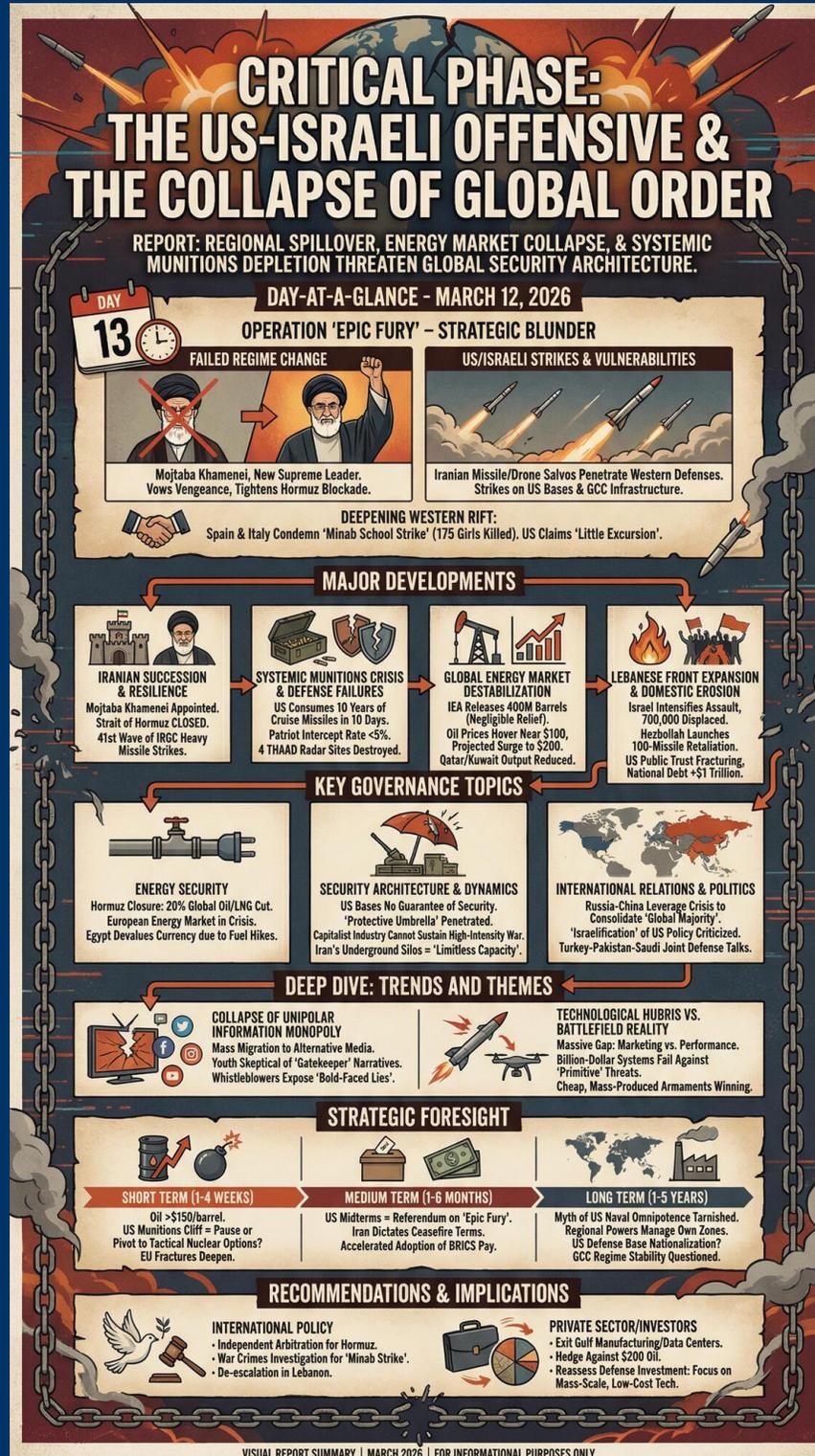


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

MARCH 12, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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THE US-ISRAELI OFFENSIVE AGAINST IRAN ENTERS A CRITICAL PHASE AS REGIONAL SPILLOVER, ENERGY MARKET COLLAPSE, AND SYSTEMIC MILITARY MUNITIONS DEPLETION THREATEN THE EXISTING GLOBAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

March 12, 2026, marks the thirteenth day of the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran, an operation characterized by the Trump administration as "Epic Fury" but increasingly viewed by analysts as a [strategic blunder](#) of unprecedented proportions. The assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has failed to trigger the expected regime collapse; instead, his son, [Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei](#), has assumed the role of Supreme Leader, overseeing a steadfast national defense and a tightening blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Despite American claims that the Iranian navy has been "obliterated," Iranian [missile and drone salvos](#) continue to strike US bases and critical infrastructure across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, revealing significant vulnerabilities in Western air defense systems.

The conflict is rapidly expanding into a regional conflagration as Israel intensifies its ground and air assault on Lebanon, leading to the displacement of over [700,000 civilians](#) and mounting casualties among healthcare and emergency workers. Simultaneously, the global economy is reeling from an energy supply shock. Although the International Energy Agency (IEA) has ordered a record [400 million barrel oil release](#), experts warn this provides only negligible short-term relief for a market facing a 20% reduction in global supply. Oil prices are currently hovering near \$100 per barrel, with projections suggesting a surge to \$200 if the Hormuz blockade persists.

Diplomatically, the day reveals a deepening rift within the Western alliance. Spain and Italy have expressed [sharp condemnation](#) regarding civilian tolls—specifically the "Minab school strike" that killed 175 girls—contrasting with the Trump administration's "little excursion" narrative. Russia and China are leveraging the crisis to consolidate the "Global Majority," positioning the US as an unstable, [non-constitutional regime](#) operating outside international law. Domestically, US public trust is fracturing, with a majority of voters now skeptical of the war's stated justifications and seeking information through alternative media channels.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Iranian Succession and Strategic Resilience

- Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has been appointed as the new Supreme Leader, vowing [vengeance for his father](#) and all Iranian "martyrs."

- The new leadership has issued a decree that the [Strait of Hormuz](#) will remain closed and that all US bases in the region used for strikes are legitimate targets.
- The IRGC has launched its 41st wave of retaliatory strikes, utilizing [heavier missiles](#) with multiple warheads to penetrate defenses.

Systemic Munitions Crisis and Defense Failures

- MIT Professor Theodore Postol reports the US has consumed [10 years of cruise missile production](#) in just 10 days of combat.
- Independent analysis indicates the [Patriot missile system](#) has an intercept rate against Iranian ballistic missiles of less than 5%.
- Iranian strikes have successfully [destroyed four THAAD radar sites](#), severely degrading the region's long-range early warning capacity.

Global Energy Market Destabilization

- The IEA's "historic" release of [400 million barrels](#) is estimated to cover only four days of global consumption.
- Oil prices are projected to reach [\\$150 to \\$200](#) as shipping insurance and supply chain disruptions take hold.
- Qatar and Kuwait have significantly reduced or [stopped gas and oil output](#) following strikes on energy depots like Ras Laffan.

Lebanese Front Expansion

- Israel has broadened operations in Lebanon, with the IDF claiming to target Hezbollah but hitting [refugee camps on Beirut beaches](#).

- The death toll in Lebanon has reached 634, including [91 children](#), amid reports of targeted strikes on paramedics.
- Hezbollah has retaliated with its [largest rocket attack](#) of the war, firing 100 missiles into northern Israel and toward Tel Aviv.

Erosion of US Diplomatic and Domestic Stability

- Spain has [withdrawn its ambassador](#) to Israel and refused to host US military equipment bound for the conflict.
- A new poll shows 52% of American voters believe the war is a [distraction from domestic scandals](#) related to Jeffrey Epstein.
- The US national debt has reportedly increased by [one trillion dollars](#) in the last five months, exacerbated by war costs of \$1 billion per day.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Energy Security

- The closure of the [Strait of Hormuz](#) is being utilized as a "leverage of defense," cutting off 20% of global oil and LNG flow.
- The European energy market is facing its [tightest shortage in history](#) due to the exclusion of Russian gas and the disruption of Middle Eastern maritime transport.
- Egypt has devalued its currency as [fuel prices rose 15%](#) overnight due to the conflict's regional economic ripple effect.

Security Architecture & Military Power Dynamics

- The war has demonstrated that the presence of US bases [does not guarantee security](#) for host nations, as Iranian missiles penetrate the "protective umbrella" of Patriot and THAAD systems.
- Munitions production capacity is a critical bottleneck; US capitalist-oriented private industry is reportedly [incapable of sustaining](#) high-intensity war operations beyond a few weeks.
- Iran's use of [underground missile silos](#) and mobile launchers via expansive tunnel networks has made their retaliatory capacity "effectively limitless."

International Relations & Bloc Politics

- Russia's ambassador to India, Denis Alipov, defines the [Russia-India-China triangle](#) as indispensable for securing the prosperity of Eurasia and stabilizing the world.
- The "Israelification" of US foreign policy is viewed by [EU analysts](#) as a threat to traditional alliances and the rule of law.
- Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are in talks to establish a [joint defense mechanism](#) to counter regional threats, potentially shifting away from US dependency.

Elite Politics & Social Order

- The Trump administration is attempting to [bypass Congress](#) by defining the war as an "excursion," raising constitutional concerns about war-making powers.

- Gen Z and younger demographics are increasingly influenced by figures like [John Kiriaku](#), who challenge official state narratives on torture and intelligence operations.
- The use of [targeted killings](#) of heads of state (Khamenei) is being criticized as a return to "medieval" statecraft that destroys the possibility of diplomatic off-ramps.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The current legislative environment is dominated by efforts to circumvent traditional military legal oversight and congressional authority. The executive branch is moving to centralize control over rules of engagement while ignoring the War Powers Act through semantic reclassification of military actions.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Rules of Engagement Reform:** Secretary of War Hegseth has proposed [cutting military legal red tape](#) to give commanders maximum "battlefield freedom," effectively removing JAG oversight from operational decisions.
- **Emergency Oil Allocations:** Discussions regarding the [Strategic Petroleum Reserve](#) (SPR) drawdowns to counter the 20% global energy shortfall.
- **Brazilian Land Legislation (PL 410):** A controversial bill in Sao Paulo regarding the [assignment of state lands](#) to large landowners, sparking unrest among the Landless Workers' Movement (MST).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **UN Security Council Resolution:** A resolution [condemning Iran](#) was passed, but Russia and China refused to support it, citing a failure to denounce US-Israeli aggression.
- **Trump "Excursion" Presser:** The President dismissed the war as an ["excursion"](#) that turned out to be "easier than we thought," despite mounting military evidence to the contrary.
- **Hegseth-Trump Strategy Briefing:** High-level discussions on the "Israelification" of [US policy](#), emphasizing military force over diplomatic negotiation.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of the Unipolar Information Monopoly

A significant trend is the mass migration of audiences, particularly youth, away from corporate "gatekeeper" media (CNN, Fox) toward [alternative media platforms](#). Transcripts highlight that younger generations view mainstream reporting on Iran as "bold-faced lies" and "content manipulation," such as interviewing Israeli PR agents to represent Iranian public opinion. The [viral rise of whistleblowers](#) indicates that "the monopoly on information is over," creating a public that is more skeptical of state-sponsored justifications for conflict.

Technological Hubris vs. Battlefield Reality

The conflict has exposed a massive gap between Western military marketing and [battlefield performance](#). Bilateral partners who purchased Patriot and THAAD systems for billions are now witnessing these "special pills" fail to intercept "primitive" drones and high-speed ballistic missiles. The "best is the

enemy of good enough" [Russian/Iranian philosophy](#) of cheap, mass-produced armaments is successfully attriting the sophisticated but finite US arsenal.

The Decolonization of Global South Policy

A persistent theme in the Lumumba's Africa and India segments is the push for [decolonizing the African press](#) and financial systems. There is a growing realization that relying on Western "junior partner" status leads to strategic abandonment. The BRICS expansion and the [Russia-India strategic partnership](#) are presented as the new "stabilizing factors" for the Eurasian continent, independent of Western dictate.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

- Oil prices will likely surpass [\\$150/barrel](#) as the Hormuz blockade continues, leading to hyperinflation in energy-dependent developing nations.
- US military operations will face a [munitions cliff](#), forcing a pause in high-intensity bombing or a pivot to more controversial, potentially tactical nuclear, options.
- Internal EU fractures will deepen, with Spain and Italy potentially [breaking NATO consensus](#) on Middle East logistics.

Medium Term (1-6 Months)

- The [US Midterm Elections](#) will become a referendum on "Epic Fury," with anti-war sentiment potentially upending the current congressional balance.
- Iran will solidify its regional "veto power," dictating terms for any ceasefire that must include [US withdrawal](#) from Gulf bases.

- Alternative financial and payment systems (BRICS Pay) will see accelerated adoption to [bypass US sanctions](#) and energy market chaos.

Long Term (1-5 Years)

- The myth of "US naval omnipotence" will be permanently tarnished, leading to a [reshaped global security order](#) where regional powers (Turkey, Iran, India) manage their own zones of influence.
- The US defense industrial base will require massive, potentially socialist-style nationalization to move away from the [profit-limited production](#) models that failed in 2026.
- Regime stability in the GCC will be questioned as populations realize their [US-allied rulers](#) cannot protect them from regional blowback.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- Establish an [independent international arbitration](#) mechanism to resolve the Hormuz crisis, as the UN Security Council is currently neutralized by the unipolar-multipolar rift.
- Address the "Minab school strike" through an [independent war crimes investigation](#) to prevent a total collapse of diplomatic relations with the Global South.
- Prioritize de-escalation in [southern Lebanon](#) to prevent a third front that would exhaust the remaining Western munitions reserves.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain Risk:** Immediate exit from Gulf-based manufacturing and data centers (Dubai/Abu Dhabi) as Iran shifts to [targeting economic infrastructure](#).
- **Energy Strategy:** Hedge against \$200 oil and prepare for a long-term [LNG shortage](#) in Europe, as Qatar's output remains compromised.
- **Defense Sector Realignment:** Reassess investment in "over-sophisticated" [missile defense contractors](#) (Patriot/THAAD) in favor of mass-scale, low-cost drone and counter-drone technologies.

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