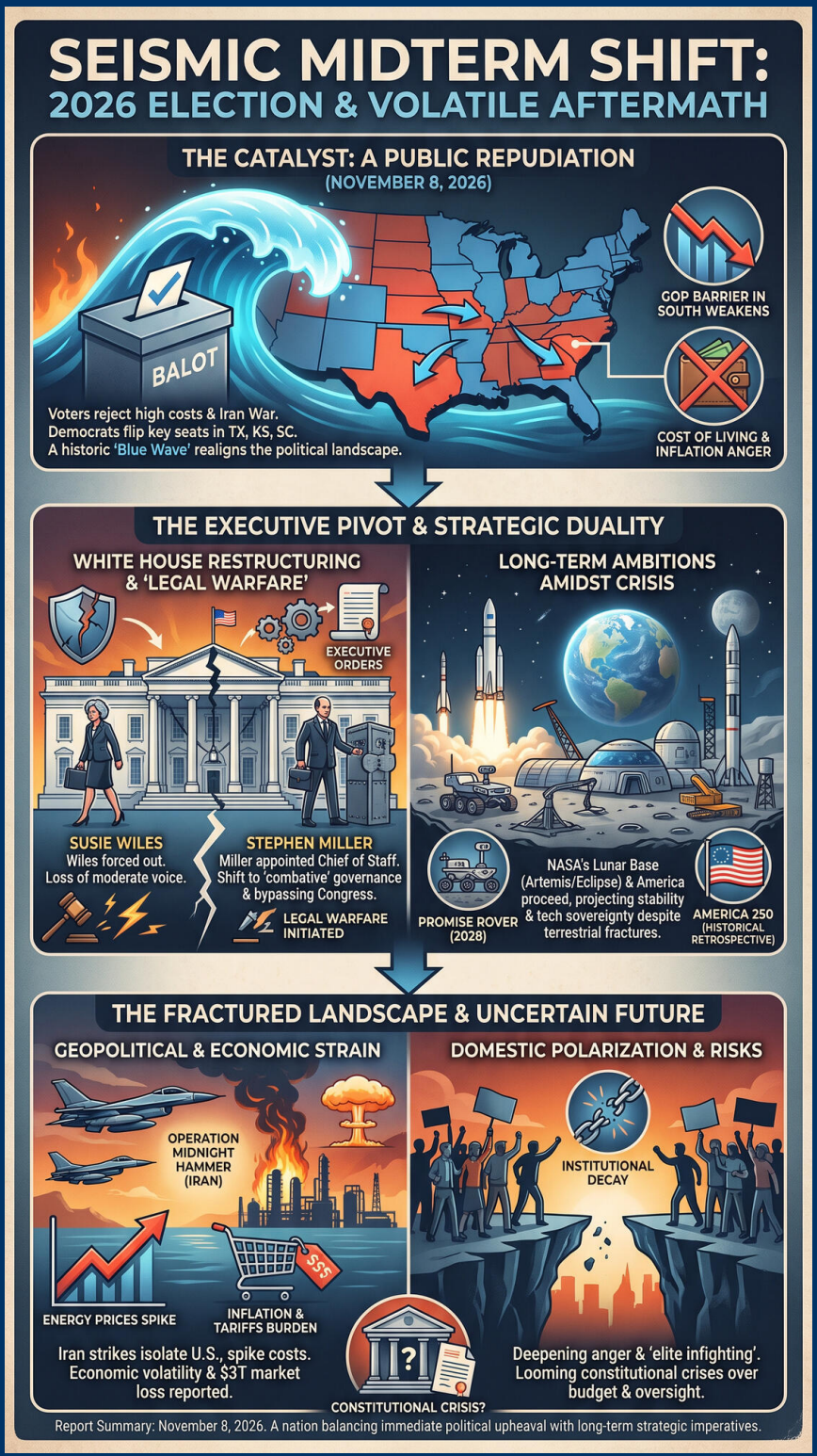
TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

NOVEMBER 8, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

NOVEMBER 8, 2026

SEISMIC MIDTERM SHIFT AMIDST ESCALATING GLOBAL CONFLICTS AND INTERNAL WHITE HOUSE VOLATILITY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The broadcasts from November 8, 2026, detail the aftermath of a transformative midterm election cycle that resulted in a historic Democratic landslide, fundamentally altering the domestic political landscape. The narrative is dominated by a public repudiation of the current administration's foreign and economic policies, specifically the ongoing conflict with Iran and the resulting spike in energy and commodity prices. This electoral "Blue Wave" has triggered immediate internal volatility within the Executive Branch, evidenced by the high-profile departure of Susie Wiles and the appointment of Stephen Miller as Chief of Staff, signaling a pivot toward a more combative and ideologically rigid governance posture in the final two years of the term.

Simultaneously, the nation is balancing these domestic fractures with a complex array of long-term strategic initiatives and commemorative milestones. NASA's comprehensive update on lunar base construction through the Artemis and Eclipse programs highlights an ongoing commitment to tech sovereignty and cislunar dominance, even as the "America 250" initiative utilizes historical retrospectives to navigate contemporary racial and social tensions. The convergence of these events suggests a government attempting to project long-term stability and scientific progress while struggling with immediate crises in legislative oversight, economic inflation, and a deeply polarized electorate questioning the core guardrails of democracy.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The 2026 Midterm Election Results and Realignment

- Democrats secured significant majorities in both the House and Senate, flipping reliable Republican seats in Texas, Kansas, and South Carolina.
- The "cost of living" and dissatisfaction with the "one-day war" in Iran were cited as primary drivers of voter behavior.
- High voter turnout among women and Hispanic voters contributed to a shift in the political center of gravity away from MAGA-aligned candidates.

Executive Branch Restructuring and Personnel Shifts

- Susie Wiles was forced to resign as White House Chief of Staff following the election losses.
- The appointment of Stephen Miller as her replacement is interpreted as a "shot across the bow" to the incoming Democratic Congress, indicating a move toward executive orders and aggressive litigation.

- Internal administration friction is emerging between Vice President Vance and the President regarding the blame for the midterm "drubbing".

Geopolitical Crisis: The Iran Conflict and Operation Midnight Hammer

- Retrospective analysis of Operation Midnight Hammer details the deployment of 125 aircraft to strike Iranian nuclear infrastructure.
- Critics argue the war has cost the U.S. billions of dollars and contributed to domestic economic instability.
- The administration claims the strikes prevented a nuclear-armed Iran, while analysts suggest the regime remains resilient.

Space Sovereignty and Lunar Infrastructure

- NASA announced several new contracts for the lunar transfer station and power grid, including the "Promise" rover mission slated for 2028.
- Strategic focus is shifting from individual missions to building cislunar infrastructure involving commercial partners like SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Intuitive Machines.
- The establishment of a permanent human presence on the moon is framed as a strategic imperative for the 21st century.

Civil Rights and Voting Legislation Challenges

- Legal scholars and activists highlight the erosion of the Voting Rights Act following the Shelby County decision and subsequent state-level redistricting.
- Current gerrymandering efforts in states like Alabama are described as structural barriers to minority representation.
- There is a growing movement to expand the size of the House and implement term limits for Supreme Court justices to restore institutional trust.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The use of F-35s and autonomous drones in the Iran conflict represents a shift in modern kinetic warfare.
- Discussions on police militarization highlight the 1300% increase in SWAT team usage since the 1980s, primarily for non-violent drug warrants.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- The implementation of broad tariffs has contributed to domestic inflation, particularly affecting gas and fertilizer prices.
- Market sentiment turned sharply negative following the election, with a loss of $3 trillion in value reported by administration critics.

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- U.S. relations with traditional allies in Europe and Great Britain are strained due to the unilateral nature of the Iran intervention.
- A strategic "look back" at the 250th anniversary focuses on using Lafayette's legacy to bridge ties with France.

Information Warfare & Disinformation

- The concept of surveillance pricing and data-driven corporate manipulation is emerging as a major consumer protection concern.
- Partisan media framing of the 1968 Chicago Convention is being used as a parallel to modern media "distrust."

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Collapse of the "GOP Barrier" in the South

The 2026 midterms represent a potential fundamental realignment. The loss of House and Senate seats in North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia suggests that the GOP's grip on the "Deep South" is weakening due to demographic shifts and a rejection of high-cost-of-living policies. This has created a crisis of identity within the Republican party, as moderates clash with the MAGA base over the direction of the party post-2026.

Executive Consolidation vs. Legislative Guardrails

A recurring theme across multiple panels is the tension between the "Imperial Presidency" and the Constitution's "Article One." Rep. Jamie Raskin and other Democratic leaders are positioning the power of the purse as the primary weapon to combat unauthorized military actions and "emoluments" violations. The appointment of Stephen Miller indicates the administration's intent to bypass Congress through executive action, setting the stage for a period of **Legal Warfare**.

The Physicality and Fragility of Digital Life

A philosophical shift is noted regarding the "Internet's permanence." Experts discuss "link rot" and the decay of digital archives, arguing that the modern web is a "facsimile of reality" controlled by a few oligarchical platforms. This connects to concerns about corporate surveillance and the need for consumers to "vote with their wallets" to reclaim privacy.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The United States is currently experiencing a period of intense **Institutional Decay** and polarization following the 2026 election results. The Washington Journal calls highlight a deep-seated anger among the public, with accusations of "socialist" agendas from the right and "authoritarian" corruption from the left. This polarization is exacerbated by economic inequality, where voters feel the basic "American contract" of work-for-stability has been broken by inflation and high housing costs.

The administrative shift within the White House suggests **Elite Infighting**. The removal of Susie Wiles is viewed by some as the elimination of a moderate voice who could negotiate with Congress, leaving a vacuum filled by "scorched earth" ideologues like Stephen Miller. This transition indicates that the Executive Branch may be retreating into a defensive crouch, prioritizing loyalty and ideological purity over state capacity and legislative success.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The international system is framed as a **Fracturing Multipolar Arena**. The U.S. projection of power via Operation Midnight

Hammer has not yielded a clear strategic victory but has instead isolated the U.S. from allies who favor diplomacy over kinetic strikes. There is significant concern regarding the Israel-Hamas-Iran triangle, with analysts suggesting that the U.S. is "paying a price" for Iranian retaliation through high gas prices and regional instability.

Simultaneously, the **Tech Sovereignty Race** continues in space. NASA's focus on Lunar Base updates serves as a vehicle for nationalistic pride and long-term planning, acting as a counter-narrative to domestic chaos. The framing suggests that while the U.S. is struggling on the terrestrial "home front," it remains a dominant force in the "high ground" of cislunar space, utilizing commercial partnerships to secure strategic interests against competitors like China and Russia.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The national economy is in a state of precarious volatility, characterized by high inflation and the negative impacts of aggressive trade policies. Market sentiment is defensive, reacting to both electoral uncertainty and the costs of foreign military engagement.

- **Inflation & Commodities:** Gasoline and diesel prices have risen by roughly one dollar per gallon since the start of the Iran conflict. Fertilizer and import costs are surging due to tariffs.
- **Markets:** Significant capital flight was reported post-election, with a valuation drop of $3 trillion cited as a market repudiation of the status quo.
- **Corporate Surveillance:** Corporations like Walmart and Kroger are shifting profit models toward "media sides" (selling consumer data), which accounts for 30% of some retailers' net operating income.
- **Labor:** Unemployment in specific sectors like agriculture remains high (30% in Kern County), despite the importation of guest workers, indicating a mismatch in the labor market.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The post-election environment has triggered several critical personnel movements that signal a shift in the administration's tactical direction.

- **Stephen Miller:** Appointed as White House Chief of Staff. Signals a transition from a "campaigning" posture to a "combative" governance style focused on immigration enforcement and executive power.
- **Susie Wiles:** Forced resignation as Chief of Staff. Interpreted as the loss of the primary "honest broker" within the administration who could manage internal factions.
- **Todd Blanche:** Mentioned as Attorney General. Criticized by opposition leaders for weaponizing the DOJ against political rivals and dismissing investigations into presidential allies.
- **Hakeem Jeffries:** Expected to be the first Black Speaker of the House in the upcoming Congress, providing a powerful legislative counterweight to the Executive Branch.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The editorial hierarchy of the day focuses heavily on **Electoral Autopsy** and **National Identity**. The lead stories are the midterm results and the subsequent White House staff shakeup. There is a strong secondary emphasis on **Historical Commemoration** (Veterans Day, America 250, Band of Brothers), which serves a dual purpose: honoring service and providing a "unifying" distraction from partisan bitterness. The Iran War is frequently discussed but often through a political lens rather than direct battlefield reporting. **Conspicuous Omissions** include any detailed coverage of the ongoing climate crisis or the specific status of domestic infrastructure projects, which are mentioned only in the context of "future needs" rather than current progress.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext of the day's broadcasts reveals a world in which the U.S. is increasingly unilateral and transactional, viewing traditional norms as secondary to "strategic success."

- **Iran:** Framed as a "nuclear threat" that required kinetic intervention, but increasingly viewed by the public as a "quagmire" that is draining domestic resources.
- **Israel:** Portrayed as a strong but stressed ally that successfully neutralized threats from Hezbollah (via the "beeper" attacks) but is now facing a legitimacy crisis and internal divisions over the "post-war plan."
- **France:** Framed through the lens of Lafayette's legacy—a "friend" whose historical support is needed now to bolster current diplomatic ties, despite modern frictions.
- **Non-State Actors (Hezbollah/Hamas):** Characterized as "competent enemies" that successfully utilized "human shields" and psychological operations to degrade Israeli legitimacy.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

There is a sophisticated and ongoing **Narrative Seeding** operation regarding the "success" of the Iran conflict. The administration utilizes veteran panels and military history segments to frame kinetic action as a defense of the "American way of life." Simultaneously, surveillance pricing is identified as a corporate psy-op, where AI is used to manipulate consumer willingness-to-pay, eroding the "fair price" social contract. Democratic leaders are attempting to counter administration narratives by framing the current White House as a "monarchy" that ignores constitutional boundaries, specifically regarding the "impoundment" of funds and the use of the active-duty military for domestic deportation missions.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The Democratic-controlled Congress will likely launch immediate investigations into the "Iran War" profiteering and the "emoluments" violations related to the President's family.

- The appointment of Stephen Miller suggests an escalation in "Operation Metro Surge" (mass deportations), which will likely result in a high-stakes standoff with Democratic governors and city mayors.
- Legislative gridlock is inevitable, with the President utilizing the veto power to block any attempts to restore S.N.A.P. funding or repeal tariffs.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a flurry of lame-duck appointments and executive orders aimed at "Trump-proofing" specific policies before the new Congress takes over in January. Protests against deportation raids may intensify in urban centers.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): A major Constitutional showdown over the federal budget and the "debt ceiling" is highly likely, with the new House majority attempting to withhold funding for the Iran conflict.

Long Term (1-5 Years): The focus on lunar infrastructure may transition from science-led to military-led if cislunar space becomes a contested domain with China. Domestic political parties will continue to realign, potentially leading to a "Post-Trump" GOP identity crisis.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The primary risks center on institutional instability and the potential for rapid escalation in regional conflicts that could spiral into a broader war.

- **Constitutional Crisis (Executive vs. Legislative):** Triggers: Congressional subpoenas ignored by the Stephen Miller-led White House. Likelihood: High. Impact: Extreme. Mitigations: Judicial intervention or bipartisan compromise on oversight boundaries.
- **Energy Price Shock:** Triggers: Retaliatory Iranian strikes on regional oil infrastructure. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High. Mitigations: Strategic Petroleum Reserve releases and alternative energy acceleration.
- **Civil Unrest (Domestic):** Triggers: Deployment of active-duty military for mass deportation missions. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High. Mitigations: Clear legal definitions of military jurisdiction and de-escalation training for law enforcement.
- **Systemic Voting Disenfranchisement:** Triggers: Continued purging of voter rolls in "pre-clearance" states. Likelihood: High. Impact: Moderate-High. Mitigations: Passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
- **Cislunar Debris Event:** Triggers: Accidental or intentional collision of lunar assets creating a Kessler Syndrome. Likelihood: Low-Moderate. Impact: High. Mitigations: International adherence to space safety standards and debris removal technology.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The exact casualty counts and humanitarian impact of the Iran strikes are glossed over in favor of tactical analysis.

- There is a lack of data on how real wage growth (or lack thereof) is comparing to inflation in non-urban "Blue" states.
- The transcripts fail to detail the Chinese lunar mission status, which is critical for assessing the competitive risk in space.
- Missing perspective: The viewpoints of Palestinians or Iranians living through these conflicts are largely absent or filtered through American analysts.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Managed Collapse" Hypothesis: The Democratic landslide and White House shakeup are not a repudiation of the administration, but a **deliberate distraction** designed to allow the GOP to shed unpopular policies while consolidating power in the courts and statehouses through 2028.

The "False Flag" Military Narrative: Operation Midnight Hammer was not a "success" but a **staged escalation** to justify permanent military presence in the Middle East and distract from the failure to achieve any diplomatic goals with Russia.

Black Swan Event: A **Cyber-Financial Meltdown** triggered by foreign actors (Iran/Russia) targeting the U.S. stock market in retaliation for the strikes, resulting in a permanent loss of confidence in digital assets and a return to commodity-based currency.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Review the rules of engagement regarding autonomous systems to prevent unintended escalations in regional theaters.
- **Economic:** Investigate surveillance pricing algorithms to protect consumer data and prevent algorithmic price-fixing.
- **Diplomatic:** Utilize the America 250 milestones to reinvigorate ties with NATO allies through joint scientific and historical projects.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Diversify sourcing away from regions affected by high tariffs and military risk.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Prepare for increased scrutiny from a Democratic House regarding environmental and data privacy standards.
- **Capital Allocation:** Prioritize lunar infrastructure and space-based technologies as long-term growth hedges against terrestrial volatility.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The current legislative environment is focused on **oversight and accountability** for executive actions, with the incoming House majority preparing a robust agenda to challenge administration policies on immigration, military action, and economic regulation.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **The First Step Act:** Bipartisan criminal justice reform signed by President Trump in his first term, now being scrutinized for its continued efficacy.
- **Inflation Reduction Act:** Criticized for its $40 billion annual cost for EV tax credits, which Republicans wish to repeal.
- **Voting Rights Advancement Act:** Proposed to restore pre-clearance requirements for states with a history of disenfranchisement.
- **Great American Outdoors Act:** Highlighted as a successful example of bipartisan conservation efforts.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Department of Justice Briefing (Jacksonville):** Attorney General Todd Blanche announced $73 million in grants for the "Model Cities Initiative" to combat violent crime.
- **NASA Administrator Update:** Details the lunar base roadmap and new contracts for cislunar communications.
- **Printers Row Lit Fest Panels:** Multiple discussions on voting rights, police militarization, and war narratives.

KEY STORIES

- **2026 Midterm "Blue Wave":** Democrats sweep to power in both chambers, flipping seats in traditionally red states like Texas and Kansas.
- **White House Staff Shakeup:** Susie Wiles resigns and Stephen Miller is appointed Chief of Staff to lead a more aggressive final term.
- **The Iran War Fallout:** Operation Midnight Hammer resulted in 125 aircraft strikes but caused gas prices to spike and contributed to GOP election losses.
- **Artemis Lunar Base Updates:** NASA awards contracts for lunar power grids and prepares for the "Promise" rover mission in 2028.
- **Voting Rights History:** Scholars discuss the "dead letter" status of the Voting Rights Act and the impact of gerrymandering on representation.
- **Surveillance Pricing Experiments:** Revelations that companies like Instacart and Walmart used AI to charge different prices to different customers based on data.
- **Band of Brothers 25th Anniversary:** Cast and crew gather in New Orleans to discuss the enduring legacy of the miniseries and its impact on veteran culture.
- **America 250 - The Homefront:** Historians analyze the impact of the Revolutionary War on domestic life and enslaved populations.
- **Veterans Day Parades:** National celebrations in Washington DC and Colorado Springs highlight community support for the military.
- **The Manhunt for Bin Laden:** CIA analysts provide a retrospective on the 30-year effort to locate the al-Qaeda leader.
- **Printers Row Lit Fest - Palestine Narrative:** Omar El Akkad discusses the "chasm" in language regarding the Gaza conflict and Western responsibility.
- **Lamar Alexander's "Education of a Senator":** The former governor discusses bipartisanship and his work with ten different U.S. Presidents.

- **Justice Department Model Cities:** Attorney General Blanche awards millions to Jacksonville for advanced surveillance and prosecution technologies.
- **The International Space Station:** Colonel Nicole Mann provides a virtual tour and updates on international scientific collaboration.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Trends On Capitol Hill is a public interest experiment in applying deep trend analysis to the daily business of the United States Congress to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists, scholars and Congressional staff better understand the overarching legislative trends, themes and patterns of Congress.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's Congressional activity to tease out its overarching themes and trends into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original source material, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the legislative themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

This inaugural report is based on deep analysis of CSPAN, CSPAN2 and CSPAN3 coverage in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive. It is currently limited to the Congressional business covered on those three CSPAN channels and thus may not include all major Congressional business, may include activity from previous days that aired on a later date, and/or may include other major federal, state and local governmental business. We will continue to refine this report to incorporate a growing array of Congressional information sources. 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.