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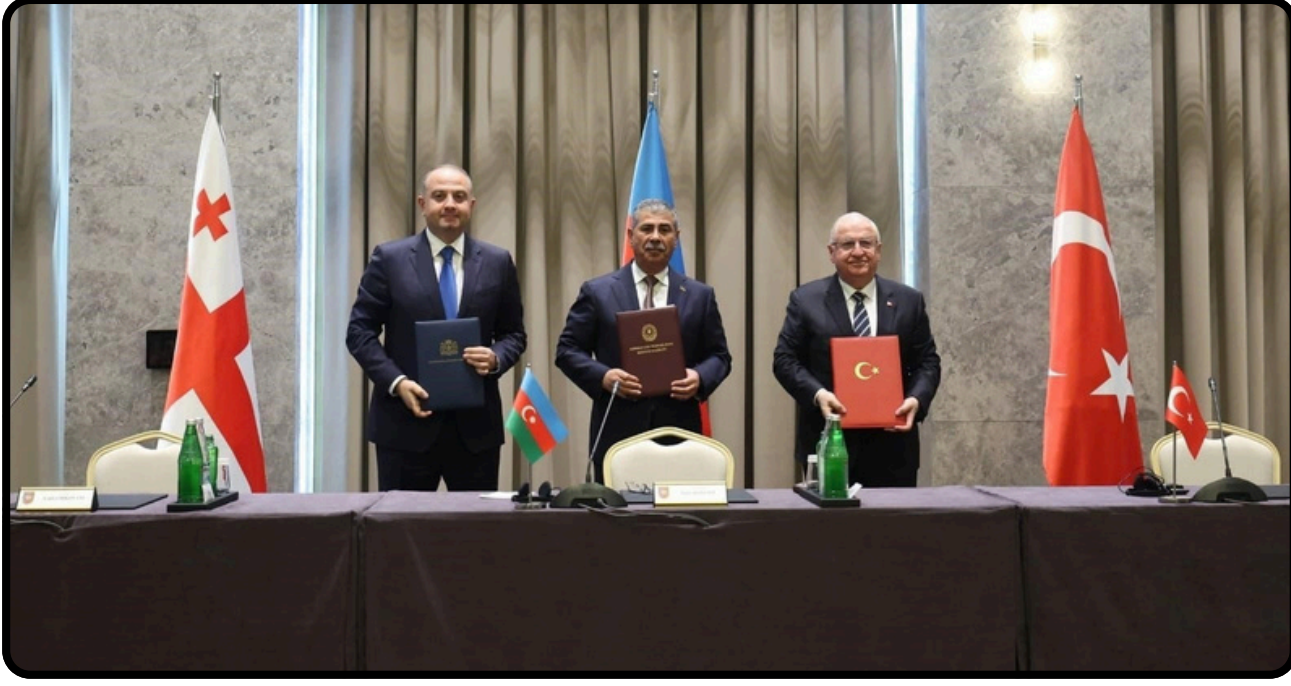
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Securing the Caucasian Perimeter: The 13th Trilateral Shusha Meeting

On 2 October 2026, the 13th Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Georgia Trilateral Meeting was held in Shusha, attended by Turkish Defence Minister Yaşar Güler, Azerbaijani Defence Minister Zakir Hasanov, and Georgian Defence Minister Irakli Chikovani. The meetings concluded with the signing of a joint agreement aimed at deepening ties between three countries by reviewing the already implemented measures, emphasizing military cooperation, security of vital regional transportation and energy routes. Throughout the meeting, emphasis was placed on joint exercises such as “Eternity” and “Caucasian Eagle”. A call was made to expand these joint operations while Chikovani thanked Türkiye for its continuous support of Georgia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and its role in modernizing Georgia’s military. Güler assured his country’s support for security and integrity of both countries as further discussions included Black Sea maritime security. Lack of an statement that includes the sayings of a common enemy could

possibly mean that this minilateral mechanism aims to create a zone of predictability that guards vital energy routes providing additional economic benefits. However, even if this is a plausible explanation, it could also be interpreted as a collective defense against Russia who in the past supported the possible fragmentation of Georgia. Furthermore, talks aimed at increasing cooperation across technical, educational and medical sides of military. Minister Hasanov noted that in addition to common fears of security in a world of uncertainties, the friendship between the respective heads of state accelerated the level of cooperation. Due to the current ongoing geopolitical situation across Caucasasia and Black Sea and the peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia, this trilateral agreement of interests could be seen as a critical security zone designed to protect the sovereignty of the respective countries and also logisticsinfrastructure against regional pressure. In essence, while the agreement at Shusha cannot be expected to solve every problem, it appears to offer a stable framework that could help the respective countries while adjusting their position in the region.



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U.S. Sanctions Against Iranian Oil Transport Networks

On October 8, 2026, the U.S. State Department and the Treasury Department put new sanctions on Iran's shadow fleet under "Operation Economic Outcast." Based on Executive Order 13846, the U.S. sanctioned 27 companies, 6 people, and 22 ships for carrying illegal Iranian oil. With these steps, Washington wants to stop Iran's oil trade, cut money for its armed groups in the region, and make trade routes safer. This new decision by the U.S. is a big blow to Iran's illegal maritime system. It stops a large part of Iran's secret operations, especially the Ship-to-Ship (STS) oil transfers at sea. For a long time, Iran used front companies and hidden tankers to continue selling oil. By putting these companies and ships on a blacklist, the U.S. successfully broke this hidden system and cut off Iran's main source of money. The main goal of this action is to weaken Iran's economy and stop it from getting stronger. These sanctions do not only affect Iran. It is clear that the U.S. also aims to limit China, which is the main buyer of

this illegal Iranian oil. In addition, Iran uses the money from its shadow fleet to fund its regional proxies, such as Hezbollah and the Houthis, in their operations against Israel and Saudi Arabia. This oil trade provides a major source of income for these groups. By stopping these financial flows, the U.S. tries to weaken Iran's regional power and cut off the funding for its armed proxies. In conclusion, these new U.S. sanctions are a major blow to Iran's shadow fleet and its illegal oil trade. This policy not only weakens Iran's economy, but also cuts off money for regional proxies like Hezbollah and the Houthis. At the same time, it puts pressure on main buyers like China. Ultimately, stopping this secret network completely will require stronger international cooperation in the future.



From Currency Devaluation to Energy Security: Iraq's Economic Vulnerability in a Changing Middle East

On October 7, 2026, Iraq devalued its currency, setting the official exchange rate at 1,520 Iraqi dinars per US dollar. The decision came amid disruptions to Iraq's oil exports and declining



government revenues, which have been affected by instability in the region and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz (Ramadan & Rasheed, 2026). As Iraq's economy remains highly dependent on oil revenues, the devaluation has raised concerns about inflation, economic stability, and the country's ability to manage external shocks. Therefore, Iraq's decision should be examined not only as a domestic economic measure, but also in the wider context of regional instability and its effects on energy markets. One of the main reasons behind the devaluation is Iraq's dependence on oil revenues. More than 90% of the government's revenue comes from oil, which makes the Iraqi economy very vulnerable to changes in oil exports and prices (Al Jazeera, 2026). Recent disruptions in the region and around the Strait of Hormuz have made it more difficult for Iraq to maintain its oil exports. As a result, the government has experienced a decrease in its revenues and greater financial pressure. The devaluation can therefore be understood as a response to these economic difficulties (Dutton, 2026). However, the decision may also create problems for the Iraqi population. A weaker dinar means that imported goods become more expensive, which can increase inflation and reduce people's purchasing power. This is especially important for Iraq because the country depends on imports for many of its basic needs. Although devaluation may help the government deal with

its financial problems in the short term, it could make daily life more difficult for Iraqi citizens in the longer term (Associated Press, 2026). The situation also shows the connection between regional instability and global energy security. Iraq is an important oil producer, so disruptions to its exports can create uncertainty in the international oil market. However, it would be inaccurate to argue that the devaluation itself directly causes global oil prices to rise. Instead, both Iraq's economic problems and instability in oil markets are connected to the wider regional crisis. This demonstrates how geopolitical developments can have economic consequences not only for one country but also for the wider global energy system.



New Proposals for Russia-Ukraine Truce: Can Diplomacy Open a New Door?

Besides the direct impact on the warring parties, the Russia-Ukraine war has global repercussions. New diplomatic initiatives led by India, Türkiye, Egypt and the United States have created the possibility of limited ceasefires concerning energy infrastructure, Black Sea



shipping and grain exports. An Al Jazeera article published on 8 October reports that Ukraine has received several proposals from these countries to facilitate negotiations with Russia. India's proposal stands out as the most comprehensive. It includes three points: stopping attacks on energy infrastructure, ensuring the flow of grain and energy through Black Sea ports, and protecting commercial ships in the region. These issues are particularly important because Russia and Ukraine are major exporters of food and energy. Disruptions to ports, infrastructure and maritime trade can therefore affect economies far beyond the region. Türkiye also plays an important role. Ankara has acted as a mediator between Kyiv and Moscow and played a key role in the 2022 Black Sea Grain Initiative together with the UN. Although the agreement later collapsed, it demonstrated that limited cooperation is possible even during war. Türkiye is now prepared to contribute again, particularly on Black Sea shipping and grain trade. India's involvement is especially significant because it maintains strategic relations with Russia while also having influence in the international system. This could allow New Delhi to act as a bridge between the conflicting sides. Egypt's interest is also important because it depends heavily on grain imports from Russia and Ukraine. However, serious obstacles remain. Mutual distrust between Kyiv and Moscow has

undermined previous ceasefire efforts. Ukraine may also be unwilling to stop attacks against Russian Black Sea ports and infrastructure. From an international relations perspective, limited agreements may therefore be more realistic than a comprehensive ceasefire. Protecting energy infrastructure, commercial ships and maritime routes could reduce the war's global economic impact and create space for broader negotiations. Personally, I find multiple limited ceasefires more realistic than an all-encompassing agreement. A protection agreement for commercial ships and critical infrastructure could be a useful first step. Türkiye's mediator role could also be valuable because it maintains relations with both sides.



EU Provides €1.24 Billion In Defense Support To Ukraine

The European Union has provided €1.24 billion in defense support to Ukraine. This decision shows that the EU continues to support Ukraine during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. According to the European Commission, the money will be used for drones, anti-drone systems, ammunition, and



missiles. The support will also help Ukraine improve its own defense industry. One important part of this support is the focus on Ukraine's domestic production. Ukraine has depended on military support from European countries and other partners since the beginning of the war. By helping Ukraine produce more military equipment itself, the EU wants to increase the country's ability to defend itself in the long term. This could also reduce Ukraine's dependence on foreign military supplies. Drones are another important part of the new support package. Drones have become very important in the Russia-Ukraine war. They are used for observation, intelligence, targeting, and attacks. At the same time, anti-drone systems are needed to protect soldiers, cities, and important infrastructure. Therefore, the EU's decision to support both drones and anti-drone technology reflects the changing nature of modern warfare. The new financial support also has a wider meaning for Europe. The EU is not only trying to meet Ukraine's immediate military needs but is also working to develop stronger cooperation with Ukraine in the defense industry. This could create closer connections between European and Ukrainian defense companies in the future. However, this financial support cannot decide the result of the war by itself. The future of the conflict will also depend on military developments, economic conditions, diplomatic negotiations,

and the decisions of Russia and Ukraine. Overall, the €1.24 billion package is an important part of the EU's continued support for Ukraine. It combines short-term military assistance with long-term plans to strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities.



The Sixth Round of the U.S. - Greece Strategic Dialogue

On October 7, 2026, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Athens to attend the sixth round of the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue. During the meetings, the two countries discussed how to improve cooperation in areas such as defense, security, energy, technology, trade and investment. During the meeting, Marco Rubio especially emphasized the fight against irregular migration and terrorism while discussing defense and security cooperation. From the perspective of the U.S., which wants to maintain its strategic presence in the Mediterranean, the fact that Greece faces threats caused by mass migration and human trafficking increased the importance of cooperation between the two countries. In this context, the creation of a 4 billion dollar



military sales package between the U.S. and Greece can be considered an important development for strengthening defense cooperation between the two countries. Marco Rubio also highlighted economic and trade cooperation during the meeting. He emphasized the need to strengthen mutual trade and investment and improve economic relations between the two countries. He also highlighted the cultural ties between the two countries, stating that Greece and the U.S. have cooperated from the past to the present and that these ties should be protected. When this cooperation is considered from Greece's perspective, it is important because it strengthens the country's strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean. The defense support that Greece receives from the U.S. and NATO increases its military capacity and defense power in the region. At the same time, stronger defense cooperation with the U.S. is also important for Greece because of its competition with Türkiye. In particular, the modernization of F-16s and the inclusion of F-35 fighter jets in Greece's defense capacity can be considered developments that may increase the country's military capacity in the region. From the U.S. perspective, cooperation with Greece strengthens the U.S. strategic presence and regional influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece's geographical location, its proximity to the Middle East, and its role in energy routes to Europe make the country an

important partner for the U.S. From Türkiye's perspective, strengthening defense cooperation between the U.S. and Greece is important for the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Considering the political and military competition between Türkiye and Greece in the region, Greece's increasing defense capacity with U.S. support is a development that should be closely followed by Türkiye. However, the fact that both countries are NATO members and that Türkiye also continues its defense relations with the U.S. means that this cooperation should not be seen as a direct alliance against Türkiye. Nevertheless, the further strengthening of defense cooperation between the U.S. and Greece can be considered a development that may affect the military and strategic balance in the Eastern Mediterranean. Finally, the cooperation between the U.S. and Greece is important not only for the relations between the two countries but also for the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. The growing cooperation in defense, security, and energy may affect how the strategic balance in the region develops in the future. Therefore, the development of relations between the U.S. and Greece should be closely followed because of its importance for the future balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean.



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Iranian President Mesud Pezeşkiyan, meanwhile, in his address to the General Assembly, positioned his country not as the aggressor, but as the party under attack. Stating that Iran was merely defending itself, Pezeşkiyan emphasized that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, scientists, and children had lost their lives in the attacks against his country. He also stated that Iran is not a terrorist state and that its innocent people have become the targets of these attacks. These statements served as a message in which the Tehran administration articulated its own perspective in response to the rhetoric of the U.S. and Israel, which characterize Iran as a security threat. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also reiterated the call “The world is bigger than five” at the 81st session of the UN General Assembly. Erdoğan noted that a system in which the will of more than 190 countries is subject to the decisions of just five countries is neither fair nor capable of establishing international trust. He called for the Security Council to be reformed in line with this principle and for the veto system to be abolished. He also emphasized that the reform efforts initiated during the tenure of current Secretary-General António Guterres must continue under the new Secretary-General.



UK-Germany Relations and the Future of European Security

The recent diplomatic visit of the newly elected United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, to Berlin for talks with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz signals a critical juncture in UK-EU relations and European security architecture. Received with full military honours at the Chancellery, Burnham’s agenda primarily focused on countering hybrid threats from Russia and deepening bilateral cyber security cooperation. The timing of this visit is highly significant. Following his statements at the Labour Party conference last week, where he emphasized setting out options for a closer connection with the European Union (EU) in the near future, Burnham is actively seeking to repair the structural damages caused by Brexit. Reflecting his late September remarks that Brexit had “done more harm than good,” the UK is currently developing a clear, long-term strategy for its European relations. Germany is also welcoming deeper cooperation with the UK and favors its closer alignment with the EU. In



this context, the two leaders are expected to formally sign off on the Kensington Treaty, a bilateral agreement struck in 2025 that commits both nations to closer cooperation in defence, security, science, technology, and economic growth. Security concerns, particularly regarding Russia, form the backbone of this renewed partnership. Both leaders highlighted the escalating hybrid warfare tactics, citing the drone attack on Leipzig/Halle airport in August, which Berlin accused Russia of orchestrating. Furthermore, PM Burnham expressed his openness to Germany's potential participation in the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), a next-generation fighter jet project currently spearheaded by the UK, Italy, and Japan. This invitation indicates London's willingness to integrate Berlin into high-level, multilateral defense initiatives. Beyond geopolitical threats, the convergence of London and Berlin is accelerated by shared domestic challenges. Both nations are currently navigating similar socio-economic landscapes characterized by irregular migration, economic stagnation, and intense domestic debates over budgets and taxation. For the UK, the economic fallout of Brexit has amplified these vulnerabilities, prompting a desire to regain mutual trade benefits with the EU. This pivot is being welcomed by key European players; recently, French Finance Minister Roland Lescure invited Britain to "come all the way" back to the EU. However, the primary catalyst

for this rapprochement remains the immediate security imperative. With increasing reports of Russian drone activities in the Baltic Sea and NATO's eastern flank, Germany and the broader EU recognize that securing their borders and deepening economic resilience inherently requires the UK's strategic integration into the European defense framework.



Beyond the Classrooms: High School Protests and the 2027 French Political Landscape

The high school protests, which first ignited on September 18 outside the Saint-Exupéry High School in Créteil, a suburb southeast of Paris, reached their peak on Tuesday, October 6. Now spreading across France and even spilling over into Belgium. Adults are present too not only to support the youth in defending their rights but also to shield them from the excessive police violence faced by these underage students. According to official statements by Minister of Education Édouard Geffrey, numerous students and police officers have been injured, and it appear likely to rise day by day. The protests stem from



issues such as a shortage of educational staff, classrooms that are becoming overcrowded yet smaller in size, inadequate and substandard educational equipment, the poor condition of school buildings. A central grievance driving these student protests is the declining capacity of public schools, especially when contrasted with the budgets allocated to private schools, and the fact that many students lack access to basic amenities and sanitary facilities. Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding “Parcoursup”, the platform where students seeking higher education must upload their grades and submit their choices, specifically that its resource allocation undermines the transparency of the student placement process. The violation and sabotage of young people's fundamental right to education worldwide, along with the neglect of education in areas inhabited by disadvantaged groups and migrants, should not form the basis of government policy. Moreover, the government's refusal to heed students' voices, prioritizing capital interests instead, and its deployment of law enforcement against minors signal that the democratic ways of crisis management capacity of French institutions is being tested. Since last week, classes have been suspended in many high schools, and most of the streets have become impassable. This situation demonstrates that the new generation in France is determined to continue asserting its rights and making its voice heard, despite

escalating police violence and threats. With the participation of university students, various trade unions, women's rights advocates, pro-Palestine activists, and the queer community, these protests, now in their third week, appear to be a reflection and continuation of the historic 1968 uprisings led by previous generations. While many protesters have suffered injuries, such as the loss of an eye or an arm, or required hospitalization, the movement persists; and although it remains uncertain whether this will lead to immediate changes in education policy or improved resource allocation, it has undeniably fostered a spirit of immediate change across France. Prominent figures in the protests include Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the left-wing candidate for the upcoming election. A presidential candidate who marches arm-in-arm with students and holds up their banners, he has taken a stand against the rising far-right populism in Europe and joined the public on the streets. Another popular figure is Bally Bagayoko, the Mayor of Saint-Denis, who has stood by the youth from the very beginning. Those are raising questions about whether they might one day ascend to high-level decision-making roles in the country. By creating a strong alternative to political figures like Marine Le Pen, who aims to bring about a major national transformation in France, such figures help consolidate democracy and, by voicing opposition to the rising far-right and reconfigure the political



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spectrum and mobilize the electorate ahead of
2027.