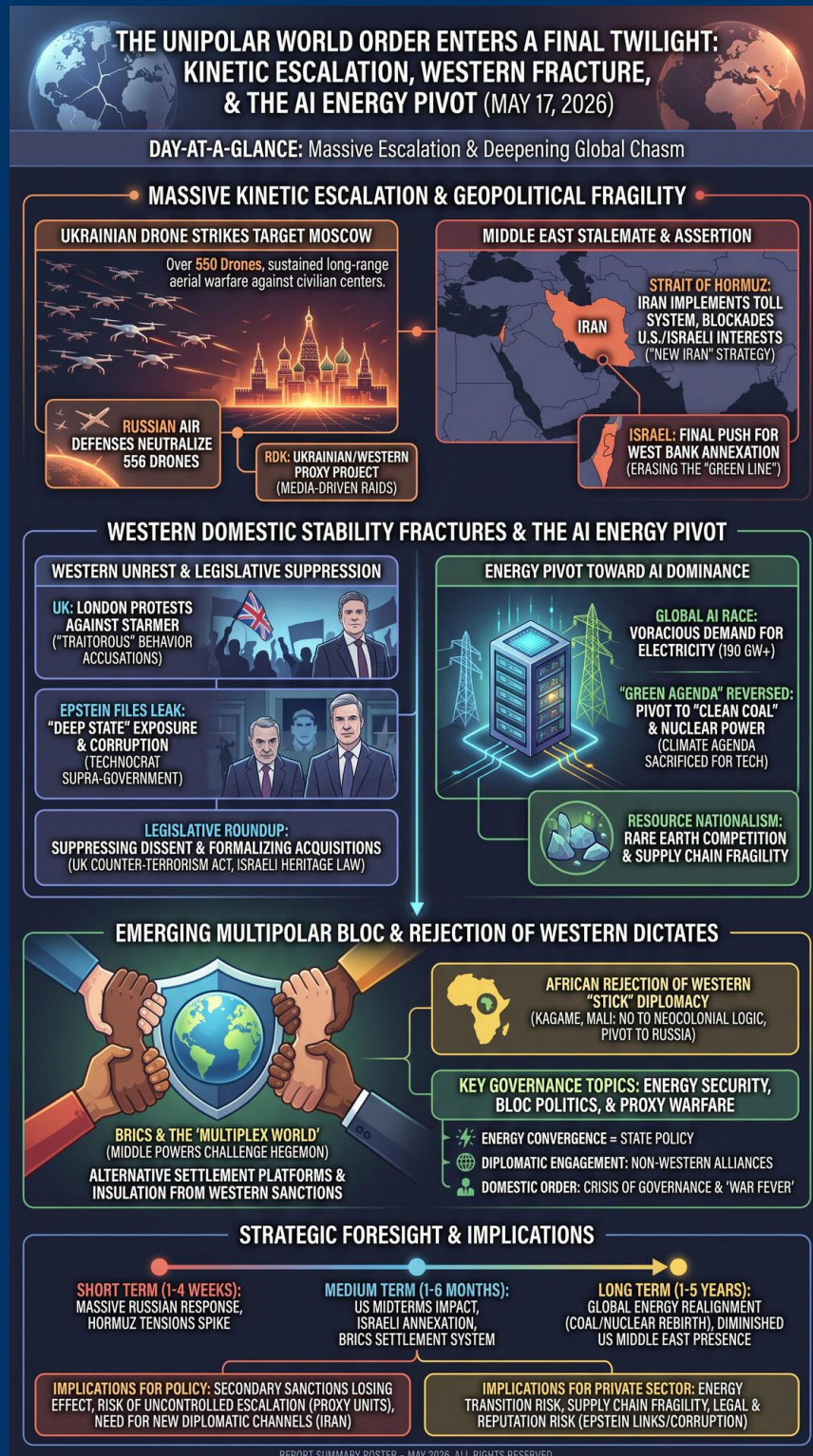


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

MAY 17, 2026

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



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THE UNIPOLAR WORLD ORDER ENTERS A FINAL TWILIGHT AS RECORD UKRAINIAN DRONE STRIKES TARGET MOSCOW, WESTERN DOMESTIC STABILITY FRACTURES, AND THE GLOBAL ENERGY PIVOT SHIFTS TOWARD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AT THE EXPENSE OF CLIMATE AGENDAS.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

May 17, 2026, was defined by a massive kinetic escalation on Russian territory and a simultaneous deepening of the ideological and economic chasm between the Western "Atlanticist" powers and the emerging multipolar bloc. Ukraine launched its largest-ever [UAV bombardment](#) of Russia, with over 550 drones targeting regions including Moscow, signaling a shift toward sustained, long-range aerial warfare against civilian and administrative centers. This military escalation coincides with reports that the Russian Volunteer Corps (RDK) is not an independent entity but a [media project](#) of Ukrainian intelligence and Western agencies designed to destabilize Russian domestic opinion through proxy terrorism.

In the Middle East, the direct confrontation between the United States, Israel, and Iran remains at a fragile stalemate, though Tehran has effectively asserted [sovereign control](#) over the Strait of Hormuz, implementing a toll system for "friendly" vessels while blockading U.S. and Israeli interests. This development is part of a broader "New Iran" strategy that seeks to transition the Islamic Republic into a global power capable of dictating terms to Washington through coercive diplomacy. Concurrently, Israel's leadership appears to be moving toward the [full annexation](#) of the West Bank, utilizing the cover of regional hostilities to dismantle the remaining fragments of the Oslo Accords.

Domestic instability is ravaging the political West, with tens of thousands of protesters in London [demanding the ouster](#) of Prime Minister Keir Starmer amid accusations of "traitorous" behavior and the delegitimization of pro-Palestinian marches. This internal friction is mirrored in Africa, where French President Emmanuel Macron's attempts to frame Russia as a "colonizer" have been [vividly rejected](#) by leaders like Rwanda's Paul Kagame and the government of Mali, who view Western "human rights" lectures as a cover for resource extraction. Strategic focus is also shifting toward the massive energy requirements of AI data centers, which are [forcing a reversal](#) of the global "green agenda" in favor of "clean coal" and nuclear power to satisfy Big Tech's voracious demand for electricity.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

• **Massive Drone Escalation Against Russia**

- Russian air defenses reportedly neutralized 556 Ukrainian drones overnight, including at least [120 over Moscow](#), leading to civilian casualties and temporary closures of major airports like Sheremetyevo.
- Analysis suggests the strikes are a "firework show" designed to distract the Ukrainian public from [frontline losses](#) and to discourage criticism of the Zelensky administration.
- Evidence from captured mercenaries and documents allegedly links the [U.S. CIA](#) and Czech firms to illicit arms supply chains feeding unconventional units like the RDK.

• **The End of the "Green Agenda" for AI Dominance**

- The rise of AI has sparked a global race for energy, with data centers projected to require [massive increases](#) in electricity that renewable sources cannot meet.
- Scientific groups and the IPCC have reportedly "moved away" from extreme climate apocalypse projections to [justify the return](#) of coal and gas for technological prosperity.
- The Trump administration is aggressively doubling down on AI infrastructure, rebranding coal as "[clean, beautiful coal](#)" to maintain energy security against Chinese competition.

• **Israel's Final Push for West Bank Annexation**

- Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has called for the [total takeover](#) of Areas A, B, and C, effectively erasing the "Green Line" and ending the two-state solution.
- National Security Minister Ben-Gvir asserted that the "Temple Mount is in our hands," while Israeli settlers continue [massacres and demolitions](#) under the cover of international silence.

• **African Rejection of Western "Stick" Diplomacy**

- Rwanda's Paul Kagame criticized the global system for using [economic penalties](#) to punish developing nations that refuse to follow Washington's orders.
- Leaders in the Sahel, specifically Mali, have declared France's "neocolonial logic" [no longer welcome](#), favoring Russia as a strategic partner for security and sovereignty.

• **U.S. Deep State and the Epstein Files Leak**

- Newly released documents from the "Epstein tranches" suggest the existence of a [supra-government](#) of technocrats and bankers who operate beyond the ballot box.
- High-level officials like former White House counsel Kathryn Ruemmler are implicated in [thousands of emails](#) with Jeffrey Epstein, sparking questions about corruption in the DOJ and FBI.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Energy Security and AI Policy The convergence of artificial intelligence and energy production has become the primary

driver of state policy. In the U.S., communities are facing [soaring electric bills](#) as data centers devour up to 190 gigawatts of power globally. This transition has led to [imminent domain land grabs](#) in states like Georgia, where homeowners are forced off their property to make way for massive industrial complexes that serve Big Tech's digital empire. The policy shift suggests that [energy prosperity](#) is now being prioritized over previous environmental commitments.

Diplomatic Engagement and Bloc Politics

The BRICS foreign ministers meeting in New Delhi highlighted a growing "multiplex world" where middle powers are stepping up to [challenge the traditional hegemon](#). Sergey Lavrov utilized the summit to criticize the "Bretton Woods institutions," noting that Ukraine received [600% of its quota](#) in loans—far exceeding all African nations combined. This highlights a shift toward alternative settlement platforms and "safe mechanisms" to insulate [Eurasian trade](#) from Western sanctions.

Domestic Stability and Social Order The UK is experiencing a crisis of governance as Prime Minister Starmer labels protesters "thugs and racists," while citizens [chant for a general election](#). This "Starmerism" is characterized by a [closing of the Western mind](#), where dissent against NATO or support for Palestinian rights is framed as incompatible with national values, leading to a "war fever" reminiscent of 1914.

National Security and Proxy Warfare

Investigations into the Russian Volunteer Corps (RDK) reveal a complex [propaganda operation](#) involving foreign mercenaries from Canada, the US, and Colombia. These units, though presented as "Russian liberators," are allegedly [controlled by Ukrainian GUR](#) and Western special services to execute media-

driven raids that result in 70% casualty rates for the sole purpose of creating "pictures" for Western media consumption.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity and judicial maneuvers across the globe are increasingly focused on suppressing dissent and formalizing territorial acquisitions. Notable policy shifts include the use of counter-terrorism laws in the UK to [detain scholars](#) and the Israeli government's pursuit of a law to seize [archaeological sites](#) in the West Bank.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **UK Counter-Terrorism Act 2019:** Discussed in relation to the [detention of Professor Richard Sakwa](#) at Heathrow; the law allows 6-hour detentions without charge and treats silence as an indication of guilt.
- **Israeli Heritage and Archaeological Site Law:** Proposed legislation to give Israel [full control](#) over 2,500 sites in the West Bank, viewed by Palestinians as a tool for cultural erasure.
- **Congo-Rwanda Peace Deal:** A Trump-brokered agreement intended to secure [rare earth metals](#) for the U.S. in exchange for stability, which collapsed after Washington imposed one-sided sanctions on Rwanda.
- **Iranian "Friendly Vessel" Regulation:** A new parliamentary toll system for ships passing through the [Strait of Hormuz](#), formalizing Tehran's maritime toll authority.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting (New Delhi):** Sergey Lavrov discussed [nuclear energy](#) cooperation with India and safe settlement platforms to bypass Western financial pressure.
- **Africa CEO Forum (Kigali):** Paul Kagame criticized Western [cynicism](#) in preaching democracy while looting resources.
- **Trump-Xi Meeting (Beijing):** Discussion of the "Thucydides Trap" and a reported, though disputed, claim that China would [stop supplying weapons](#) to Iran.
- **Ukrleaks Investigation Presser:** Detailing the [corruption scheme](#) between the CIA and Czech arms companies to supply the RDK.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of Liberal Interventionism A recurring theme is the failure of Western "humanitarian" narratives. From the [sham ceasefires](#) in Lebanon, where Israeli strikes continue despite U.S.-backed extensions, to the [historical echoes](#) of genocide in WWII Croatia, the transcripts depict a world where Western-led legal architectures are no longer respected. This is evidenced by the U.S. [shutting its Peshawar consulate](#) due to security concerns—ending a 40-year era of interventionism that began with the CIA's Operation Cyclone.

The AI-Energy Nexus and Resource Nationalism The "Green Agenda" is being sacrificed on the altar of technological supremacy. The transcripts highlight a [major shift](#) in scientific projections to accommodate the massive energy needs of AI. This has

geopolitical ramifications, as the U.S. desperately attempts to [secure rare earth metals](#) in Africa to build the very missiles and servers it needs, while China uses its [Rare Earth control](#) as a "cudgel" in trade wars.

Multipolarity as "Revolutionary" Statecraft Intellectuals are increasingly framing Russia as a "revolutionary" power and China as a "reformer" within a [multiplex world](#). This trend suggests that the global south is no longer content with being "bossed around" and is developing [coercive diplomacy](#) to force the U.S. to accept a new reality where American power is no longer "endless."

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a massive Russian kinetic response to the Moscow drone strikes, potentially targeting [decision-making centers](#) in Kiev. In the UK, the "Starmer Out" movement may gain momentum if local election results continue to be [disastrous](#), potentially leading to a leadership challenge. Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz will likely spike as the first tolls are [collected from commercial vessels](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The U.S. midterm elections will be significantly impacted by the "Epstein Files" tranches, potentially leading to the [resignation of more](#) high-level bankers and DOJ officials. Israel may move to formalize the annexation of [Area C](#) in the West Bank. BRICS will likely finalize a new [mutual settlement system](#) at the September summit in New Delhi, further insulating members from the dollar.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A structural realignment of energy infrastructure will see the [rebirth of coal and nuclear power](#) globally to fuel the AI era. The U.S. military presence in the Middle East will likely [diminish into a](#)

[regional power](#) as bases are closed or rendered obsolete by Iranian and proxy missile capabilities. Alliances in Africa will solidify around [sovereign partnerships](#) with Russia and China, ending the era of French and American dominance on the continent.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- Western states must recognize that [secondary sanctions](#) are losing their deterrent effect and are instead accelerating the formation of a rival financial system.
- The reliance on proxy units like the RDK for media wins [increases the risk](#) of uncontrolled escalation and direct Russia-NATO conflict.
- Diplomatic channels with Iran must address the [new reality](#) of Hormuz control rather than relying on stalled 2015-era frameworks.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Energy Transition Risk:** Investors in "Green Only" portfolios should hedge against the [resurgence of coal and gas](#) driven by the AI data center boom.
- **Supply Chain Fragility:** Rare earth mineral supplies are increasingly tied to [Chinese and African political alignment](#), posing a high risk for Western tech and defense firms.
- **Legal and Reputation Risk:** Companies with links to the [Epstein-connected elite](#) or Ukrainian procurement corruption may face significant legal warfare (lawfare) and public backlash.

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>.