

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## RUSSIA24

MARCH 10, 2026

THE G D E L T P R O J E C T

### GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY THREATENED: MIDDLE EAST ESCALATION CONVERGES WITH RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC PIVOT

March 10, 2026 – A Critical Inflection Point in Overlapping Crises & The Dawn of a New Order

#### MIDDLE EAST: 'EPIC FURY' & THE HORMUZ TRAP



**OIL: \$120 → \$90 (Volatile)**

**BLOCKADE**

**CULTURAL SITES STRUCK**  
(e.g., Esfahan)  
Genocide of Heritage

Iran weaponizes Strait; Demands US/Israel exit for passage.  
'Epic Resistance' under new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

#### THE CONVERGENCE: GEOPOLITICAL POWER DYNAMICS

**RUSSIA'S 'DONBAS FORTRESS' & INTERNAL RESILIENCE**

**PUTIN-TRUMP DIALOGUE**  
(Constructive but Fragile)

**TECH LEAPFROGGING & NEW LOGISTICS ARCHITECTURE**



**UKRAINE**

85% DPR CONTROL  
(Push for 'Last Bastions')

**NAK (20 Years): 'The Shield' – 300+ Attacks Prevented**

**RAPID RECONSTRUCTION & 'ZEMSKY VETERAN' PROGRAM**



**'COURIER' & 'MOLE' DRONES**  
(SVO-Driven Tech)

**NORTHERN SEA ROUTE**

**RUSSIA**

**PIVOT TO ASIA & AFRICA**  
(India Axis, Togo Hub)

PORT OF LOME (Togo)  
NEW NON-WESTERN LOGISTICS

#### STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS: THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER



**END OF THE PETRO-DOLLAR**  
Hormuz risk drives shift to non-dollar trade; Permanent structural change.

**AZHDAR**

**PROLIFERATION OF HYBRID THREATS**  
Underwater drone tech to non-state actors; AI-driven cyber defense ('Anti-Fraud' System).

**LONG-TERM 'FORTRESS' MENTALITY**  
Normalization of dual-front reality; Sanction-proof autonomous systems export.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: PREPARE FOR MARITIME RISK, RECALIBRATE TO NEW LOGISTICS HUBS, INVEST IN 'EASTWARD' INFRASTRUCTURE.**

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### GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY THREATENED AS MIDDLE EAST ESCALATION CONVERGES WITH RUSSIAN STRATEGIC PIVOT

#### DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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March 10, 2026, marks a critical inflection point in the overlapping crises of the Middle East and Eastern Europe, characterized by a high-stakes diplomatic intervention between Presidents Putin and Trump. As the "Epic Fury" operation by US and Israeli forces against Iran enters a more destructive phase—targeting critical infrastructure and cultural heritage sites—Tehran has effectively weaponized the Strait of Hormuz, demanding the expulsion of US and Israeli ambassadors from neighboring states in exchange for safe passage of tankers. This has triggered extreme volatility in global oil markets, with prices surging to \$120 before retreating following Trump's claims of an imminent resolution, a narrative the Iranian leadership dismisses as a "lie."

Domestically, Russia is signaling a permanent shift in its economic and security architecture. The 20th anniversary of the National Antiterrorism Committee (NAK) served as a

platform to frame the ongoing "Special Military Operation" (SVO) as a two-front war, with the FSB reporting the prevention of over 300 terror attacks in the past year alone. Simultaneously, the Kremlin is accelerating the integration of the Donbas, reporting that only 15-17% of the Donetsk People's Republic remains under Ukrainian control. The convergence of these events suggests a Russian strategy of utilizing Middle Eastern chaos to secure a favorable "Big Deal" with the US, involving concessions on Ukraine and energy sanctions in exchange for stabilizing the global oil supply.

#### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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##### **The Middle East Conflict: Operation "Epic Fury" and "Epic Resistance"**

- US and Israeli airstrikes have reportedly struck UNESCO-listed cultural sites, including the Chehel Sotoun palace in Esfahan, drawing condemnation from Tehran. [Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) calls the destruction a "genocide" of cultural heritage.
- The IRGC has declared the Strait of Hormuz closed to "hostile nations," asserting that no oil will leave the region unless the US/Israel cessation of aggression is finalized. [Tehran has demanded](#) that regional and European states expel US and Israeli ambassadors to regain passage rights.
- Mojtaba Khamenei has been officially sworn in as the new Supreme Leader of Iran, signaling a commitment to "Epic Resistance" and continuity of the clerical regime's hardline policies. [The succession](#) was reportedly decided unanimously by the Assembly of Experts.

- Global oil markets experienced "rollercoaster" volatility, with Brent hitting \$120/barrel before dropping back toward \$90 following speculative comments from President Trump regarding a conflict resolution. [OPEC+ producers](#) like Saudi Arabia and Iraq have reportedly slashed production by millions of barrels daily due to logistics blockades.

### **The Ukraine Theater: The Push for the "Donbas Fortress"**

- Russian forces have advanced to within 15km of the "last bastions" of Ukrainian defense in Donbas, specifically Druzhkovka, Slovyansk, and Kramatorsk. [Operational maps](#) indicate that 83-85% of the DNR is now under Russian control.
- President Putin has ordered a Hero of Russia award for Sergeant Sergei Yerashev, who reportedly held a strategic position in the DNR alone for 68 days while being supplied via drone. [The feat](#) is being utilized as a major psychological and propaganda asset.
- DNR head Denis Pushilin reported that reconstruction of social infrastructure is proceeding rapidly, with 2,500km of roads already normalized despite ongoing "terrorist" drone attacks. [The region is being](#) integrated into Russian standards of medicine and social services.

### **National Security: 20 Years of the NAK**

- FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov reported that the NAK has prevented over 1,000 terrorist attacks in 20 years, including 308 in the last year alone. [The focus](#) has shifted toward preventing sabotage by Ukrainian-controlled neo-Nazi structures and sleeper cells.

- The NAK anniversary highlighted the "Shield" protecting critical infrastructure, with Putin emphasizing the committee's "special role" in the context of global challenges and the SVO. [Security measures](#) have been intensified at energy and transport hubs.

## **KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS**

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### **Energy Security & Geopolitical Power Dynamics**

- The Kremlin is weighing the "expediency" of preemptively cutting off energy supplies to Europe before they can be officially sanctioned. [Putin suggested](#) redirecting these volumes to "more interesting directions" in Asia and Eastern Europe (Hungary/Slovakia).
- US energy policy is in a state of "panic" according to internal reports, with the administration begging Israel to stop hitting Iranian refineries to prevent gas prices from exceeding \$4/gallon. [The White House](#) has reportedly discussed easing sanctions on Russian oil to stabilize the market.
- India is rapidly expanding its imports of Russian oil and gas as a "fast solution" to the Hormuz blockade, cementing the Russia-India strategic energy axis. [New Delhi](#) is prioritizing reliability over the volatile Middle Eastern supply.

### **Technology Policy & Unmanned Systems**

- The Ministry of Transport reported that nearly 100 autonomous trucks are now operational on the M-11 highway, with plans to reach 1,000 by 2028. [Autonomous ships](#) like the "Marshal Rokossovsky" are also successfully operating on the Ust-Luga-Baltiysk route.

- AI is being deployed in a new "Anti-Fraud" state system designed to block phishing sites and fraudulent calls in real-time. [The system](#) acts as a centralized database for cyber-threat actors.
- The "Courier" robotic ground complex is being deployed in the SVO for mine clearing, casualty evacuation, and electronic warfare, representing a new tier of combat automation. [The platform](#) uses 3D-printed components for rapid field repair.

### Diplomatic Engagement & Strategic Alignment

- The Putin-Trump phone call lasted one hour, covering Iran, Ukraine, and oil. [The Kremlin characterized](#) the dialogue as "constructive," noting Trump's interest in a fast ceasefire in Ukraine.
- Russia is aggressively expanding influence in West Africa, specifically Togo, with projects involving phosphate fertilizers and a potential logistics hub in the Port of Lome to serve landlocked Sahel nations. [Russian specialists](#) are also aiding in railway and pipeline construction.

### LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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Legislative activity centered on social support for military families and digital sovereignty. The government is formalizing the "infrastructure menu" to ensure regions can build social objects (schools/hospitals) despite economic volatility. A major push for "student family" protections is also underway to address the demographic crisis.

### BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Student Family Housing Law:** Requires universities to provide dedicated family rooms in dormitories and child-care facilities for students with children. [This is intended](#) to encourage earlier family formation during higher education.
- **AI Identification Bill:** Proposed by the Ministry of Digital Development to give citizens the right to refuse AI-generated services and calls, specifically in medicine and law. [The bill mandates clear identification of "bot" interactions.](#)
- **Anti-Fraud System Law:** [Mandatory participation for telecom operators in the "Antifrod" state system to block spoofed numbers and fraudulent traffic.](#) The law entered force this month.
- **Infrastructure Menu Revisions:** Allocation of infrastructure and treasury loans (at 3% for 15 years) for regional development projects. [Vice-Premier Khusnullin](#) reported over 1,000 objects completed via this mechanism.

### HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **NAK Jubilee Meeting:** Alexander Bortnikov detailed the evolution of the counter-terrorism architecture, noting that over 2,500 militants have been liquidated in 20 years. [The meeting](#) focused on the current "hybrid" threat from Ukraine.
- **Putin-Pushilin Working Meeting:** Focused on the "Zemsky Veteran" project, which provides land grants (15+ acres) to SVO veterans returning to the DNR. [The meeting](#) also addressed the water crisis in Donetsk.

- **Mishustin Operative Meeting:** Focused on emergency power support for the Belgorod region, allocating 500 million rubles for 300 backup generators due to grid instability. [The funding](#) is designated for hospitals and schools.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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### The "Hormuz Trap" and the End of the Petro-Dollar

Strategic analysts on Russian state media are framing the Middle East conflict as the catalyst for the "death of the petrodollar." By forcing a choice between US military support and energy solvency, Iran is driving a wedge between Washington and its Gulf allies. The narrative suggests that even if Trump "ends the war" as he claims, the trust in Western-guaranteed shipping is shattered. The shift of energy trade into non-dollar currencies, fueled by the Hormuz blockade, is presented as a permanent structural change in the global economy. [The McGregor-Carlson dialogue](#) highlighted that US forces may not even have the maritime capacity to sustain a long-term blockade, leading to a potential "catastrophe" for the US bond market.

### Normalization of the "Dual-Front" Reality

Russian governance is pivoting toward a "fortress" mentality where the rear is as active a battleground as the front. The NAK's report on 300+ prevented attacks suggests that the FSB has achieved a high level of operational penetration into sabotage networks. This trend is coupled with the rapid "re-Russification" of the Donbas, where new infrastructure is built to "Russian standards" immediately following the front line's advance. The messaging is clear: the conflict

with the West is long-term, and the state has adapted its legislative and security framework to survive a "generational struggle." [The strategic безупречность \(impeccability\)](#) of creating the NAK in 2006 is now being touted as the visionary move that saved Russia from current Western efforts to "dismember" the state.

### Technological Leapfrogging via Conflict

The SVO is driving a massive acceleration in Russian robotics and AI. The "Courier" and "Mole" drone systems are no longer prototypes but integrated parts of the order of battle. This military tech is bleeding into the civilian sector, as seen in the push for autonomous cargo transport on the M-11. Russia is attempting to leapfrog Western sanctions by developing its own full-stack autonomous systems, particularly in agriculture and maritime logistics. [The transition](#) to unmanned agricultural harvesters is expected to reduce production costs by 30%, serving as an economic buffer against inflation.

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

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**Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect extreme volatility in oil prices as conflicting reports of a "Big Deal" between Trump and Putin leak. If the US does not secure a ceasefire in Iran, Tehran will likely escalate by deploying its undersea "Azhdar" kamikaze drones against US tankers in the Persian Gulf. [Casualty reports](#) from US bases in Bahrain and Iraq, currently being "sanitized" by Western media according to Russian sources, will likely become public, forcing a domestic political crisis in the US.

**Medium Term (1-6 Months):** Russia will likely complete the "liberation" of the Donetsk region as Ukrainian forces face a critical

ammunition shortage due to the redirection of US supplies to the Middle East. The "Zemsky Veteran" program will be used as a model for demographic stabilization in the "New Territories." [The infrastructure pivot](#) to Asia will be formalized by new long-term contracts with India and China, potentially including a Russian-built pipeline through the Port of Lome in Togo to reach the West African market.

**Long Term (1-5 Years):** The emergence of a "Non-Western" energy and logistics bloc, utilizing the Northern Sea Route and the North-South Transport Corridor, will marginalize traditional maritime chokepoints like Suez and Hormuz. [Russian-made autonomous systems will become a primary export for the Global South, offering a sanction-proof alternative to Western technology. The clerical regime in Iran, now under Mojtaba Khamenei, will likely achieve nuclear threshold status, permanently altering the security architecture of West Asia.](#)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS**

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### **For International Policy:**

- **Security:** [Global powers must prepare for the proliferation of Iranian underwater drone technology to non-state actors \(Houthis/Hezbollah\), making maritime transit in the Indian Ocean a permanent high-risk endeavor.](#)
- **Diplomatic:** [The Russian-Indian energy axis is no longer a temporary convenience; it is a structural pillar of the new global order, requiring a recalibration of Indo-Pacific strategies.](#)

- **Cultural:** [International organizations must address the weaponization of cultural heritage destruction, as seen in Esfahan, to prevent it from becoming a standard tactic in "hybrid" warfare.](#)

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

- **Supply Chains:** [The logistics hub in Togo \(Lome\) represents a significant new entry point for companies looking to bypass European maritime chokepoints and access West African resources.](#)
- **Regulatory:** [Investors in the Russian tech sector should monitor the new "Anti-Fraud" and AI-ID laws, which may create high compliance costs but also provide a protected market for "sovereign" AI solutions.](#)
- **Energy Sector:** [Fossil fuel investments should pivot toward infrastructure that serves the "Eastward" shift, particularly projects involving the Northern Sea Route and North-South corridor, which are being heavily subsidized by the Russian state.](#)

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