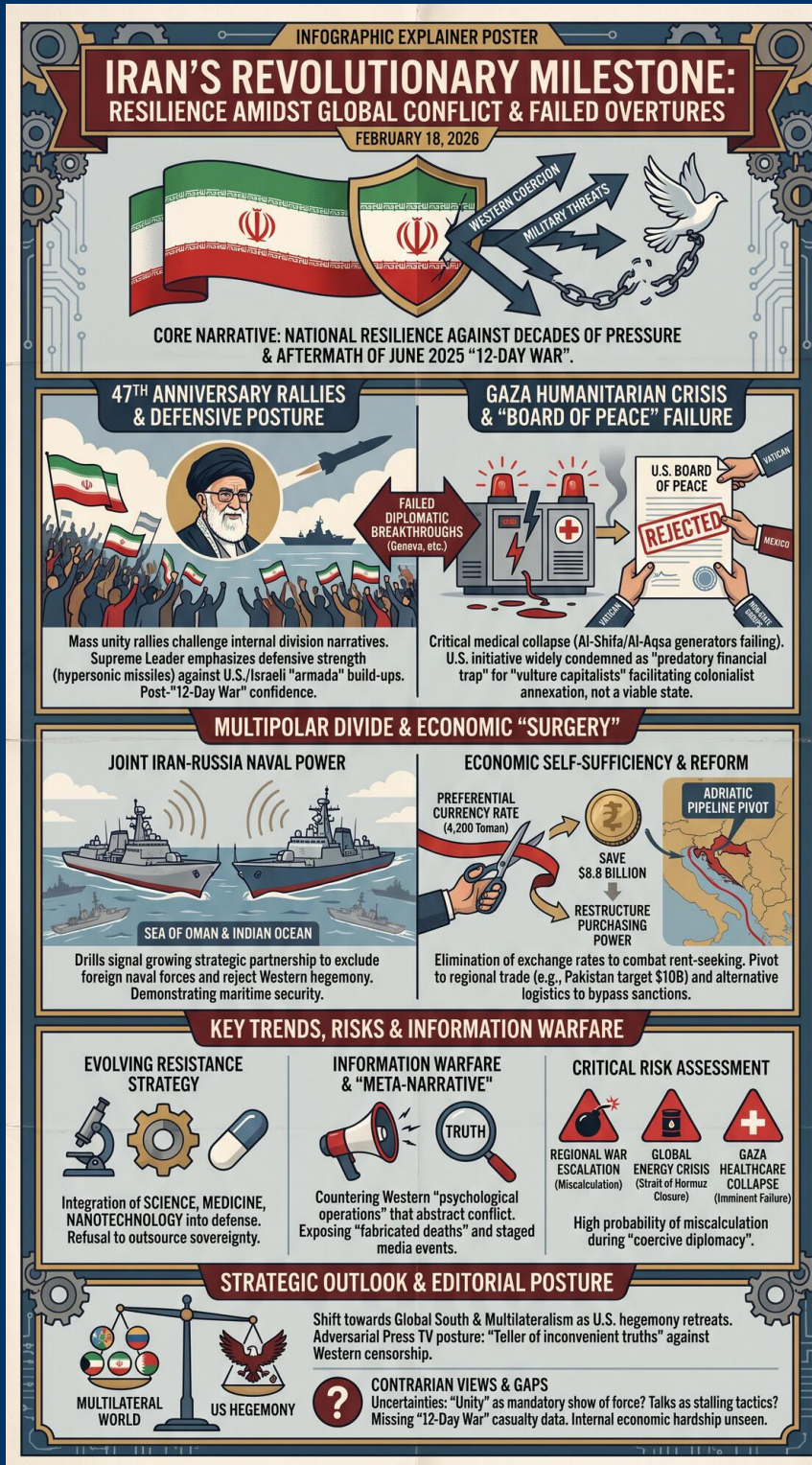


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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IRAN MARKS REVOLUTIONARY ANNIVERSARY AMIDST REGIONAL CONFLICT AND FAILED DIPLOMATIC OVERTURES

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The reporting of February 18, 2026, is dominated by the 47th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, framed as a milestone of **national resilience** against decades of Western coercion. This commemorative narrative serves as the backdrop for a tense geopolitical environment characterized by the aftermath of a "12-day war" in June 2025 and ongoing, yet struggling, indirect nuclear negotiations between Tehran and the Trump administration. Iranian leadership portrays its [strategic posture](#) as defensive and rooted in ideological independence, emphasizing that military threats from the U.S. and Israel have historically failed to fracture the state.

Concurrently, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has reached a critical failure point at the start of Ramadan. Reporting focuses on the systemic destruction of medical infrastructure and the failure of international bodies to halt what is described as a

genocidal campaign. A proposed "Board of Peace" initiated by the U.S. administration is widely condemned by various international actors, including the Vatican, Mexico, and non-state groups, who characterize it as a predatory [financial trap](#) designed to benefit Western venture capitalists rather than secure a viable Palestinian state.

The day's events suggest a deepening of the multipolar divide, with Iran and Russia conducting joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean to project **maritime security** and signal a rejection of Western naval hegemony in West Asia. Economic reporting highlights Iran's "major economic surgery"—the removal of preferential currency exchange rates—to combat rent-seeking and inflation, a move framed as courageous despite [mounting regional challenges](#).

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **47th Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution:** Mass rallies across Iran are utilized to project national unity and support for the Supreme Leader, specifically challenging Western narratives of internal division following recent [civil unrest](#).
- **Gaza Medical and Humanitarian Collapse:** Reports indicate the near-total failure of generators at Al-Shifa and Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospitals, endangering thousands of patients, including [kidney dialysis patients](#) and war-injured children.
- **Rejection of the "Board of Peace":** The Trump administration's peace initiative is rebuffed by the Vatican, Mexico, and the Latin Patriarchate, who argue it facilitates [colonialist annexation](#) of the West Bank.

- **Iran-Russia Naval Exercises:** The launch of joint drills in the Sea of Oman and Northern Indian Ocean signals a growing [strategic partnership](#) aimed at excluding foreign naval forces from the region.
- **Economic "Surgery" in Iran:** The government formalizes the elimination of the preferential currency rate, aiming to save \$8.8 billion and restructure [domestic purchasing power](#).
- **Stalled Global Diplomacy:** Indirect talks between Iran and the U.S. in Geneva, alongside failing Russia-Ukraine peace negotiations, indicate a lack of **diplomatic breakthroughs** in major global flashpoints ([Source](#)).

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- Iranian officials emphasize that [defensive weapons](#), including hypersonic missiles, are essential for deterrence against U.S. and Israeli "armada" build-ups in the Persian Gulf.
- The West Bank is described as a "scene of violent raids," with new Israeli housing plans labeled as [de facto annexation](#).

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The U.S. is accused of "coercive diplomacy," using military threats as a backdrop for [nuclear negotiations](#).
- Iran summons the German ambassador to protest "anti-Iran activities" and support for [violent groups](#) in Europe.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- Iran and Pakistan pledge to increase bilateral trade to **\$10 billion** by 2028, focusing on [agriculture and research](#).

- Russian oil exports to Hungary and Slovakia are redirected via Croatia to bypass [Ukrainian blockades](#).

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- Iraq remains in a "political deadlock" over the selection of a president and prime minister, with U.S. pressure allegedly complicating the [nomination of Nuri Maliki](#).
- The UK legal system and Crown Prosecution Service are accused of "state capture" by [Zionist lobbies](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Evolution of Resistance into State Strategy

Iran has transitioned from a strategy of survival to one of institutionalized strength. The state frames its ability to hold elections and innovate under "maximum pressure" as a debunking of the myth that dependency equals stability. The integration of **science, medicine, and nanotechnology** into the national defense narrative suggests that knowledge itself has become a [primary battlefield](#). This trend is coupled with a refusal to outsource sovereignty, contrasting Iran with regional neighbors who rely on foreign protection.

The Weaponization of Financial Aid and Reconstruction

A major theme is the critique of Western-led "peace" initiatives as mechanisms for **culture capitalism**. The proposed "Board of Peace" is analyzed as an immoral plan where the victims of conflict are forced to pay for their own reconstruction through debt and the surrender of assets to [venture capitalists](#). This narrative suggests a growing global

skepticism toward U.S. economic statecraft, with traditional allies like Mexico and religious authorities distancing themselves from Washington's [rupture of the rules-based order](#).

Information Warfare and the "Meta-Narrative" of Chaos

There is a sophisticated effort to analyze and counter Western psychological operations. Reporting dissects how Western media supposedly "rehearses and legitimizes" strikes against Iran by discussing them as **abstract chess moves** rather than attacks on a nation ([Source](#)). This is paired with "Midnight Fantasies," a program dedicated to exposing "fabricated deaths" and staged media events used to justify foreign [intervention and sanctions](#).

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

- **Iran:** While state media projects [massive support](#) for the leadership during anniversary rallies, it also acknowledges a "seditious plan" involving domestic unrest. These riots are framed as **foreign-funded hybrid warfare** led by the CIA and Mossad, designed to erode the revolution from within ([Source](#)).
- **United States:** Domestic stability appears fragile, with reports of a "heavy-handed immigration crackdown" causing public approval for President Trump to tank. Polls suggest only **20% of the public** supports a military conflict with Iran ([Source](#)). Furthermore, "raids by paramilitaries" on American streets and infrastructure decay are cited as evidence of a **dysfunctional government** ([Source](#)).

- **Iraq:** A persistent political deadlock and the threat of a constitutional vacuum constrain the state's capacity to act independently, as Kurdish factions and [external pressures](#) prevent the formation of a government.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The international system is depicted as a fracturing arena where U.S. hegemony is in global retreat. Nations in the **Global South** (145 countries outside the "US Empire") are framed as increasingly seeking a **multilateral world** where sovereignty is respected ([Source](#)). Canada's move to reduce its military reliance on the U.S. is cited as a significant shift in the behavior of **traditional Western allies** ([Source](#)).

Iran is actively projecting power through its "Axis of Resistance" and new strategic alignments with Russia and China. The "12-day war" is referenced as a **defining moment** where Iran demonstrated the capability to impose its will on adversaries, establishing a level of deterrence that current U.S. military build-ups in the [Persian Gulf](#) seek to challenge ([Source](#)).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The global economic environment is under threat from potential "oil shocks" and the failure of neoliberal models. Iran is pivoting toward **self-sufficiency** and diversifying

trade with regional partners to mitigate the impact of ongoing sanctions.

- **Key Economic Vectors:**

- **Currency Reform:** Iran's elimination of the 4,200 Toman preferential rate aims to eliminate [rent-seeking and smuggling](#).
- **Energy Logistics:** Russian oil redirected to Hungary and Slovakia via the **Adriatic pipeline** in Croatia ([Source](#)).
- **Oil Market Risk:** Closure of the Strait of Hormuz remains a catastrophic risk, with **20% of the world's oil** at stake if regional war erupts ([Source](#)).
- **U.S. Debt:** Cited as a strategic vulnerability, with **\$39 trillion** in debt limiting the U.S.'s ability to sustain long-term conflict ([Source](#)).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Strategic shifts in U.S. and Iraqi leadership are highlighted as catalysts for regional instability.

- **Donald Trump:** Characterized as a leader "boxed into a corner" by neoconservatives and the Israeli lobby, pursuing [coercive diplomacy](#) with no clear military objective.
- **Pete Hegseth:** As Secretary of Defense, his role is framed as **purely political**, lacking deep reservist experience and driving "military adventurism" ([Source](#)).
- **Nuri Maliki:** His candidacy for Iraqi Prime Minister is a focal point of Kurdish and [U.S. opposition](#), leading to legislative stalemate.
- **Lionel Idan:** A senior UK prosecutor accused of being under the [influence of Zionist groups](#), shaping national prosecution guidance against anti-Zionists.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

Press TV maintains a nationalistic and adversarial editorial posture, positioning itself as a "teller of inconvenient truths" against Western "shadow banning" and "censorship" ([Source](#)). The **Lead Stories** are the successes of the Iranian Revolution, the "crimes" of the Israeli military in Gaza and the West Bank, and the failure of U.S. diplomacy. **Buried Stories** include detailed accounts of Iranian domestic grievances, which are instead generalized as foreign sabotage. **Conspicuous Omissions** include any critical examination of the internal Iranian economic hardship resulting from the currency "surgery," or the potential for escalatory miscalculation by Iranian-aligned militias.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The day's reporting utilizes a dichotomy between "principled resistance" and "delusional arrogance." Patterned narratives suggest that Western leaders are morally compromised and transactional, while Iranian leadership is unwavering and religiously grounded.

COUNTRIES

- **Iran:** Portrayed as a scientific and military "stronghold" that has "institutionalized its sovereignty" despite 47 years of siege ([Source](#)).
- **United States:** Framed as a "paper tiger" with a weak navy and a "dysfunctional government" going broke due to [protracted wars](#).
- **Israel:** Described as a "Zionist entity" and "chaos engine" for the West, pursuing [ethnic cleansing](#) in Gaza.

LEADERS

- **Ayatollah Khamenei:** Characterized as a "man of credibility" who speaks "reality" and cannot be [defeated militarily](#).
- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as an "autocratic president" and an "agent" of Netanyahu, compromised by his [proximity to Jeffrey Epstein](#).
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Framed as "delusional," using a "boot on [Trump's] neck" to force a war that would [destroy Israel](#).

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Hamas:** Framed as the **vanguard of identity**, refusing to surrender its mission to accept colonialism ([Source](#)).
- **CST/Jewish Leadership Council:** Accused of infiltrating the UK's administration of justice to criminalize [anti-zionism](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The concept of "sickening the victim" is used to describe how colonizers label resistance as "madness" to justify [repression and isolation](#).
- **Propaganda Deconstruction:** State media actively "dissects" Western headlines from the Economist and The Guardian, claiming they use "colonial language" to [legitimize illegal acts](#).
- **Counter-PsyOps:** Exposure of "fake martyrs" and "staged killings" in Western media reports of [Iranian protests](#).
- **Technological Circumvention:** Debate in Washington over using **Starlink** to bypass Iranian [internal controls](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Escalation to Regional War:** If U.S.-Iran negotiations fail, the trajectory points toward a regional conflict involving Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and direct strikes on [Tel Aviv](#).
- **Economic Bipolarity:** Continued sanctions will likely force Iran and Russia into a formal, binding military and energy pact, potentially involving [Chinese missile destroyers](#) stationed in the Gulf.
- **Failure of the Trump Peace Plan:** The "Board of Peace" will likely fail to gain international legitimacy, leading to a **unilateral Israeli move** toward total annexation of the [West Bank](#).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect heightened military alerts and potential "sneak attacks" as negotiations in Geneva reach a [stalemate](#). Possible arrests of anti-war activists in the UK and U.S. ([Source](#)).
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The impact of Iran's currency surgery will manifest in either stabilized inflation or **heightened domestic unrest**. U.S. midterm elections will drive more aggressive [foreign policy rhetoric](#).
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** A permanent shift toward a "multilateral world" as the Global South consolidates trade routes and security pacts that [exclude the U.S.](#) Potential disintegration of the "special relationship" between the UK and U.S. due to **domestic state capture**.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current risk landscape is defined by the high probability of **miscalculation** during "coercive diplomacy."

- **Full-Scale Regional War:** Triggers: A "limited" U.S. strike on Iranian nuclear or symbolic sites. Likelihood: Moderate-High. Impact: Catastrophic destruction of regional infrastructure and U.S. bases. Mitigations: Immediate [rational diplomatic engagement](#) and de-escalation of the naval armada.
- **Global Energy Crisis:** Triggers: Closure of the Strait of Hormuz in response to military attack. Likelihood: High if war begins. Impact: Staggering inflation in the U.S. and a collapse of Asian [oil supply](#). Mitigations: Security of transit guarantees and independent energy supply lines.
- **Total Healthcare Collapse in Gaza:** Triggers: Ongoing lack of fuel and spare parts for hospital generators. Likelihood: Imminent. Impact: Deaths of thousands of vulnerable patients ([Source](#)). Mitigations: Unconditional opening of **humanitarian corridors**.
- **UK Institutional Decay:** Triggers: Continued lobbying of the Crown Prosecution Service by partisan interests. Likelihood: High. Impact: Loss of the [rule of law](#) and impartial justice. Mitigations: Judicial review and removal of lobbyists from consultative groups.
- **Unprovoked "Sneak Attack":** Triggers: Breakdown of indirect talks in Geneva. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Rapid escalation to war as experienced in [June 2025](#). Mitigations: Third-party mediation (Oman/Russia) to maintain **diplomatic channels**.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **The June 2025 "12-Day War":** State media references this as a settled historical fact, but provides no data on the **actual casualty counts** or the specific triggers that ended it.
- **Iranian Economic Sentiment:** Reports focus on the **macroeconomic benefits** of currency reform but omit any coverage of the "living paycheck to paycheck" struggles of the population ([Source](#)).
- **Russian-Chinese Coordination:** While naval drills are public, the transcript admits "**absolute silence**" on whether a formal defense pact exists ([Source](#)).
- **U.S. Internal Military Resistance:** There is no information on how the **Pentagon's career military brass** views the "political" leadership of Secretary Hegseth.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Unity" Mirage:** The massive anniversary rallies might not be a sign of genuine support but a **mandatory show of force** by a state that is actually terrified of its own population and "generation z" ([Source](#)).
- **Diplomacy as a Stalling Tactic:** The indirect talks might be a **mask for both sides** to complete military preparations for a summer offensive ([Source](#)).
- **The Black Swan - "Nuclear Lending":** A highly unlikely but catastrophic scenario suggested in Russian circles is "**lending**" **nuclear forces** to Iran to prevent a U.S. invasion, which would instantly trigger a [global conflict](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Prepare for asymmetric responses in the Mediterranean and Red Sea if [Persian Gulf](#) tensions boil over.
- **Economic:** Secure alternative shipping routes and "railway links" to [Central Asia](#) to mitigate a Strait of Hormuz blockade.
- **Diplomatic:** Support the UN as the primary manager of international crises to counter the widely rejected [U.S. "Board of Peace"](#).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chains:** Pivot away from reliance on ports in the Persian Gulf (e.g., Dubai) which are highlighted as [vulnerable to infiltration](#).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Monitor shifting UK prosecution guidelines regarding "hate crime" and "terrorism" as they become [increasingly politicized](#).
- **Capital Allocation:** Hedge against "flash crashes" in the stock market driven by [geopolitical news](#) cycles.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative and policy discussions center on international law adherence and domestic control measures in flashpoint regions. High-profile international rejections of U.S.

initiatives suggest a breakdown in the effectiveness of **Western-led treaties**.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **War Powers Act (U.S.):** Discussion of the President's requirement for [congressional approval](#) to start a war.
- **Public Order Act (UK):** Misused to arrest journalists and restrict [movements of anti-zionists](#).
- **Gaza Deal:** A proposed ceasefire and hostage exchange that the U.S. administration and Israel are accused of [failing to adhere to](#).

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Oman Nuclear Negotiations:** Second round of indirect U.S.-Iran talks described as ["constructive" but stalled](#).
- **Geneva Russia-Ukraine Summit:** [Trilateral talks conclude without a breakthrough](#).
- **Munich Security Conference:** Speeches revealing a widening gap between [American and Canadian values](#).

KEY STORIES

- **47th Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution:** Rallies held in Tehran and across Iran; leader Ayatollah Khamenei meets with thousands from [East Azerbaijan province](#). He warns the U.S. that it will never achieve a military victory over Iran and that its **warships can be sunk** to the bottom of the ocean ([Source](#)).
- **Gaza Hospital Crisis:** Generators at Al-Shifa and Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospitals are failing due to a lack of [spare parts and fuel](#). Kidney patients like a woman named Khaula report that electricity cuts 5-6 times during a single [3-hour dialysis session](#).

- **Board of Peace Controversy:** An initiative by the Trump administration to monitor the Gaza truce is rejected by the [Vatican, Mexico, and religious authorities](#). It is characterized as "vulture capitalism" intended to force Palestinians into [perpetual debt](#).
- **Iran-Russia Joint Naval Drills:** Commencing in the Oman Sea and Northern Indian Ocean, involving surface and air units to boost [maritime security](#). Russian Corvet "Stoiki" docks in Iranian waters ([Source](#)).
- **Removal of Preferential Currency Rate:** The Iranian government saves \$8.8 billion by eliminating the **4,200 Toman rate**, intending to strengthen household purchasing power and [curb rent-seeking](#).
- **West Bank Annexation Threats:** Israel reportedly plans to build thousands of settlements near [Jerusalem](#), annexing up to 80% of remaining Palestinian land through **forced migration programs** ([Source](#)).
- **Arrest of Latifa Wachakra:** UK journalist arrested on her way to speak in [Birmingham](#) for social media posts dating back to October 2023; accused of conduct likely to stir **racial hatred**.
- **Epstein Files and Political Influence:** Claims that the "Epstein list" is being used to blackmail U.S. and UK politicians (e.g., Donald Trump, Peter Mandelson) to follow [pro-Israeli agendas](#).
- **Russia-Ukraine Geneva Talks:** Two days of "business-like" but difficult talks between Rostam Almarov (Ukraine) and Vladimir Medinsky (Russia) conclude without [breakthrough](#).
- **Canadian Military Expansion:** Prime Minister Mark Carney (implied) announces a multi-billion dollar plan to reduce dependence on [U.S. military protection](#).

- **Superheroes and Political Context:** A documentary analyzes how comic book characters like Superman and Batman reflect the [demise of the American dream and the shift from ethics to "tools for government."](#)
- **Iraq Political Deadlock:** [Parliament fails to elect a president due to Kurdish disputes and alleged U.S. interference](#) in the prime ministerial nomination.
- **Berlin Film Festival Protest:** Over 80 film figures slam the festival for "institutional silence" on the [genocide in Gaza](#).
- **Adriatic Pipeline Pivot:** Croatia agrees to allow Russian crude oil transit to Hungary and Slovakia via the [Adriatic pipeline](#).
- **40th Day Memorial Service:** Held in Tehran for victims of a "U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt" last month; high-ranking officials including [Vice President Arif](#) attend.

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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