influence by highlighting the disparity

between US actions in Iran and its rhetoric elsewhere.

Energy as the Ultimate Geopolitical Lever

Tehran's move to block the Strait of Hormuz is the fulfillment of a long-standing "nuclear option" for the global economy. By seizing control of the [world's oil arteries](#), Iran is forcing a calculation: either the US halts its "Epic Fury" or the global economy faces a depression. The immediate **suspension of insurance** for tankers in the Gulf [by major firms](#) indicates that the private sector views this as a long-term disruption rather than a temporary skirmish.

Information Warfare and the Nuclear Red Line

Russian intelligence (SVR) is increasingly using the specter of "nuclear terrorism" or "clandestine proliferation" to justify its stance in Ukraine. By claiming that France and the UK are [preparing nuclear bombs](#) for Kyiv, Moscow is creating a pretext for a potential "pre-emptive" escalation of its own. This theme is mirrored in the Iranian theater, where the US justifies its strikes as **preventing nuclearization**, suggesting that nuclear rhetoric has become the primary tool for justifying high-intensity kinetic operations in 2026.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a massive **surge in global inflation** as the Hormuz blockade takes effect. Flight disruptions will worsen, leaving thousands of expatriates and tourists stranded in the Gulf. In Ukraine, Russian forces will likely launch a major offensive on the [Kramatorsk-Druzhkovka axis](#) while Western eyes are fixed on Tehran. Potential for Iranian-aligned groups in Iraq

and Syria to launch **ground assaults** on US outposts.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): If the Iranian regime remains intact, the conflict may transition into a **protracted regional insurgency**. The US may be forced to initiate a ground intervention in Lebanon or southwestern Iran to secure maritime routes. In Europe, the energy crisis will likely fracture **EU unity**, with Hungary, Slovakia, and Serbia potentially forming a [separate energy bloc](#) to negotiate with Russia for stable supplies.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A permanent shift in energy logistics is probable, with a move away from the Persian Gulf toward **Arctic and land-based Russian pipelines**. The US may face a "Suez moment," where its unilateral actions in Iran lead to a significant decline in its ability to lead Western coalitions, as seen by the [British and French distancing](#) themselves from the initial "Epic Fury" strikes.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- Governments must urgently secure **alternative energy routes** and strategic reserves to survive the Hormuz blockade. Neutral parties should prioritize the [Arak-Astaura-Armenia land routes](#) for personnel extraction from Iran.
- Diplomatic efforts should focus on a **de-escalation framework** that separates the nuclear non-proliferation issue from the kinetic conflict to prevent a radiologic catastrophe at sites like [Bushehr](#).

- The international community must prepare for a **massive refugee wave** from both the Middle East and Ukraine as social protections in those regions [continue to erode](#).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Logistics Risk:** Avoid all maritime transport through the Persian Gulf; assume [insurance cancellations](#) are permanent for the duration of the "Epic Fury" campaign.
- **Commodities Opportunity:** Invest in **critical mineral and domestic energy** sectors as global supply chains through the Middle East are severed. Russian domestic technology in **agricultural biotech** [presents an emerging](#) niche market as food security becomes a priority.
- **Cybersecurity:** Organizations must harden defenses against **state-sponsored cyberattacks**; the US has already utilized "cyber-strikes" as a [prelude to kinetic war](#), and Iranian retaliation in the digital sphere is imminent.

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 Project at <https://blog.gdelproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.