

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

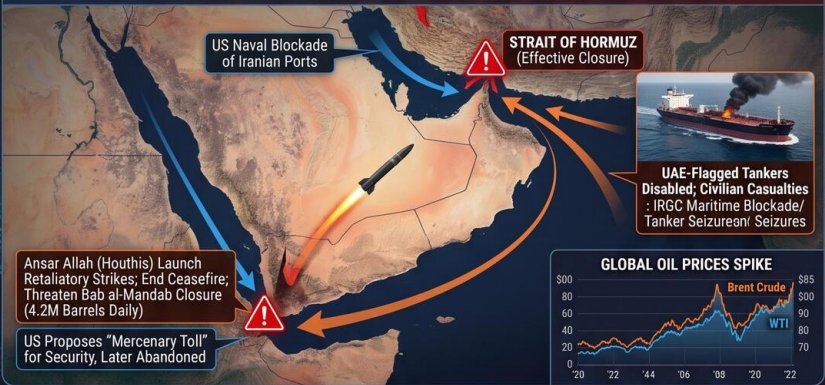
JULY 14, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

SIMULTANEOUS GLOBAL KINETIC ESCALATIONS: PERSIAN GULF & EASTERN EUROPE THREATEN ENERGY SECURITY & WESTERN DIPLOMACY

July 14, 2026: A critical inflection point in global security, marking a systemic breakdown of established international order and the rise of a unilateral force-based paradigm.

WAR OF THE STRAITS: GULF MARITIME CRISIS & ECONOMIC FALLOUT



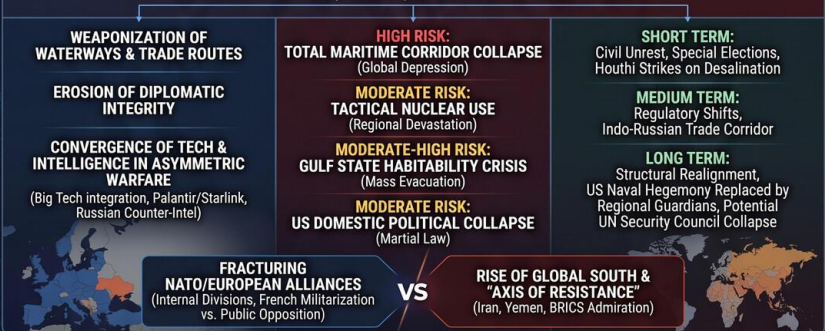
LONG-RANGE STRIKE WAR: EASTERN EUROPE ESCALATION & US INSTABILITY



GLOBAL ECONOMIC WARFARE & DIPLOMATIC EROSION



FUTURE TRENDS, RISKS, & GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS



REPORT CONCLUSION: The world is fractured into a struggle between a declining Western hegemony and a principled Eurasian/Middle Eastern coalition. Established norms are vanishing, replaced by a volatile "war economy" and the stark reality of force.

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

RT

JULY 14, 2026

SIMULTANEOUS KINETIC
ESCALATIONS IN THE PERSIAN
GULF AND EASTERN EUROPE
THREATEN GLOBAL ENERGY
SECURITY AND SIGNAL A SYSTEMIC
BREAKDOWN OF WESTERN
DIPLOMATIC HEGEMONY.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

July 14, 2026, marks a critical inflection point in global security as the "war of the straits" intensifies, threatening to collapse international energy markets. The confrontation between the United States and Iran has moved beyond rhetorical threats to a sustained maritime blockade and active kinetic exchanges in the Strait of Hormuz. US Central Command has resumed a blockade of [Iranian ports](#), while the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has disabled UAE-flagged tankers, resulting in civilian [Indian casualties](#). This maritime crisis is compounded by the Ansar Allah (Houthi) movement's termination of a four-year ceasefire, launching retaliatory ballistic missile strikes against [Saudi Arabian airfields](#) and threatening to close the Bab al-Mandab strait, which would effectively sever

the primary global artery for petroleum and hydrocarbons.

In Eastern Europe, the conflict has expanded into a "long-range strike war of attrition." The Russian FSB claims to have thwarted a massive [Ukrainian drone plot](#) targeting strategic military sites in the Moscow region using foreign nationals as agents. Simultaneously, the death of US Senator Lindsey Graham—a primary architect of American interventionist policy—has triggered significant domestic political instability in the US, evidenced by the controversial appointment of his [sister to his seat](#) and a widening rift within the Republican party over "forever wars." These events converge to portray a world where established international laws, particularly freedom of navigation, are being replaced by a "rules-based order" that is increasingly defined by the ability to project unilateral force.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Strait of Hormuz Blockade and Economic Fallout

- The Strait of Hormuz is effectively closed to non-approved traffic as Iran and the US enforce competing [naval blockades](#).
- Global oil prices have spiked, with Brent crude trading above [\\$85 per barrel](#) and WTI near \$80.
- The Trump administration briefly proposed a [20% fee](#) on all cargo transiting the strait, which was later walked back in favor of [trade and investment](#) deals with Gulf states.
- At least 30 ships remain anchored at [Bandar Abbas](#) due to the closure.

Houthi Escalation and the Bab al-Mandab Threat

- Ansar Allah officially ended its informal ceasefire, citing Saudi aggression against [Sana'a International Airport](#).
- Retaliatory strikes were launched against [King Faizal Airbase](#) in Saudi Arabia using drones and ballistic missiles.
- Houthis have warned they may close the [Bab al-Mandab](#) strait, which carries approximately 4.2 million barrels of crude oil daily.

Foiled Drone Terror Plot in Moscow Region

- The Russian FSB intercepted 35 FPV drones armed with [C4 explosives](#) intended for a leading military enterprise.
- The plot involved a complex logistics chain through Slovakia, Poland, and Belarus, utilizing agents recruited via [Telegram](#).
- A high-profile Ukrainian-American media personality, "[Keef Stoner](#)," is identified as an organizer and SBU asset.

Death of Senator Lindsey Graham and Political Transition

- Senator Lindsey Graham died of an [aortic dissection](#) following a trip to Ukraine.
- Darlene Graham, the late senator's sister, was appointed as interim senator for [South Carolina](#), sparking accusations of nepotism and a lack of meritocracy.
- Internal GOP critics, such as Mark Lynch, are mobilizing to challenge the "war machine" legacy in upcoming [special elections](#).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The US-Iran conflict has transitioned to "Round Three" of tit-for-tat strikes, with the US targeting [Bushehr and Jask](#).
- Iran has retaliated by targeting US military facilities in [Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan](#).
- French militarization continues with Ukrainian troops participating in the [Bastille Day parade](#) for the first time.

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The Trump administration's abandonment of the [JCPOA and Minsk Agreements](#) is cited as evidence of US "diplomatic incompetence."
- A potential "Memorandum of Understanding" signed in [Versailles](#) is reportedly failing due to mutual distrust and cheating allegations.
- Bulgaria is emerging as a "home of the resistance" within the EU, refusing to abandon [Russian cultural and energy ties](#).

Macroeconomics & Trade

- India is facing a new "air pocket" crisis similar to 1991, driven by [energy vulnerability](#) and regional conflict.
- Russian-Indian trade targets have been set at [\\$100 billion by 2030](#).
- The 21st EU sanctions package against Russia is portrayed as [failing](#) due to internal member state opposition.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Waterways and Trade Routes

A definitive shift is occurring where strategic waterways (Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab) are no longer managed through international law but are being treated as ["nuclear weapons"](#) of economic warfare. The US attempt to monetize maritime security through tolls suggests a move toward a mercenary-style foreign policy, while Iran and its allies are demonstrating that [asymmetric control](#) of narrow straits provides a decisive check on traditional naval power.

The Erosion of Diplomatic Integrity

There is a recurring theme of "diplomatic cheating" and the irrelevance of signed agreements. Analysts argue that the US and its allies utilize [ceasefires \(like the 60-day MOU\)](#) solely to rearm rather than to seek peace. This has led to a situation where adversaries no longer view negotiation as a viable path, choosing instead to escalate toward a [kinetic "L"](#) (loss) for their opponents rather than compromise.

The Convergence of Tech and Intelligence in Asymmetric Warfare

The integration of "Big Tech" into the military-industrial complex is accelerating. Reports indicate that companies like [Palantir and Starlink](#) are actively directing drone strikes on Russian logistics. This is being countered by Russia through intensive [counter-intelligence operations](#) targeting the supply chains of these "tech weapons," such as ceramic tiles used to hide drone components.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

United States: Institutional Polarization

The US is facing significant internal strain. The death of Senator Graham has exposed a

power vacuum in the "warhawk" wing of the GOP, leading to the appointment of his sister, [Darlene Graham](#), which many see as a retreat from merit-based governance. Domestic frustration over [gas prices](#) and inflation is reaching a breaking point, with citizens reportedly choosing between fuel and food, while the administration is accused of prioritizing [war-profiteering](#) for the "venture capitalist" class.

Ukraine: Cabinet Collapse and Mobilization Crisis

The Zelensky government is undergoing a "musical chairs" reshuffle to maintain power under Martial Law. The resignation of the [Prime Minister and entire cabinet](#) signals a deep crisis of legitimacy. Public anger over [violent "press-ganging"](#) (conscription) is rising, while the leadership is accused of abandoning the front lines to wage a symbolic "drone war" to appease [Western curators](#).

Iran: National Unity Through Mourning

In contrast to Western descriptions of a "rogue state," the broadcast highlights a surge in Iranian national resolve following the funeral of the [Supreme Leader](#), which saw an estimated 12 to 50 million mourners. This event is framed as a [referendum](#) of support for the government against foreign-led regime change plots, including an alleged Mossad operation involving former President [Ahmadinejad](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The Fracturing of NATO and European Alliances

The "Pax Americana" is portrayed as being in terminal decline. Internal divisions within

Europe are sharpening, with nations like [the Netherlands, Italy, and Bulgaria](#) "rocking the boat" over continued escalation. The French government is depicted as being [out of sync](#) with its own population, who largely oppose weapon shipments to Ukraine, while its leadership pushes for a "[European World War](#)" to assume continental leadership.

The Rise of the Global South and the "Axis of Resistance"

A new geopolitical bloc is solidifying around Iran and Yemen, framed as the "[Axis of Resistance](#)." These actors are positioning themselves as defenders of Palestinian rights and opponents of "[American-Zionist](#)" aggression. This bloc is increasingly admired by "BRICS" nations for its ability to challenge the [US military](#) geopolitically and kinetically.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The global economic state is highly volatile, transitioning from a post-COVID recovery to a "war economy" footprint. Geopolitical risk is being aggressively priced into commodities, specifically energy and fertilizers. Supply chain routes are becoming militarized tolls zones, fundamentally altering the cost of global trade.

- **Energy Prices:** Brent crude is over [\\$85/barrel](#); oil stores are running [short globally](#).
- **Supply Chain Choke Points:** Strait of Hormuz closure impacts [15% of world cargo](#); potential Bab al-Mandab closure would affect an additional 15%.
- **Defense Spending:** Narrative focus on a [\\$2.3 trillion](#) "war machine" budget in the US.

- **Sanctions Impact:** European sanctions on Russia are mocked for targeting [minor organizations](#) and cultural symbols like poets and borsch.
- **Indian Economic Indicators:** Transitioning from "Infrastructure Deficit" to a "Trust Deficit" between government and the [private sector](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Strategic leadership shifts indicate a hardening of positions across all major theaters, with moderate voices being marginalized in favor of ideologues or family loyalists.

- **Darlene Graham:** Appointed as [interim US Senator](#); seen as a potential "rubber stamp" for Trump administration policies.
- **Ukrainian Cabinet:** Prime Minister [Julius Veridenko](#) and entire cabinet resigned; interpreted as a loss of institutional stability.
- **Rumen Radev:** Emerges as the new "[pro-Russian](#)" voice in the EU, replacing the role previously held by Viktor Orban.
- **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad:** Reported under [house arrest](#) in Iran following a suspected plot with foreign intelligence.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network maintains a staunchly anti-Western, nationalistic posture. The **Lead Stories** focus on US/Israeli military failures, Russian counter-intelligence successes, and the "heroic" resistance of the Iranian people. High prominence is given to [detailed reports](#) of foiled Ukrainian plots, framing the Kiev regime as "terrorist." **Buried Stories** include

any independent verification of Iranian casualties or internal dissent within Russia. The tone is **fear-inducing** regarding the global economy but **reassuring** regarding Russian and Iranian military capabilities.

Conspicuous Omissions: There is no coverage of Russian civilian casualties from frontline combat, nor is there any mention of the domestic economic strain within Russia or Iran due to the ongoing wars. The "20 million a week" [Russian casualty statistic](#) is dismissed without providing verified alternative data.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The world is framed as a struggle between an overreaching, corrupt Western hegemony and a principled, defensive coalition of Eurasian and Middle Eastern powers.

COUNTRIES

- **Iran:** Portrayed as a heroic, resilient society under "sacred defense." Quote: "Iran is seen as almost a [heroic country](#)... they've taken on the biggest, baddest military in the world."
- **United States:** Framed as a declining, chaotic "mafia" state. Quote: "We have a [mafia also in office](#) making policy on the flag."
- **Ukraine:** Depicted as a desperate, failed state governed by "neonazis and banderists." Quote: "The regime of Zelinski is much more [terrorists, neonazis](#)."
- **Bulgaria:** Emerging as a rational, principled actor within a "dysfunctional" EU ([Bulgaria is the new home of Resistance](#)).

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Framed as an egotistical "master of making money" who lacks military understanding. Quote: "Egotistical [megalomaniacal president](#)... thinks of himself as master of making money."
- **Vladimir Putin:** Portrayed as a wise, patient strategist waiting for the Europeans to [surrender and accept terms](#)."
- **Emmanuel Macron:** Depicted as an out-of-touch leader pursuing a [specific agenda](#)" to fuel a world war.

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Ansar Allah (Houthis):** Framed as a legitimate military force possessing "nuclear weapons" (strategic straits) ([Yemen has this nuclear weapon being the Babap straight](#)).
- **Big Tech (Starlink/Palantir):** Described as the [director of this grand orchestra](#)" of Western warfare.
- **IRGC:** Depicted as a [disciplined guardian](#) of regional security, despite Gulf state complaints of missile attacks.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The meta-narrative for July 14th is the proliferation of "False Flag" operations. RT analysts openly suggest that attacks in the Gulf were conducted by [Israeli intelligence](#) disguised as Iranian strikes to draw the US into war. There is significant "narrative seeding" regarding the [death of Lindsey Graham](#), with guest speakers calling it "divine intervention" and "cosmic justice." Ground truth is obscured by the network's reliance on "unverified footage" from social media ([This unverified footage... is said to show missiles](#))

and the framing of all Western reporting as "embarrassing propaganda."

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The Strait of Hormuz will remain [effectively closed](#) for the next 30-60 days, causing a global energy recession worse than 2008.
- Iran will leverage its missile superiority (60-70% [remaining arsenal](#)) to force a permanent withdrawal of US bases from Bahrain and Kuwait.
- The Ukraine conflict will pivot to a "long-range strike" war, with Russia [deciding which NATO member states](#) are legitimate targets due to being "co-belligerents."

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

Expect increased civil unrest in European capitals as fuel prices double. The [August 11th special election](#) primary in South Carolina will serve as a proxy battle for the future of US foreign policy. High likelihood of Houthi strikes on [desalination plants](#) in the Gulf, triggering a humanitarian crisis.

Medium Term (1-6 Months)

Regulatory shifts in the EU as a "Bulgaria-led" bloc potentially [vetoes further sanctions](#). Formalization of a new [Indo-Russian trade corridor](#) to bypass Western blockades.

Long Term (1-5 Years)

Structural realignment where US naval hegemony is permanently replaced by regional "strait guardians." Potential collapse of the [UN Security Council](#) as current

members are seen as no longer representing 21st-century realities.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current risk profile is dominated by the potential for a "Black Swan" event in the maritime corridors, which would have immediate, cascading effects on the global supply chain.

- **Total Maritime Corridor Collapse:** Simultaneous closure of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab. Triggers: Houthi implementation of Al-Mandab blockade ([early reports have indicated... it is in play](#)). Likelihood: High. Impact: Global depression, worse than 2008. Mitigations: Immediate diplomatic concessions by the US on naval blockades.
- **Tactical Nuclear Use:** Escalation of deep strikes within Russia. Triggers: Ukrainian strikes on Russian [oil refineries](#) using Western intel. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Unprecedented regional devastation. Mitigations: NATO cessation of "long-range strike war" support.
- **Gulf State Habitability Crisis:** Destruction of power and water infrastructure. Triggers: Iranian strikes on [desalination plants](#) in Dubai or Qatar. Likelihood: Moderate-High. Impact: Mass evacuation of millions from the Arabian Peninsula. Mitigations: Removal of US offensive bases from Gulf countries.
- **US Domestic Political Collapse:** Insurrection or assassination following the Graham succession. Triggers: [Assassination attempts](#) on Trump or key GOP figures. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: US military withdrawal into domestic martial law. Mitigations: Adherence to meritocratic appointment processes.

- **Global Famine:** Fertilizer supply chain disruption. Triggers: Closure of straits impacting [petrochemical and fertilizer](#) exports. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Widespread social unrest in the Global South. Mitigations: Creation of "humanitarian corridors" through the Persian Gulf.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The broadcast fails to provide any [independent confirmation](#) of the 288 Ukrainian UAVs intercepted; these numbers may be inflated to show competence.
- The casualty count in the Strait of Hormuz is inconsistent, with different reports citing [one](#) versus [eight](#) sailors wounded or killed.
- There is a total lack of perspective from the [Yemeni \(Saudi-backed\) government](#), which is framed as a "puppet" without agency.
- The status of the [Iranian Murshid](#) (Supreme Leader) remains speculative; RT dismisses rumors of a vacuum while simultaneously covering a massive funeral.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Managed Escalation" Scenario

Instead of a breakdown, the current conflict is a coordinated effort between the US and Iran to [monetize the straits](#) and drive out smaller traders, eventually leading to a "share the proceeds" deal mentioned by Trump ([me and the Ayatollah... will share the proceeds](#)).

The "Potemkin Resistance" Scenario

Bulgaria's "resistance" is not a cultural shift but a [stalling tactic](#) by corrupt elites to

maintain access to Russian black-market funds while remaining technically within the EU/NATO fold.

Black Swan Event: A massive [solar flare or AI glitch](#) disables the orbital command systems of the Soyuz MS-29, leading to an unplanned re-entry and a complete halt to all international space cooperation.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Neutral states should immediately diversify air defense systems beyond the [Patriot system](#), which is portrayed as failing against modern drone swarms.
- **Economic:** Implementation of "Energy Sovereign" funds to buffer against the \$100/barrel reality of a [closed Hormuz](#).
- **Diplomatic:** Shift engagement toward ["Resistance" blocs](#) like Bulgaria to find back-channels for negotiation with Russia.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Move manufacturing to the ["Selection of 14"](#) sectors in India to leverage the PLI scheme and regional stability.
- **Regulatory:** Prepare for a ["mercenary toll"](#) environment in international waters; factor a 20% "security fee" into all maritime logistics.
- **Capital Allocation:** Divest from Gulf-based infrastructure that lacks independent [power/water desalination](#) capabilities.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative bodies in Iran and the US are reacting defensively to the crisis, codifying redlines and naval controls into national law to preclude diplomatic compromise.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Persian Gulf Bill (Iran):** Formally introduced to Iranian parliament ([The Persian golf bill was formally introduced](#)); codifies management of the strait as a non-negotiable redline.
- **Redistricting Proposal (South Carolina):** Trump-led effort to add congressional lines in SC was [rejected](#) by local legislature, showing a rare limit to presidential influence.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **South Carolina Interim Appointment:** Governor Henry McMaster appointed [Darlene Graham](#) to the Senate; triggers a special election on August 11th.
- **Iranian Parliamentary Review:** 180 lawmakers signed a statement declaring the "[era of understanding](#)" with Washington is over.

KEY STORIES

- **Maritime Kinetic Exchanges:** IRGC disables UAE tankers in [Hormuz](#); US naval blockade of [Iranian ports](#) resumes.
- **Houthi Ballistic Strike:** Missiles and drones hit [King Faizal Airbase](#) in response to Sana'a airport bombings.
- **FSB Counter-Terror Operation:** 35 drones intercepted in [Moscow region](#); plot linked to SBU asset "[Keef Stoner](#)."

- **Lindsey Graham Autopsy:** Death confirmed as [aortic dissection](#) following a high-stress visit to Ukraine.
- **Soyuz MS-29 Launch:** Russian-American crew docks with [ISS](#) amid geopolitical tensions on Earth.
- **Ro Khanna Detainment:** US Congressman held for 20 minutes by [Israeli settlers](#) in the West Bank.
- **Ukraine Cabinet Purge:** Massive [government overhaul](#) including the Prime Minister's resignation.
- **Bulgarian EU Dissent:** New Prime Minister [Rumen Radev](#) blocks 21st sanctions package against Russia.
- **India-Russia Trade Pact:** Goal set for [\\$100 billion](#) in trade by 2030, focusing on fossil fuels and tech.
- **Funeral of Imam Khamenei:** Reported as the [largest in history](#), with 12 million people in Tehran alone.
- **Monaco Bombing Investigation:** Ongoing probe into [SBU agents](#) linked to a bombing in Monaco.
- **Venezuela Aid Mission:** 700 [Cuban doctors](#) and Mexican supplies arrive after double earthquakes.
- **Ahmadinejad Plot:** Former Iranian president allegedly arrested for plotting a [coup with Mossad](#).

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 GDEL T Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.