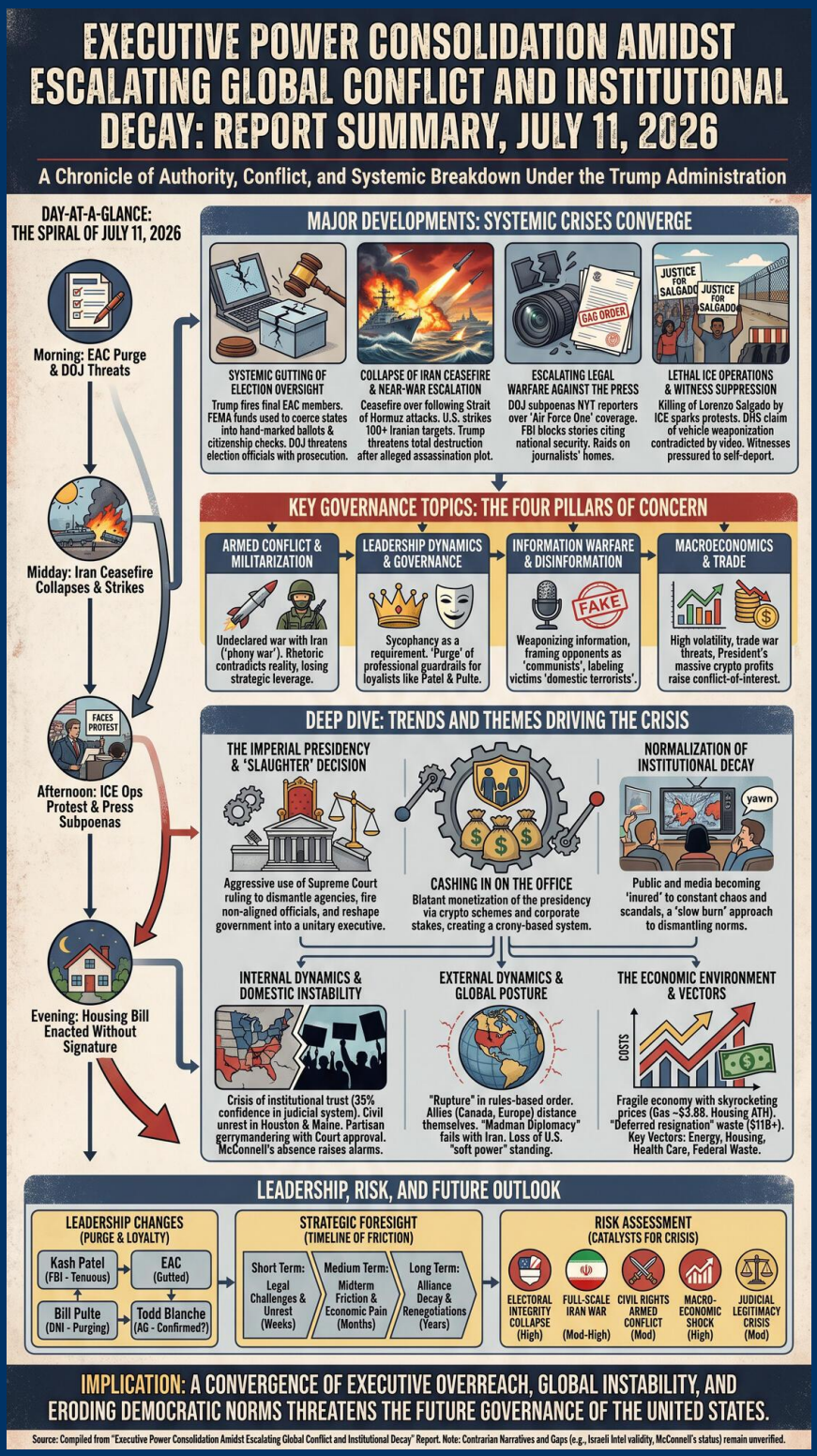
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

MSNOW

JULY 11, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

MSNOW

JULY 11, 2026

EXECUTIVE POWER CONSOLIDATION AMIDST ESCALATING GLOBAL CONFLICT AND INSTITUTIONAL DECAY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

July 11, 2026, was defined by a calculated consolidation of executive authority by the Trump administration, occurring against a backdrop of renewed kinetic conflict with Iran and deepening domestic polarization. The administration's move to purge the remaining members of the bipartisan Election Assistance Commission (EAC) represents a significant escalation in efforts to reshape the electoral landscape ahead of the midterms. This institutional gutting coincided with the Department of Justice (DOJ) issuing subpoenas to journalists and threatening election officials with criminal prosecution, signaling a "whole-of-government" approach to suppressing dissent and controlling electoral outcomes.

On the international stage, the "ceasefire" with Iran has functionally collapsed, with the U.S. and Iran trading retaliatory strikes and the President issuing veiled threats of total destruction in response to alleged assassination plots. Domestically, the administration's focus on "vanity projects" and symbolic victories has clashed with a pervasive affordability crisis, exemplified by the President's refusal to sign a bipartisan housing bill while simultaneously touting gimmicky gas price reductions at select private fuel stations. The convergence of these events suggests an administration prioritized on personal loyalty and narrative control over traditional governance and crisis management.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Systemic Gutting of Election Oversight

- President Trump fired the final three members of the Election Assistance Commission, an agency responsible for certifying voting systems and maintaining registration forms.
- The administration is threatening to withhold FEMA anti-terrorism funds from states that do not transition to hand-marked paper ballots and implement strict citizenship verification.
- The DOJ sent a directive to all 50 states threatening criminal prosecution of election officials if non-citizens are found on voter rolls.

Collapse of Iran Ceasefire and Escalation to Near-War

- President Trump declared the ceasefire over following Iranian attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.
- The administration claims to have received intelligence from Israel regarding an Iranian plot to assassinate the President.

- U.S. forces conducted strikes against over 100 Iranian targets, including air defenses and drone storage, while Trump boasted of "1,000 missiles locked and loaded."

Escalating Legal Warfare Against the Press

- The Trump DOJ issued subpoenas to four New York Times reporters concerning their coverage of the President's use of a "gifted" used aircraft from Qatar as Air Force One.
- The FBI attempted to block the publication of stories citing national security concerns, though officials declined to specify the nature of the threat.
- This follows reported raids on journalists' homes, including a Washington Post reporter involved in investigating government efficiency efforts.

Lethal ICE Operations and Witness Suppression

- The killing of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo by ICE agents in Houston has sparked massive protests and allegations of a cover-up.
- DHS initially claimed Salgado "weaponized his vehicle," but surveillance video and witness testimony suggest the vehicle did not ram agents and was shot from the side.
- Witnesses to the shooting are currently in ICE detention and are reportedly being pressured to sign self-deportation papers.

Bipartisan Housing Bill Becomes Law Without Signature

- The "21st Century Road to Housing Act" officially became law at midnight despite President Trump's refusal to sign it.
- Trump held the bill hostage in a "protest" over the Senate's failure to pass the "SAVE America Act," a controversial voter restriction measure.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization The U.S. is currently in a state of undeclared war with Iran, characterized by "periodic spasms of violence" resembling a "phony war" rather than a stable peace. Military analysts warn that U.S. leadership is losing strategic leverage because the President’s rhetoric often contradicts the ground reality of Iranian capabilities.

Leadership Dynamics & Governance The administration is increasingly defined by "sycophancy" as a primary requirement for office. FBI Director Kash Patel's survival despite multiple scandals is attributed to his willingness to act on Trump's priority of "relitigating the 2020 election." Simultaneously, the "purge" of non-critical intelligence personnel by Bill Pulte suggests a broader effort to remove professional "guardrails."

Information Warfare & Disinformation The administration is actively weaponizing information by distorting the definition of "communism" to frame domestic opponents while simultaneously engaging in state-led market interventions. Furthermore, the labeling of shooting victims as "domestic terrorists" without evidence is cited as a recurring tactic to justify lethal force.

Macroeconomics & Trade The economy is experiencing high volatility, with sporadic trade war announcements (such as threats against Spain) and tariffs driving up costs. Financial disclosures reveal the President cleared over $2.2 billion in his first year back

in office, primarily through cryptocurrency ventures and Trump Media, raising significant conflict-of-interest concerns.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Imperial Presidency and the "Slaughter" Decision The administration is aggressively utilizing the Supreme Court's "Slaughter" decision to dismantle independent federal agencies. By interpreting this as unfettered power to fire any official not "totally aligned" with the President, the administration is removing the "referees" of democracy. This is not just personnel management; it is a structural redesign of the U.S. government into a unitary executive model where oversight is viewed as obstruction.

Cashing in on the Office A recurring theme is the blatant monetization of the presidency. From selling crypto "meme coins" to taking direct stakes in semiconductor firms, the Trump family is accused of operating a "graft" system. Analysis shows that while investors lost $2.3 billion in Trump-linked crypto ventures, the family pocketed hundreds of millions in fees and value. This "state corporatism" represents a shift away from traditional free-market capitalism toward a crony-based system.

Normalization of Institutional Decay The transcripts suggest a public and media environment becoming "inured" to chaos. The "casually back to war" and "casually back to firing officials" cycle serves to desensitize the electorate. Strategic analysts argue this is a "slow burn" approach to dismantling norms where the sheer volume of scandals makes any single event impossible to track or hold accountable.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The United States is facing a "crisis of masculinity" and institutional trust, with only 35% of Americans expressing confidence in the judicial system. Partisan polarization has reached a point where partisan actors can openly redraw gerrymandered lines with Supreme Court approval. Institutional decay is further evidenced by the "radio silence" from the office of Senator Mitch McConnell following a month-long absence, prompting his own state's governor to demand proof of his health.

Civil unrest is bubbling in communities like Houston and Maine. In Houston, the killing of Salgado has unified Black and Latino organizations in a demand for justice that they feel can no longer be found within the federal system. In Maine, the implosion of the Graham campaign has left progressive voters feeling "homeless" and "gaslit," creating a vacuum that the Democratic establishment is scrambling to fill via a truncated convention process.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The global operating environment is characterized by a "rupture" in the rules-based international order. Traditional allies like Canada and European nations are locking their doors to American influence, viewing the U.S. as a volatile actor. The NATO summit in Turkey was overshadowed by Trump's trade threats and his obsession with "conquering Greenland."

The administration's "Madman Diplomacy" with Iran has failed to yield a deal, as Iranian hardliners have successfully exploited vague

clauses in the U.S.-led Memorandum of Understanding. Consequently, the U.S. has lost its "soft power" advantage, with the President's intervention in international sports (the FIFA World Cup debacle) being cited as a prime example of the "anti-Midas touch" damaging America's global standing.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The national economic state is increasingly fragile, with natural gas prices rising to $3.88 a gallon and food prices skyrocketing. Market sentiment is characterized by extreme uncertainty, as businesses struggle with unpredictable "border taxes" and tariff oscillations. A major emerging vector is the "deferred resignation program," which has paid federal employees at least $11 billion not to work, leading to critical staffing shortages at the IRS and VA hospitals.

Key Economic Vectors:

- **Energy:** Gas prices are up over $0.70 from last year due to the Iran conflict.
- **Housing:** Home prices have hit an all-time high, with only 4 in 10 households able to afford a starter home.
- **Health Care:** ACA premiums are expected to rise by a median of 14% next year, forcing 3 million people to drop coverage.
- **Federal Waste:** Inept management of downsizing efforts has cost $11-$15 billion in payments to idle workers.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Personnel changes are dictated by loyalty tests and the ongoing "purge" of the professional civil service.

- **Kash Patel (FBI Director):** Tenuous. Despite being summoned to the White House for disciplinary reasons, he remains in power because he is a key "sycophant" and a clear successor is not currently in place.
- **Election Assistance Commission (EAC):** Gutted. The President fired the remaining bipartisan members, leaving the agency unable to perform its statutory duties.
- **Bill Pulte (Acting DNI):** Conducting a "third round" of purges within the intelligence community to remove perceived "leakers."
- **Todd Blanche (Acting AG):** Facing confirmation hearings; accused of violating the Epstein Disclosure Act but likely to be confirmed due to strong GOP support.
- **Graham (Maine Senate Nominee):** Resigned. Officially withdrew his candidacy following sexual assault allegations, throwing the Maine race into chaos.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network maintains a posture of high-alert, framing the Trump administration as a "gravest threat to the future of democracy." The lead stories emphasized the gutting of election infrastructure and the weaponization of the DOJ against the press. The tone is largely one of alarm, focusing on the erosion of institutional guardrails. Buried stories include the specifics of international diplomacy in the Middle East beyond the

immediate kinetic conflict. A conspicuous omission is a detailed counter-perspective from the administration beyond official spokesperson denials, and any report on the actual status of Iranian nuclear fuel that Trump claims is "nothing but dust."

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext of the day's reporting frames the international arena as a series of personal transactions for the President rather than a theatre of national interest.

COUNTRIES

- **Iran:** Portrayed as an aggressor but also as a rational actor exploiting U.S. diplomatic incompetence. Trump's framing alternates between "nice people" and "scum."
- **Israel:** Framed as a strategic manipulator, providing intelligence to "buck up" Trump and draw the U.S. deeper into the Iran conflict.
- **Qatar:** Portrayed as a source of corrupting influence, providing aircraft and massive investments to the Trump family while mediating the war.

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as a **distracted autocrat** obsessed with gold-plating and vanity projects while governance fails. "He would rather cheat than win."
- **J.D. Vance:** Portrayed as **entitled** and disconnected, bragging about tax-funded chefs while eyeing multi-million dollar mansions far from his "Hillbilly Elegy" roots.
- **Zoran Mamdani:** Framed as a **competent alternative**, with even business leaders noting his success in managing New York's economy.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The administration is practicing "narrative seeding" by using Truth Social to preemptively delegitimize midterm results. The meta-narrative is that of a "rigged" system, justifying the removal of election oversight. Psychological operations are being conducted via ICE monitors and monitors in blue states, intended to "season" the country to a federal presence at the polls. The likely ground truth is that the administration is preparing for potential losses by creating the legal and rhetorical framework to contest outcomes regardless of evidence.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The housing bill becoming law without Trump's signature will be weaponized by Democrats to paint the administration as indifferent to the material needs of the middle class.
- The DOJ subpoenas against the NYT will likely lead to a First Amendment showdown in the Supreme Court, testing the limits of the "Slaughter" decision's executive protections.
- The Maine Senate race, once a "low-hanging fruit" for Democrats, will become a bellwether for party unity following the Graham scandal.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Immediate legal challenges from Secretaries of State over the EAC firing. Expect potential social unrest in Houston if Salgado investigation results are withheld by federal authorities. **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The midterms will be a high-friction event, with federal "monitors" potentially leading to conflicts with local law enforcement. Economic pain from gas prices will likely peak in September. **Long Term (1-5 Years):** Structural decay of U.S. alliances will force renegotiations of global security treaties, as the U.S. is increasingly viewed as an unreliable partner.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current trajectory suggests high-intensity risks in both domestic stability and international security.

- **Electoral Integrity Collapse:** Triggered by the gutting of the EAC and DOJ intimidation of officials. Likelihood: **High**. Impact: Catastrophic domestic crisis. Mitigation: Legal intervention by Secretaries of State.
- **Full-Scale War with Iran:** Triggered by Iranian retaliation for U.S. bridge strikes or further Strait of Hormuz closures. Likelihood: **Moderate-High**. Impact: Global economic depression. Mitigation: Qatari-led mediation.
- **Civil Rights Armed Conflict:** Triggered by ICE deployments to polling places or protests in Houston. Likelihood: **Moderate**. Impact: Widespread social unrest. Mitigation: Independent local investigations.
- **Macroeconomic Shock:** Triggered by unpredictable trade shutdowns (e.g., Spain) and gas price spikes. Likelihood: **High**. Impact: Loss of market confidence. Mitigation: Housing Bill implementation.
- **Judicial Legitimacy Crisis:** Triggered by continued executive defiance of lower court rulings on immigration and transparency. Likelihood: **Moderate**. Impact: Breakdown of rule of law. Mitigation: "Justice in Motion" bus tour engagement with voters.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The transcript fails to verify the validity of the Israeli intel regarding the assassination plot, which serves as a major driver for war escalation.
- There is a lack of information on Iranian public sentiment following the death of the previous Ayatollah and how this constrains the new leader’s options.
- The actual status of the SAVE America Act’s support within the GOP Senate caucus is vaguely defined as "unpopular" but lacking hard counts.
- The precise location of Senator Mitch McConnell remains a significant information vacuum.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Madman" strategy with Iran may be an intentional "over-correction" to create a chaotic environment that makes a "deal" seem more palatable to a war-weary public, even if it is a weak deal. Alternatively, the "purge" of election officials may not be to rig the vote, but to trigger a massive legal backlog that prevents certification of any losses, effectively stalling a transition of power. **Black Swan:** A

Strait of Hormuz kinetic event involving a major global insurer pulling all coverage, leading to an immediate worldwide halt in sea-bound oil trade.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Security: Shift emphasis from federal to local law enforcement for election protection.
- Economic: Monitor the Trump Media/ Crypto ventures for potential foreign state-linked money laundering.
- Diplomatic: Establish sub-national diplomatic channels between Secretaries of State and allied governments.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Supply Chain: Hedge against a long-term closure of the Strait of Hormuz; current gas prices are likely a baseline, not a peak.
- Regulatory: Prepare for aggressive DOJ civil division action against corporations perceived as "politically activist."
- Capital: Direct investment toward private sector solutions for housing and energy as federal programs face waste and mismanagement.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The day was defined by the transition of a major housing package into law against executive resistance, while a federal "SAVE" act served as a primary rhetorical weapon for the President.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **21st Century Road to Housing Act:** A bipartisan bill passed by the House and Senate aimed at increasing housing supply and outlawing private equity buyers. Became law at 12:01 AM without Trump's signature.
- **SAVE America Act:** A voter restriction bill requiring proof of citizenship (passports/ birth certificates) to vote. Lacks sufficient support to pass the Senate.
- **Uterine Fibroid Intervention and Gynecological Health Treatment Act:** A bill to expand early screening and research funding for women's health.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Todd Blanche Confirmation Preview:** Analysis of upcoming hearings where Blanche faces criticism for legal violations but strong partisan support.
- **Houston Justice Press Conference:** Representative Sylvia Garcia and LULAC demanding an independent investigation into the Salgado shooting.

KEY STORIES

- **Iran War Escalation:** The U.S. struck 100+ Iranian targets near the Strait of Hormuz following ship attacks; Trump issued a genocide-level threat if assassinated.
- **EAC Purge:** Trump fired all remaining bipartisan EAC commissioners, leaving federal election certification in a vacuum.
- **Salgado Shooting Cover-Up:** Witness testimony from ICE detention contradicts the DHS account of the fatal shooting of a 35-year resident in Houston.

- **Housing Bill Midnight Enactment:** The Road to Housing Act became law without a presidential signature, marked by an empty signing desk at the Capitol.
- **NYT Subpoenas:** The DOJ issued subpoenas to four reporters investigating Trump's used aircraft "Air Force One."
- **Trump Family Profits:** Steve Rattner reports Trump Media and crypto deals increased the President's net worth to $6.5 billion while in office.
- **Kash Patel Friday Night Recall:** The FBI Director was forced to cancel a personal trip and return to the White House under apparent threat of firing.
- **McConnell Missing:** Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear demanded a health update as Senator McConnell remains unseen for weeks.
- **Voter ID Threats:** DOJ and FEMA threaten to withhold anti-terrorism funds from states that do not implement Trump's voter registration demands.
- **Maine Senate Scramble:** Maine Democrats announced a convention on July 25th to replace Graham following his withdrawal.
- **Ken Paxton Voter Fraud Allegations:** Investigation links the Texas AG to voting from a Denton County home while registered at a separate address.
- **Justice in Motion Tour:** 30 retired federal judges toured the Midwest in robes to advocate for an independent judiciary.
- **DOGE Inefficiency Report:** Public Citizen finds the administration paid $11 billion in salary to federal workers forbidden from working.
- **Uterine Fibroid Awareness:** Lupita Nyong'O discussed her struggle with fibroids to support new health legislation.
- **Freedom Fuel Gas Gimmick:** White House promotes a 25-station chain selling gas at $3.47 despite national averages hitting $3.88.
- **Patrick Dempsey Rejection:** The actor declined to run for the Maine Senate seat, leaving a vacuum of recognizable figures.

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. To learn more or subscribe to our free daily newsletters, visit https://blog.gdeltproject.org/announcing-our-new-daily-todays-trends-on-capitol-hill-todays-media-trends-newsletter-briefings/. 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.