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BULLETIN - 16



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Haiti's Gang Crisis: State Authority, Territorial Control and International Security

On 18 October 2026, armed gangs in Haiti attacked an armoured vehicle carrying four Salvadoran members of the UN-backed Gang Suppression Force. The four soldiers later went missing and were confirmed to be held by gangs. During the attack, armed groups used firearms and explosive devices, while helicopters sent to support the soldiers also came under fire. On 21 October, El Salvador announced a military operation to rescue them. This was the largest attack against the international force since it started its current mission in Haiti. The importance of this event goes beyond the kidnapping of four soldiers. Haiti's gangs are no longer only criminal groups involved in kidnapping, smuggling and illegal trade. In many areas, they control roads, neighbourhoods and important economic routes. The United Nations has stated that gangs continue to challenge state authority and adapt their tactics when security forces increase pressure on them. This means that the security problem in Haiti is also a state capacity

problem. The main question is whether the Haitian state can maintain effective control over its own territory. However, it would be inaccurate to describe all Haitian gangs as insurgent groups. Most of them do not have a clear political programme or a traditional goal of taking control of the national government. Their main interests are often territorial control, economic income and criminal networks. Still, when armed groups can stop security forces from entering an area, control movement and directly attack an international security force, the line between organised crime and armed political violence becomes less clear. The attack also shows the limits of international security intervention. The Gang Suppression Force has more than 2,000 personnel, but this is still far below its planned strength. Gangs have responded to stronger security operations by changing tactics, using ambushes, hostage-taking and violence against communities. This creates a difficult situation: increasing military pressure may weaken gangs in some areas, but it can also lead them to use more aggressive methods in order to protect their territory and influence. For this reason, the Haiti crisis cannot be solved only through military operations. Security forces may regain territory, but these gains can be temporary if the state does not return with police, courts, public services and functioning institutions. The main security issue in Haiti is therefore not only the strength of the gangs, but also the



weakness of state authority in areas where gangs have created their own control. The kidnapping of the Salvadoran personnel demonstrates how far this challenge has developed and why restoring security requires both armed pressure and a stronger state presence.



The Growing Threat to Ukraine's Digital Infrastructure: Hybrid Warfare, Artificial Intelligence, and Cybersecurity

Ukraine's Prime Minister Sergiy Koryshenko warned that attacks on the country's digital infrastructure were intensifying at a pace comparable to strikes against its energy sector. According to the Ukrainian government's official statement, approximately ten data centres in Kyiv had been damaged during September. Koryshenko also warned that cyberattacks targeting government information systems and Ukrainian businesses were increasing, with artificial intelligence becoming a growing concern. He instructed government authorities to establish specialised cybersecurity teams and strengthen their technical defences. These developments illustrate how the Russia-

Ukraine war increasingly affects the digital systems that support public administration, communications and economic activity. The reported incidents should be understood within the broader context of hybrid warfare, in which conventional military operations may be accompanied by cyber operations, information campaigns and attacks on critical infrastructure. Digital infrastructure has strategic importance because disruptions to data storage and government systems can affect the delivery of public services even when physical territory remains under a state's control. However, the available reporting does not establish that every reported incident involved artificial intelligence, and official allegations concerning responsibility should be distinguished from independently verified technical findings. The role of artificial intelligence is particularly relevant because the technology can be used for both offensive and defensive purposes. AI-assisted tools may help identify suspicious activity and accelerate threat detection, while potentially enabling malicious actors to automate certain tasks. The military dimension is also expanding: on 14 October 2026, NATO's Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre reported the development of AI-based models with Ukraine to forecast enemy drone activity and support operational planning. These systems demonstrate how AI is being integrated into defence, although predicting drone activity and defending civilian



data centres are distinct applications. For Türkiye, these developments underline the importance of protecting government networks, financial systems, telecommunications and energy infrastructure. Cybersecurity should therefore be considered part of national security and economic resilience rather than solely a technical responsibility. Cooperation among public institutions, universities and private technology companies could improve preparedness, while international information-sharing mechanisms may help identify emerging threats. At the same time, attributing cyberattacks requires careful technical assessment; premature conclusions can contribute to diplomatic tensions. The wider implication is that the effectiveness of a state's security strategy increasingly depends on its ability to maintain essential services during a crisis. Ukraine's experience suggests that investment in specialised personnel, secure infrastructure and coordinated incident response may be as important as acquiring advanced technologies. Ultimately, AI-assisted cyber operations are likely to remain a significant security concern, but their impact will depend on the capabilities of both attackers and defenders, the resilience of targeted institutions and the development of effective international cooperation.



Analysis of Trump's Voter Support: Religious Identity and Economic Factors in the Political Preferences of White Evangelicals

In its report dated October 22, 2026, Reuters emphasizes that although Donald Trump's overall voter support has decreased, white evangelicals are still an important base for the Republican Party. According to Reuters-Ipsos data, Trump's support among white evangelicals has fallen from 77% in January 2025 to 63% now. This rate is considered much higher than his support among other major demographic groups. One of the main points in the report is that economic problems have had a limited effect on the political preferences of white evangelical voters. While inflation and the high cost of living are among the factors that increase dissatisfaction with the Trump administration, cultural issues such as abortion, gender policies, and religious values also seem to influence the political views of this voter group. This situation is interpreted as showing that economic conditions, cultural values, and religious beliefs can shape voter behavior together. The October 2026 study by the Pew



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Research Center shows that white evangelical Protestants tend to support Republican candidates in House of Representatives elections. For this reason, the Reuters report should be evaluated not only by looking at Trump's personal popularity but also by considering the long-standing relationship between the Republican Party and white evangelical voters. Academic studies show that this support cannot be explained only by party loyalty. Trangerud's study states that white evangelicals' support for Trump has been clear since the 2016 elections and that this support cannot be explained only by opposition to Hillary Clinton. Studies by Whitehead and Perry on Christian nationalism, published in Sage Journals, show that the connection between religious identity and political preferences has become more visible in American politics. The report shows that Trump's support has weakened, but his political coalition has not completely broken apart. White evangelical voters, who may have high participation rates before the midterm elections, are expected to directly affect the Republican Party's performance in key states. For this reason, when evaluating Trump's future political power, it is necessary to look not only at general public opinion polls but also at the behavior of this loyal voter base.



Geopolitical Shifts in the North: China's Entry into the Russia-Japan Territorial Dispute

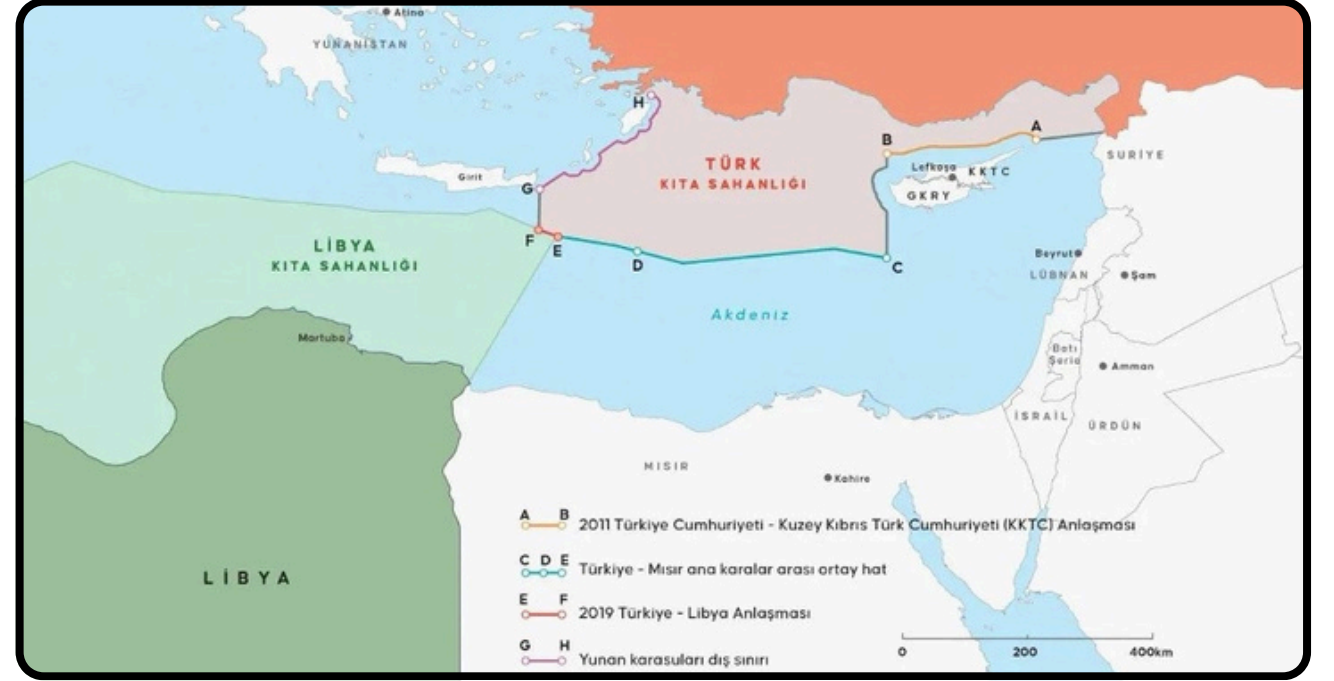
Between October 13 and 19, 2026, the international spotlight was on a new development in the long-running territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kuril Islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories. Reports said a regional Chinese delegation from Heilongjiang visited Etorofu Island to explore opportunities in aquaculture and tourism. The visit sparked diplomatic protests from Tokyo and raised questions about wider geopolitical ramifications of China's expanding economic presence in Russian-held territory. China has traditionally maintained a neutral position in the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan. But its growing economic activity around the disputed islands could be seen as a sign of greater acceptance of Russian control. Such commercial cooperation does not in itself represent any official change in Beijing's position, but it risks conflating economic interests with territorial politics. The visit also highlights increasing ties between Russia and



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China as relations with Western countries remain strained. Japan's growing alignment with Western sanctions against Russia could be compounded by a strengthening economic relationship between Moscow and Beijing, piling on diplomatic pressure on Tokyo. The visit does not seem to be the product of any obvious political strategy, but it may still fuel Japan's concerns about the growing influence of the two powers in the region. The problem goes far beyond regional corporate operations in Japan. There has been little progress in reaching a formal peace deal with Russia, and the conflict is still unsolved. Tokyo is also concerned about the potential long-term effects on Japan's territorial claims as well as the progressive strengthening of Russian sovereignty due to foreign economic activity in the disputed islands. Japan faces additional security concerns in the north as a result of these changes, where it must strike a balance between diplomatic initiatives and more general regional defense needs. The visit provides a glimpse of how the Kuril Islands dispute can become more and more intertwined with broader tensions among great powers. The dispute between Russia and Japan, which has been festering for a long time, is now compounded by China's regional ambitions, Japan's ties with the West, and the deepening strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing. Even if the activities in the disputed territories are described as purely economic

cooperation, they can have political implications and add layers of complexity to an already fragile regional security environment.



The Approval of the Türkiye-Libya Agreement and the Balance of Power in the Eastern Mediterranean

On October 20, 2026, the Libyan House of Representatives unanimously approved the maritime boundary agreement that was signed between Türkiye and Libya on November 27, 2019. The agreement aims to define the maritime boundaries between the two countries in the Mediterranean Sea. One of the main reasons why Libya approved the agreement signed in 2019 in 2026 is the country's divided government. The House of Representatives in eastern Libya opposed the agreement signed with Türkiye and decided not to approve it in 2020. It also decided to cut political ties with Türkiye. However, in 2026, the parliament changed its previous position and reversed its earlier decisions. As a result, the maritime boundary agreement signed between Türkiye and Libya was unanimously approved. How this development will affect the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean and the



future of the region remains to be seen. When the positions of other Mediterranean countries are considered, it can be seen that Greece opposes this agreement. The Türkiye-Libya agreement is considered to be a major source of disagreement regarding maritime boundaries, energy resources in the open sea, and the maritime rights of islands under international law. It is argued that the maritime rights of Crete and other Greek islands are ignored, limiting Greece's rights in the Eastern Mediterranean. For this reason, Greece is also reported to oppose Libya's approval of the agreement. Following the signing of the agreement between Türkiye and Libya, Greece and Egypt signed an agreement in August 2020 to define part of their exclusive economic zones. This development is important in terms of competition over maritime zones in the Eastern Mediterranean. It can also be argued that the disagreements between Türkiye and Greece are not limited to maritime boundaries. The Great Sea Interconnector (GSI) project, which aims to establish an electricity connection between Greece and Cyprus and is also supported by the European Union, is considered within the framework of disputes over maritime areas. Türkiye's objections to the project indicate that energy initiatives are also among the factors affecting regional competition in the Eastern Mediterranean. The approval of the Türkiye-Libya agreement is

considered a development that could strengthen Türkiye's geopolitical position in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition to supporting Türkiye's claims regarding maritime areas, the agreement may also create a political basis for developing energy cooperation in the region. This is important for the exploration of energy resources and the development of potential energy projects in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, the agreement's contribution to Türkiye's economic growth depends on the results of energy exploration activities and the development of regional cooperation. The approval of the agreement may also affect the long-standing competition between Türkiye and Greece over maritime areas. Strengthening relations with Libya and developing diplomatic relations with other regional countries, such as Egypt, are considered factors that could expand Türkiye's room for action in the Eastern Mediterranean. Energy cooperation with Spain also shows that Türkiye's relations in the Mediterranean are not limited to maritime boundaries and sovereignty disputes. In this context, it can be argued that Türkiye's diplomatic and economic relations with different countries may play a role in shaping the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. In conclusion, the approval of the Türkiye-Libya agreement may affect the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. The agreement could strengthen Türkiye's



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regional position, while disagreements over maritime boundaries and energy resources may continue between the countries in the region. Therefore, the future effects of this agreement will depend on diplomatic relations and developments in energy cooperation.



From Bogotá To Jerusalem: Colombia's Sharp Foreign Policy Shift

Colombia officially opened its embassy in Jerusalem on October 14, 2026, as part of its policy to reestablish relations with Israel. The ceremony was attended by Colombian Foreign Minister Omar Bula Escobar and Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. Colombia became the tenth country to open an embassy in Jerusalem with this move. The Bogota government announced that they are rebuilding their previously severed relations with Israel and that they will continue their strategic partnership with Israel in this context. This step was condemned by 18 countries, including Turkey. Colombia and Israel had been cooperating in many areas, especially security, for a long time. However, former President Gustavo Petro announced in May 2024 that

they had severed diplomatic relations with Israel due to the Gaza war. Gustavo Petro had likened Israel's operations in the Gaza Strip to Nazi concentration camps and accused Israel of committing genocide. In this context, he had plans to open an embassy in Ramallah, West Bank. However, even though he could not implement this plan, he continued to stand against Israel's policies. However, President Abelardo de la Espriella, who took office in August 2026 with the support of United States President Donald Trump, tried to repair the relations severed due to the Gaza war by opening an embassy in Jerusalem. With this move, he consciously reversed the previous administration's foreign policy actions. The issue of Jerusalem has long been an unresolved matter between Palestine and Israel. Occupied Palestinians recognize East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, as the capital of their future state, while Israel sees the entire city as its capital. There are also differing views in international politics regarding the status of Jerusalem. While many states keep their embassies in Tel Aviv, ten countries, including the United States, have moved their embassies to Jerusalem. In addition to all this, the United Nations Security Council's resolutions 476 and 478 from 1980 have deemed unilateral actions aimed at changing the city's status as invalid and have called for the withdrawal of diplomatic representatives from the city. In the context of these decisions,



eighteen countries, led by Turkey, condemned Colombia, arguing that its decision undermined efforts for a two-state solution. The long-term impact of the decision will depend on whether the reestablished partnership with Israel provides Colombia with tangible security, technology, and trade gains. Achieving visible results in these areas could facilitate the defense of the foreign policy change in domestic politics and its transformation into a more permanent state policy. Conversely, if the Jerusalem decision remains primarily a leader-centric and ideological choice, the diplomatic costs that may arise with Arab and Islamic countries could increase the likelihood of a subsequent administration changing the policy again.



F-35 Move in the Global Air Superiority Race

The United States Department of Defense (Pentagon) and Lockheed Martin have announced a new 10-year framework agreement for the production of 850 F-35 fighter jets. Although the unit cost of these fifth-generation aircraft, produced in three different configurations, exceeds \$100 million—a point that drew sharp criticism from US

President Donald Trump—the Pentagon has taken a strategic step to secure its long-term defense capacity. Currently holding more than 500 F-35s in its inventory, the US aims to maintain its global air superiority. In a geopolitical landscape where global rivals like China and Russia are entering the competition by producing their own fifth-generation fighter jets, the F-35 project serves as the primary strike force not only for Washington but also for its allies in Europe and the Far East. In this context, the F-35 functions as a standard instrument for military integration within NATO and the Western alliance. Turkey was officially removed from this critical program in 2021. This development compelled Ankara to accelerate its indigenous fifth-generation fighter project, KAAN, and to seek alternative procurements like the Eurofighter in order to preserve its regional deterrence. On the operational front, F-35s do not merely remain a deterrent. The US and its alliance network, particularly Israel, are actively deploying these aircraft in active conflict zones, including the escalating Iran-Israel tensions in the Middle East. Consequently, this massive production agreement stands out as an effort by the US and its allies to retain technological superiority and dictate the air doctrine of the upcoming decade.



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U.S. Ban on DeepSeek: Data Security and Strategic Competition in Artificial Intelligence

On October 19, 2026, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security directed federal civilian agencies to remove DeepSeek products and third-party services that use DeepSeek from their information technology systems. The U.S. administration cited the potential transfer of sensitive data to China, the security of government information, and potential cybersecurity vulnerabilities as reasons for the decision. The decision also restricts federal agencies from purchasing new DeepSeek products. The U.S. appears to view DeepSeek not only as a commercial AI product, but also as a potential risk to government data security. The Chinese Ministry of Commerce, meanwhile, criticized the U.S. decision on October 20. Beijing argued that the ban harmed the legitimate commercial interests of Chinese companies and was inconsistent with previous agreements reached between the leaders of the two countries. Thus, it can be said that the issue has evolved from being merely a technical cybersecurity measure into a

part of the broader technology competition in U.S.– China relations. A major aspect of the DeepSeek debate is the processing of vast amounts of user data by artificial intelligence systems. It can be argued that where data is stored in an AI service, which country's laws it is subject to, and whether government agencies can access this data are no longer merely matters of personal privacy, but have become issues of interstate power struggles. The fact that DeepSeek stores user data in China and that this data is subject to Chinese law has been highlighted as a key element of the security debate. The countries in which AI companies operate and where user data is stored can become part of states' concept of digital sovereignty. The competition between the U.S. and China has expanded in recent years to include semiconductors, advanced chips, export controls, and artificial intelligence technologies. For this reason, while the DeepSeek decision is based on data security concerns, it cannot be evaluated entirely separately from the two countries' strategic competition in the technology sector. This is further illustrated by China's issuance on October 23 of new approvals supporting the global use of models developed by domestic AI companies such as DeepSeek and MiniMax. While the U.S. is removing a China-based AI system from its public infrastructure, China, on the other hand, appears to be working to expand the international use of its own AI



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companies technologies. The DeepSeek case shows that data security, digital sovereignty, national security, and the global expansion of technology companies are increasingly becoming part of the same competitive landscape. Therefore, this ban can be viewed both as a cybersecurity measure and as a reflection of the broader U.S.–China technology competition.