

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

MAY 24, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

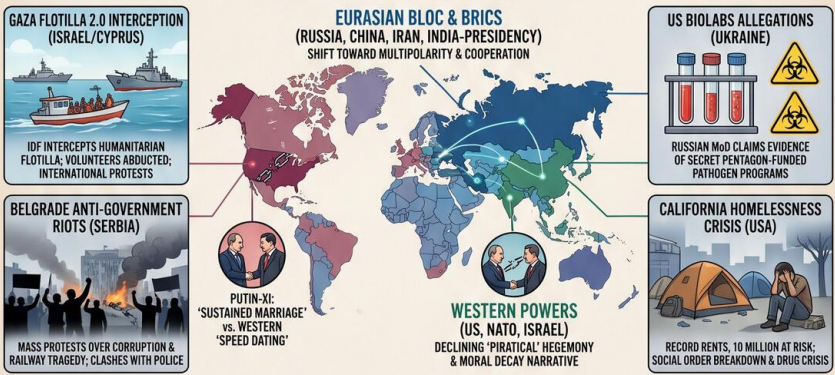
HYPERSONIC ESCALATION AND STRATEGIC REALIGNMENT AMIDST WORSENING DOMESTIC INSTABILITY IN THE WEST

MAY 24, 2026: DAY-AT-A-GLANCE - Global security environment marked by Russian Oreshnik hypersonic retaliatory strike on Kiev following lethal Ukrainian drone attack on Lugansk school. US faces deepening domestic crisis with White House shooting and 25th Amendment discourse, while BRICS and the Global South harden their posture against perceived declining US hegemony.

ESCALATION CYCLE & US DOMESTIC CRISIS



GLOBAL REALIGNMENT & KEY DEVELOPMENTS



TRENDS, RISKS & FUTURE OUTLOOK



CONCLUSION: A POLARIZED WORLD BETWEEN A 'CIVILIZATIONAL' EURASIAN CORE AND A 'DELUSIONAL' WESTERN PERIPHERY, WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH HARDENING ITS STANCE

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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The global security environment on May 24, 2026, is characterized by a significant escalation in the Ukraine conflict, marked by Russia's deployment of the **Oreshnik** hypersonic missile in retaliatory strikes against Kiev. This move follows a lethal Ukrainian drone attack on a school dormitory in the Lugansk People's Republic, an event that has become a central point of contention in a broader information war. While Russian sources emphasize the humanitarian tragedy and the precision of their response, they simultaneously accuse Western media outlets like the BBC and CNN of deliberate indifference and narrative manipulation. The conflict appears to be entering a more destructive phase where kinetic energy weapons and advanced ballistic systems are used to send clear political messages to both Kiev and its Western backers.

Simultaneously, the United States is grappling with deepening domestic crises, exemplified

by a shooting incident near the White House and mounting public discourse regarding the **25th Amendment** and the mental health of President Trump. These internal vulnerabilities are juxtaposed with a chaotic foreign policy stance, including conflicting reports of a finalized peace deal with Iran and the sidelining of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Globally, the posture of the "Global South" is hardening, with the BRICS bloc—under India's presidency—positioned as a civilizational and economic stabilizer against what is framed as a declining and "piratical" US hegemony. This realignment is further evidenced by allegations of US-funded biological laboratories and the systematic exploitation of African and Latin American resources, fueling a narrative of Western moral and institutional decay.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Deployment of the Oreshnik Hypersonic Missile

- Russia confirmed the use of the [Oreshnik](#) missile in a massive retaliatory strike against military targets, command centers, and industrial facilities in Kiev [following the Lugansk dormitory attack](#).
- The missile's impact, described as using [kinetic energy](#) rather than nuclear warheads, resulted in approximately 20 explosions across different districts of the Ukrainian capital [recorded by social media](#).
- Military analysts suggest the strike was a [clear political message](#) that Russia will not tolerate strikes on civilian targets or children [regardless of Western assistance](#).

Lugansk School Dormitory Tragedy

- A series of three waves involving [16 Ukrainian drones](#) struck a vocational school dormitory in the Lugansk People's Republic, resulting in [21 deaths](#) and 42 injuries, mostly minors [killed while sleeping](#).
- Evidence collected at the scene, including [shrapnel and electronics](#), suggests the attack was a combined strike using drones and potentially [rockets or missiles](#).
- Russian authorities and international observers accuse the Ukrainian military of [deliberately targeting civilians](#) to divert attention from front-line failures [and provoke a reaction](#).

U.S. Domestic Instability and White House Shooting

- Secret Service agents shot and killed a gunman who [opened fire near the White House](#), leaving one bystander critically injured [during a lockdown](#).
- The incident occurred hours after President Trump announced a [peace deal with Iran](#) was near finalization, leading to speculation that the shooting was a [desperate deflection](#) from political crises [or the "latest griff"](#).
- Analysts discuss the potential use of the [25th Amendment](#) due to the President's perceived "clinical illness" and "added level of delusion" in managing global affairs [and the war machine](#).

Gaza Flotilla 2.0 Interception

- The Israeli military intercepted a humanitarian flotilla of [more than 50 boats](#) in international waters near Cyprus, leading to the [abduction of volunteers](#), including Indonesian citizens [and journalists](#).
- National Security Minister Ben-Gvir faced criticism for [mocking the detainees](#) and supporting laws that provide the [death sentence](#) specifically for Palestinians [convicted of terror](#).
- Mass protests erupted in Jakarta demanding the release of the [nine Indonesian participants](#) from what they termed "Zionist occupying forces" [following allegations of abuse](#).

Allegations of Secret U.S. Biolabs in Ukraine

- The Russian Ministry of Defense released documents allegedly proving the existence of [secret US Army programs](#) in Ukraine handling dangerous pathogens [near local populations](#).
- Reports link these facilities to outbreaks of bird flu and [new strains of Coronavirus](#), drawing parallels to historical Japanese [Unit 731 experiments](#).
- Whistleblowers claim these labs were performing [clinical trials on unsuspecting citizens](#) under the guise of peaceful research [funded by the Pentagon's DTRA](#).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- Deployment of the **Oreshnik** missile system as a deterrent and retaliatory tool in the Ukraine theater [signaling a new level of danger](#).
- Discussion of the **Sarmat** ICBM as a "continent killing weapon" and the ultimate [threat against NATO nations](#) like the United Kingdom [if conflict escalates further](#).

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The shifting center of geopolitical gravity toward **Eurasian powers** (Russia, China, Iran) [signal a changing of the guard](#) away from US hegemony [toward a multipolar world](#).
- India's role as the **BRICS president** and its potential to act as a [civilizational peacemaker](#) in the West Asia conflict [despite US pressure](#).

Civil Unrest & Social Order

- Mass protests in **Belgrade** over government corruption and the 2024 railway station tragedy, resulting in [clashes with security forces](#).
- The **homelessness crisis** in California, where rents have reached [\\$3,500 for one-bedroom units](#) and 10 million people are [at risk of becoming unhoused](#).

Information Warfare & Disinformation

- Critique of **Western media "prostitutes"** for ignoring Ukrainian war crimes while [condemning Russian retaliation](#) as "barbaric" [to maintain a "good guy image" for Kiev](#).

- Allegations that **AI warfare companies** like Palantir are facilitating [deliberate targeting of civilian schools](#) to test red lines [in coordination with NATO](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of Unipolar Hegemony

- The narrative throughout the day emphasizes that the US has entered a "**piracy phase**" where it breaks international law and treaties because it can no longer [secure consensus through institutions](#).
- The rise of the BRICS nations is framed not just as an economic shift, but as a "**civilizational meeting of the minds**" that seeks to replace the US dollar system [with one based on mutual respect and cooperation](#).
- US military power is described as a "**spent force**" in the Persian Gulf, unable to prosecute wars [far from home without its now-abandoned bases](#).

The Weaponization of Morality

- A recurring theme is the "**double standard**" of Western nations that condemn Iranian or Russian actions while [ignoring the massacre of 175 children](#) in school strikes in **Minab** or [the 21 students in Lugansk](#).
- The Israeli government is portrayed as having a "**sixth century BC mentality**" that aligns with archaic plagues rather than modern [nuclear-age diplomacy](#).
- Societal decay in Europe is highlighted through the rise of "**medieval illnesses**" like syphilis and gonorrhea, which are linked to [a "race to the bottom" of morality](#).

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

United States: Institutional Decay and Political Violence

- Political violence is described as becoming **"routine,"** with the White House shooting being used as an argument for [increasing presidential protection](#) and building fortified structures [like new ballrooms](#).
- The **homelessness crisis** in Los Angeles reveals a breakdown in basic social order, with citizens reporting that ["criminals run this city"](#) and people are forced to [use heroin to cope](#) with life on the streets.
- Speculation regarding **President Trump's mental state** and "intellectual corruption" suggests a leadership incapable of navigating the complex [geopolitical "fourth turning"](#).

Serbia: Anti-Government Mobilization

- Belgrade has seen the [closure of bridges and suspension of rail traffic](#) due to student-led anti-government demonstrations [following the Novi Sad tragedy](#).
- Clashes between protesters and police, involving [stones and firecrackers](#), indicate a high level of social volatility [fueled by perceptions of systemic corruption](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The Hardening of the Eurasian Bloc

- Russia and China are increasingly **"pricing in"** US unpredictability, focusing on managing the chaos of the current administration rather than [seeking productive head-way](#).
- The relationship between **Putin and Xi** is described as a "sustained marriage" compared to the ["speed dating" nature of Western diplomacy](#) driven by four-year election cycles [and fundraising pressures](#).
- Iran has acquired **"major leverage"** over the global energy system through its control of the [Strait of Hormuz](#), which it is now managing jointly with Oman [under IRGC supervision](#).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The global economic outlook is dominated by the threat of a **"catastrophic collapse"** in energy supplies if the Iran-Israel-US conflict expands beyond regional boundaries. The disruption of shipping in the **Strait of Hormuz**—a narrow passage where [energy routes converge](#)—is already contributing to **rising oil prices** and supply chain pressures. Simultaneously, a trend toward **dedollarization** is accelerating, with BRICS nations developing mechanisms to trade without [Western oversight or the SWIFT system](#). Russia is highlighted as emerging as a [beneficiary of the conflict](#), maintaining the

highest GDP by PPP in Europe [despite extreme sanctions](#).

- **Energy Costs:** Potential for **global economic contraction** if Middle Eastern oil and gas fields, which are [not heavily protected by anti-missile defenses](#), are struck [by either side](#).
- **U.S. Debt:** The US is described as carrying [\\$40 trillion in debt](#), with its economy being "sucked dry" by deficit spending and [insider trading in futures markets](#).
- **Commodity Monopolies:** Five multinational companies, including **Bayer Monsanto and Cargill**, dominate the global soy market, often at the expense of [indigenous land rights in South America](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Leadership dynamics are characterized by internal purges and the "sidelining" of traditional allies in favor of unilateral maneuvers.

- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Reportedly [sidelined by the Trump administration](#) during peace negotiations with Iran, as he is perceived as a [hindrance to any potential deal](#).
- **Andriy Yermak:** The former "right-hand man" to Zelensky has been [arrested for endemic corruption](#) and was recently released on a [\\$3.1 million bail](#).
- **Kash Patel:** Mentioned as the **FBI Director** overseeing the investigation into the White House shooting [and internal security threats](#).
- **Imran Khan:** Remnants of his [2022 ouster in Pakistan](#) are discussed, with new evidence suggesting [US and EU complicity](#) due to his refusal to isolate Russia [over the Ukraine conflict](#).

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network adopts a heavily **anti-Western and pro-multipolarity** posture, prioritizing stories that highlight Western hypocrisy and military overreach. The **lead stories** are the Oreshnik missile strike and the Lugansk school tragedy, which are framed as a sequence of "justified retribution" against "terrorist" actions. The **White House shooting** is treated with skepticism, framed as a possible "distraction" from presidential failures. **Buried stories**—which the network notes are being ignored by the BBC and CNN—include the specifics of civilian suffering in the Donbas and the evidence of biolabs. **Conspicuous Omissions** include any critical analysis of the Russian casualties in Ukraine or the internal economic pressures within Russia and China, creating a hierarchy that elevates "Global South" solidarity and Western "moral decay."

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

Geopolitical analysis reveals a world polarized between a "civilizational" Eurasian core and a "delusional" Western periphery.

COUNTRIES

- **Russia:** Portrayed as a **principled and powerful** actor exercising its [legitimate right to self-defense](#) under the UN Charter. "Russia is not... Russia know what they are doing" [and controls the pace of events](#).
- **Ukraine:** Framed as a **chaotic puppet regime** resorting to "barbaric terrorist attacks" on children because it [cannot win on the battlefield](#).

- **Israel:** Portrayed as a **rogue, "homicidal" nation** that has committed "genocide in Gaza" and is now [playing God](#) by invoking biblical plagues against Iran [to trigger a war of whim](#).
- **China:** Characterized as a **confident and strategic** superpower that views the US as a [spent force](#) and is mapping a [future based on coexistence](#).

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as **impulsive, delusional, and potentially ill**. "He doesn't even know there's a break" on the [war machine](#), focusing on [performative photo-ops](#) and pageantry over concrete diplomacy.
- **Vladimir Putin:** Framed as a **strategic "grown-up"** who is forced to [humor the global superpower](#) during its decline while [stopping the world from blowing up](#).
- **Narendra Modi:** Portrayed as a **dignified leader** with the stature to [say no to American delusions](#) and lead the BRICS nations [as a core for global stability](#).

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Palantir:** Framed as a **nefarious AI warfare company** whose CEO, Alex Karp, is accused of [deliberately targeting children](#) to test military technology [and push red lines](#).
- **Banda Bassotti:** Described as a **celebrated anti-fascist music group** that has organized [caravans of solidarity](#) with the people of the Donbas [since 2014](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The transcripts describe a state of **"intellectual corruption"** where Western media outlets have moved toward a **"more intimate relationship with security services"** than ever before [due to the death of traditional advertising models](#). Journalists are portrayed as **"weary and scared"** of reporting the truth [for fear of losing their jobs](#), resulting in newsrooms that [skirt inconvenient subjects](#) that upset their "masters in the highelons." RT positions itself as the counter-narrative, using what it calls the **"Sanchez Effect"**—shining a light on truths that Washington and London [forbid from being told](#). This includes the active ["pedaling of one-sided narratives" regarding the Ukraine conflict to condition the minds of taxpayers](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The Ukraine war will shift toward **high-precision, non-nuclear strategic strikes** using the Oreshnik system, potentially forcing a "real negotiation" only [when Kiev's masters realize they cannot win](#).
- A successful BRICS transition toward an **independent clearing house** for funds will render [Western secondary sanctions obsolete](#), permanently altering global capital flows [away from the Petro-dollar](#).
- US domestic instability will likely reach a **constitutional crisis** involving the 25th Amendment [before the 2028 elections](#) as "everyday Joes and Janes" [wake up to the systemic failure](#).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect **heightened air warnings** in Kiev and potential strikes on "decision-making centers" [where military leadership is located](#). The Indonesian government will likely escalate [diplomatic pressure on Israel](#) regarding the flotilla participants [to avoid further domestic unrest](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The **opening of the Strait of Hormuz** may be formalized under a new Iran-Oman joint mechanism, creating a ["zone of control"](#) that enforces its own tariffs [independently of US maritime oversight](#).

Long Term (1-5 Years): [Africa and the "Global South" will move toward resource sovereignty, ending the exploitation of raw materials and](#)

[unified bargaining from a position of strength](#). The US **military-industrial complex** may face a downturn as allies like Israel [seek independence from US funding](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current geopolitical landscape presents five critical risks that could rapidly deteriorate into systemic crises.

- **Regional Energy Collapse:** Triggers include a direct strike on Middle Eastern oil refineries or a total closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Likelihood: **High** if Israel-Iran strikes continue. Impact: **Catastrophic** global economic contraction. Mitigations: BRICS intervention to [force a "grown-up" tea-and-talk resolution](#).

- **Kinetic to Nuclear Threshold Crossing:** Triggers include the use of the Sarmat ICBM in response to a NATO strike on Russian soil. Likelihood: **Moderate** but rising. Impact: **Existential** threat to European nations. Mitigations: Immediate [cessation of funding for Ukrainian "asymmetric" attacks](#).
- **Global Biosecurity Breach:** Triggers include the accidental or intentional release of pathogens from "secret" biolabs during military approach. Likelihood: **Low-to-Moderate**. Impact: **Pandemic-level** mortality and social shutdown. Mitigations: [International inspection and transfer](#) of research materials to neutral third parties.
- **U.S. Civil War or State Collapse:** Triggers include a MAGA "collapse" following an unsuccessful peace deal or [presidential incapacity](#). Likelihood: **High** based on internal polarization. Impact: **Profound** global anarchic vacuum. Mitigations: Institutional [invocations of the 25th Amendment](#) and enhanced domestic security.
- **Mass Unhoused Migration:** Triggers include a 12% rise in homelessness in California coupled with an [expansion of corporate landlord control](#). Likelihood: **High**. Impact: **Severe** social order breakdown in major Western hubs. Mitigations: [Expansion of rent control](#) and investment in public showers/infrastructure [like the "Shower of Hope"](#).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The broadcasts fail to provide **independent, third-party confirmation** of the death toll and victim demographics in the Lugansk school strike, relying solely on [Russian Ministry of Defense reports](#).

- There is no mention of **Russian military activity** or front-line movements that might have legitimately justified the presence of drones in the [vicinity of the dormitory](#).
- The "Oreshnik" missile's **actual technical specifications** and its effectiveness vs. just "kinetic energy" are unverified [beyond propaganda claims](#).
- The portrayal of **STDs in Europe** as a sign of the "antichrist" lacks any [epidemiological context](#) or comparison to global health trends [outside of ideological framing](#).
- The **status of the Iran deal** is entirely based on hearsay and "imaginary conversations" in the [President's own head](#).

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The Oreshnik as a Signal of Weakness

- Rather than a show of strength, the use of a "nuclear-capable" missile for a **purely kinetic strike** could be seen as a desperate attempt to bluff NATO into de-escalation because Russian [conventional stockpiles are actually depleted](#).

The "Managed" Chaos of Trump

- The White House shooting and the 25th Amendment talk could be a **coordinated psychological operation** by the "Deep State" to paralyze the administration's attempt to [close a peace deal](#) that would [damage the defense industry's profits](#).

Black Swan Event: The "Satan II" Miscalculation

- A "test" or deployment of the **Sarmat** missile that experiences a guidance failure, resulting in an [accidental hit on a NATO member](#), triggering an automatic Article 5 response [and total global war](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Neutral nations must establish **independent monitor zones** around "peaceful" biolabs to prevent pathogen weaponization [as documented in Ukraine](#).
- **Economic:** Central banks should **diversify reserves** immediately to hedge against a total Petrodollar collapse [driven by the Iran mechanism](#).
- **Diplomatic:** Adopt the "Grown-Up" model—facilitate high-level [BRICS-led summits](#) that bypass US leadership [to preserve the UN Charter](#).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chains:** Reroute all maritime logistics [away from the Strait of Hormuz](#) and anticipate [badly hit port facilities](#).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Prepare for [legal action against tech companies](#) found to be facilitating "terrorist" targeting [via AI warfare systems](#).
- **Safety Standards:** Investors in Western residential real estate must **price in the risk** of mass rent control [as social order continues to degrade](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity on this day is focused on the **emergency management** of conflicts and the **criminalization** of dissent or specific ethnic groups.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Israeli Terror Sentencing Law:** Provides the [death sentence](#) specifically for those convicted of terror, framed as being [applicable only to Palestinians](#).
- **California Rent Control Initiative:** An initiative to [expand rent control](#) in the state, currently being [opposed by the Apartment Association](#).
- **PL 410 (Brazil/Sao Paulo):** A law to assign [restituted lands to large landowners](#), triggering opposition from [movement for landless workers \(MST\)](#).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Russian MOD Briefing:** Announcement of [massive retaliatory strike](#) and successful destruction of [military industrial complex targets](#).
- **UN Human Rights Council (Upcoming):** Expectation of an [urgent session](#) called by Russia regarding the children [killed in Lugansk and Minab](#).

KEY STORIES

- **The Oreshnik Hypersonic Strike on Kiev:** Russia launched state-of-the-art missiles against Kiev in [retaliation for a school attack](#). Approximately [20 explosions](#) were reported [across several districts](#).

- **Lugansk School Dormitory Massacre:** [21 students killed](#) and 42 injured when [Ukrainian drones struck a dormitory](#) while they were sleeping. Survivors described a [horrific five-story collapse](#).
- **White House Shooting Incident:** Secret Service killed a gunman [near the White House](#). Analysts question if it was a [diversion from the Iran deal](#).
- **Gaza Flotilla Interception:** The IDF seized a [50-boat humanitarian fleet](#) near Cyprus. Volunteers from [multiple countries were detained](#), prompting [international condemnation](#).
- **US Biolabs in Ukraine Exposure:** Documents released by the Russian MOD claim to show [secret USArmy programs](#) managing pathogens [including COVID-19 strains](#).
- **Belgrade Riots:** Mass protests and [clashes with police](#) over corruption and a [railway station collapse](#) that killed 16 people.
- **California Homelessness Crisis:** Analysis of [10 million at-risk citizens](#) in California as [rents hit record highs](#) and infrastructure fails.
- **The Republic of Soy:** Indigenous displacement in [Paraguay and Brazil](#) as five multinationals [monopolize productive land](#).
- **BRICS Civilizational Shift:** India and the "Global South" [searching for a new world order](#) based on cooperation rather than [US dominance](#).
- **Operation Condor Archives:** Discovery of [tonnes of documents](#) in Paraguay proving [systematic disappearance and torture](#) by US-backed regimes.
- **Tiangong Space Station Mission:** China successfully launched its [Shenzhou 23 spacecraft](#) with the first [Hong Kong astronaut](#) aboard.

- **European Moral Decay:** Commentary on [record STD levels](#) and the "blue-haired brigade" at [Eurovision and Cannes](#) as signs of societal collapse.
- **Strait of Hormuz Joint Management:** Iran and Oman discussing a [shared economic arrangement](#) and tariffs for [maritime traffic](#).

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.

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