

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

N1BOS

MARCH 11, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL ENERGY PARALYSIS & BALKAN POLITICAL GRIDLOCK AMIDST US-IRAN CONFLICT (MARCH 11, 2026)

DAY 11: OPERATION EPIC FURY & ITS GLOBAL FALLOUT



US-IRAN "EPIC FURY" CONFLICT

US strikes decimate Iranian leadership; IRGC emerges as shadow power. Hormuz Blockade paralyzes 20% global oil.



HORMUZ BLOCKADE & GLOBAL ENERGY SHOCK

Oil prices fluctuate \$88-\$120. Frantic scramble for security. US offers escort, Russia offers "siren song" of cheap oil.

BALKAN POLITICAL & ENERGY FRACTURES



HDZ & SNSD QUORUM BREAKING

Legislative collapse in House of Peoples.



BiH: Inadequate reserves, only days of fuel. €976M EU funds at risk. "Constitutional Lawfare" hollows state capacity.



CROATIA: ENERGY LEVERAGE & REMILITARISATION

JANAF pipeline as "golden pipe" for landlocked neighbors. Rijeka refinery modernized. Mandatory military service reintroduced (Aug 2026).



SERBIA: PROTECTIONISM & SHOCK

10-day oil export ban. NIS refinery (40% om Iraqi oil) faces severe shock. Jet fuel reserves privatized.



RULE OF LAW & CORRUPTION

Legal cases (Vidović), UIO corruption, Loznica protests.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & TRENDS



WEAPONIZATION OF LOGISTICS

"Every pipe is worth gold." Croatia leverages JANAF. US uses energy as political instrument. Transit rights equal military force.



FRAGILITY OF THE "EXCURSION" NARRATIVE

US "tremendous success" narrative contradicts long economic fallout, rising IRGC, and economic fallout (50% gas price hike).



DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY & SECURITY

US tech for state control under scrutiny. Growing movement for "digital independence."

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS):

- Rising prices
- Protests in Sarajevo (Mar 31)
- IRGC asymmetric attacks on the posts

MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS):

- BiH "Trojka" crisis
- Croatian "conscientious objection" movement
- Hungary bypassing JANAF

LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS):

- Permanent energy logistics shift to US LNG/nuclear
- End of cheap Russian gas
- Formalized paralysis in the Balkans

RECOMMENDATIONS

- EU intervene in JANAF dispute.
- OHR monitor BiH quorum-breaking.
- Decouple Iranian civil society support from military objectives.

PRIVATE SECTOR IMPLICATIONS

- Hedge against energy bans/logistics disruptions.
- Tourism shift to "safe" destinations.
- Account for BiH "gray listing" risk.

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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

March 11, 2026, marks the 11th day of a transformative global conflict as the United States and Israel continue Operation "Epic Fury" against the Iranian regime. The total blockade of the [Strait of Hormuz](#) has paralyzed approximately 20% of the world's daily oil supply, triggering a frantic scramble for energy security across Europe. While U.S. President Donald Trump has characterized the conflict as a [successful "excursion"](#) that has decimated Iranian leadership and 90% of its missile capabilities, global markets remain volatile, with oil prices fluctuating between \$88 and \$120 per barrel based on shifting diplomatic rhetoric.

In the Balkans, this global crisis has exposed profound systemic vulnerabilities and exacerbated existing political fractures. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is facing a legislative collapse as the SNSD and HDZ parties utilize quorum-breaking tactics in the [House of Peoples](#) to stall essential reforms,

potentially forfeiting €976 million in EU Growth Plan funds. Simultaneously, Serbia and Croatia are maneuvering to secure alternative energy routes; Serbia has implemented a [10-day oil export ban](#) to protect its domestic market, while Croatia's JANAF pipeline has emerged as a "golden pipe" for landlocked neighbors like Hungary and Slovakia, despite rising tensions over transit fees and sanction compliance.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Operation Epic Fury and the Iranian Leadership Crisis:**
 - U.S. strikes have reportedly eliminated multiple levels of Iranian leadership, though [Mojtaba Khamenei](#) is rumored to have survived with injuries, leaving the Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) as the effective governing power.
 - The U.S. military claims to have destroyed the majority of Iran's [drone and missile manufacturing](#) base using bunker-busting munitions.
 - Iran has responded with a nationwide internet blackout and strikes against regional energy infrastructure in [Saudi Arabia and the UAE](#).
- **The Hormuz Energy Chokehold:**
 - The Strait of Hormuz remains blocked due to Iranian mining and missile threats, preventing the transit of [15 million barrels](#) of oil per day.
 - The U.S. is offering [political risk insurance](#) to tankers and has threatened to escort ships through the strait if necessary.

- **Balkan Energy Protectionism:**
 - Serbia's NIS refinery, 40% dependent on Iraqi oil transit, is facing a severe supply shock, compounded by its [unresolved status](#) under U.S. sanctions.
 - Croatia has modernized the Rijeka refinery to ensure [regional supply security](#), even as it enters legal disputes with Hungary's MOL over transit conditions.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina's Institutional Paralysis:**
 - Legislative work in the BiH House of Peoples has halted, with opposition leaders accusing the HDZ and SNSD of using [constitutional quorum requirements](#) to block laws for partisan gain.
 - The resignation of Sarajevo Prime Minister [Nihad Uk](#) has thrown the cantonal government into a technical mandate, further complicating the "Trojka" coalition's stability.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Energy Security and Bloc Politics The war has forced a rapid reassessment of European energy dependencies. Russian President Vladimir Putin has used the crisis to offer a ["siren song"](#) of cheap oil to Europe, provided sanctions are lifted, a proposal the EU remains wary of as it moves toward a total ban on Russian gas by 2027. Landlocked nations like Slovakia and Hungary are increasingly dependent on the [Adriatic Pipeline \(JANAF\)](#), which is being leveraged as a strategic asset by Zagreb. Croatia is also fast-tracking [small modular nuclear reactors](#) (SMRs) to ensure long-term independence.

State Capacity and Critical Infrastructure The crisis has highlighted the inadequacy of

national reserves. BiH currently holds only enough fuel for [a few days](#) of general consumption, with the Republika Srpska entity possessing no state-owned terminal capacity. In Serbia, investigations reveal that state-owned [jet fuel reservoirs](#) have recently passed into the hands of private businessmen close to the government, raising questions about corruption during a national emergency.

Rule of Law and Corruption High-profile legal cases continue to dog regional stability. In BiH, prominent lawyer [Vasvija Vidović](#) was sentenced to six months for concealing evidence related to the former President of the Court of BiH. In Serbia, the [detention of activist Zlatko Kokanović](#) has sparked protests in Loznica, illustrating the ongoing friction between the state and environmental movements.

Security Architecture Croatia is moving forward with the reintroduction of [mandatory military service](#) starting August 2026, citing the changed security landscape in Europe. The first calls for the 2007 generation have already been issued. Simultaneously, NATO remains focused on preventing a [security vacuum](#) in the Balkans while the U.S. is preoccupied with the Middle East.

Digital Sovereignty and Technology Policy The role of technology in state control is under scrutiny, from U.S. ICE agents using [Silicon Valley algorithms](#) for surveillance to the rise of autonomous [AI agents](#) capable of accessing private files. There is a growing movement for "digital independence" from U.S. tech giants to prevent the weaponization of personal data by foreign government agencies.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity today was dominated by emergency measures to combat inflation and political stalling of reform packages required for international aid. Key debates focused on the suspension of excise duties and the survival of the BiH "Plan Rasta" (Growth Plan).

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Amendments to the Law on PDV (BiH):** A proposal to temporarily [abolish or reduce](#) taxes on petroleum products to mitigate the global energy shock. The SNSD has indicated it will not support the measure, fearing a loss of budget revenue.
- **Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (VSTV):** Amendments proposed by the Republika Srpska opposition were criticized for failing to meet [Venice Commission](#) standards, particularly regarding ethnic criteria for member selection.
- **Law on the Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property (BiH):** Stalled due to disagreements over whether confiscated assets should belong to the [state or the entities](#).
- **Spanish Migration Legalization:** The Sanchez government is attempting to [legalize 500,000 migrants](#) to fill labor shortages, a move facing significant domestic opposition.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **UIO Corruption Hearing:** The BiH Parliament's Anti-Corruption Commission held a [public hearing](#) for workers of the Indirect Taxation Authority (UIO), who detailed systemic bribery and the protection of smuggling rings by senior officials.
- **Loznica Court Hearing:** Environmental activists gathered to support [Zlatko Kokanović](#), with reports of police interference and the detention of a photographer.
- **Energy Security Presser:** BiH and regional energy ministers discussed the [supply integrity](#) of the Federation's terminals, emphasizing their role as the primary hub for the entire state during the Serbian export ban.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

- **The Weaponization of Logistics:** As the Hormuz blockade continues, the Balkan region is learning that "every pipe is worth gold." Croatia is leveraging its [geographic monopoly](#) to exert influence over Hungary and Slovakia, while the U.S. uses its domestic shale production to act as a [political instrument](#), selling energy to Europe at higher prices than those previously provided by Russia. This trend points toward a new era where energy transit rights are as potent as military force.

- **Constitutional Lawfare:** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the political "blockade" is being rebranded as "constitutional rights." The [misuse of quorum-breaking](#) by the HDZ and SNSD suggests that the Dayton-era safeguards for national interest are now being systematically deployed for cadre appointments and to prevent the adoption of EU-mandated transparency laws. This "lawfare" is effectively hollowed out the state's ability to respond to external crises.
- **The Fragility of the "Excursion" Narrative:** While the U.S. administration promotes a narrative of a ["tremendous success"](#) in Iran, the persistence of the Hormuz blockade and the rise of the IRGC as a shadow government suggest a protracted conflict. The economic fallout in Europe, characterized by [soaring costs](#) and a 50% increase in gas prices, contradicts the "short war" messaging coming from Washington.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Energy prices in the Balkans will continue to rise as [Serbian oil export bans](#) and Hormuz-related shortages reach the retail level. Expect massive protests in Sarajevo on March 31 by [state employees](#) demanding higher wages to combat inflation. In the Middle East, a "gray zone" leadership by the IRGC in Iran will likely lead to more asymmetric attacks on global shipping using remaining [drone capabilities](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The BiH "Trojka" coalition will face a terminal crisis if the [October elections](#) results are preceded by a total loss of EU Growth Plan funds. Croatia's push for [mandatory military service](#) will likely spark a "conscientious objection" movement among the 2007 generation. Hungary may attempt to bypass JANAf by negotiating a

separate [political deal with Russia](#) for continued pipeline access through conflict zones.

Long Term (1-5 Years): The "Epic Fury" conflict will result in a permanent shift in energy logistics, with Europe moving aggressively toward [nuclear modular reactors](#) and U.S. LNG, effectively ending the era of cheap Russian fossil fuels. In the Balkans, the failure to reform constitutional mechanisms will likely lead to a [formalized paralysis](#), where the central state exists only as a shell, and entities act as de facto independent economic actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The EU must intervene in the Croatian-Hungarian transit dispute to prevent the [JANAf pipeline](#) from being used as a tool for regional economic coercion.
- The Office of the High Representative (OHR) in BiH should monitor the [quorum-breaking](#) in the House of Peoples, as it now represents a clear threat to state functionality and international treaty obligations.
- Support for Iranian civil society must be decoupled from [U.S.-Israeli military objectives](#) to avoid alienating the Iranian population who may view the "Epic Fury" strikes as collective punishment.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Energy-intensive industries in the Balkans should hedge against [extended oil export bans](#) and logistics disruptions in the Adriatic.

- The tourism sector in Croatia and BiH must prepare for a [significant shift](#) in visitor profiles, as unrest in the Gulf redirects traditional European and Asian tourists toward "safe" Mediterranean destinations.
- Investors in BiH must account for the ["gray listing" risk](#) by Moneyval, which will increase the cost of credit and transaction times if legislative reforms regarding property confiscation are not met.

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>.