EDITION 011 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026

MIND CLUB

Worldview

Intelligence

WORLD ATLAS · PDMC.WORLD

SPECIAL COVERAGE · THE EDITION IN FOUR SQUARES

04S · P. 19

The United States and China

ANALYSIS

02 · P. 04

Ebola passes 11,500 confirmed; Africa CDC says most new cases were on no one's list

GOV

03 · P. 05

Strikes on Qeshm, tankers hit, and a war powers limit fails 48 to 51

PRESS

05 · P. 06

Measles is endemic again in three countries of the Americas

GOV

THIS WEEK IN ONE SENTENCE · P. 02

Three nuclear powers issued a four-point declaration in Shenzhen, none of it on trade; only Beijing's readout records a Taiwan line.

THIS EDITION

Four points in Shenzhen; none of them on trade

HUMANITY

FOUR POINTS IN SHENZHEN; NONE OF THEM ON TRADE

Three nuclear powers issued a four-point declaration in Shenzhen, none of it on trade; only Beijing's readout records a Taiwan line. Ebola still adds 400 to 500 cases a week, and the United States lost its measles elimination status.

EBOLA, DRC · 11.16

11,504

CONFIRMED · 5,630 DEATHS
ECDC, 11.19; WHO: 400 TO 500 NEW A WEEK

MEASLES, AMERICAS · 11.13

58,213

CONFIRMED CASES · 82 DEATHS
PAHO; US, MEXICO, BOLIVIA LOST STATUS 11.17

BRENT · 11.20

$92.57

DOWN 3.4% ON THE WEEK
FRIDAY SETTLE, BLOOMBERG VIA RIGZONE

SUDAN DRONES · 2026

1,630+

OF 2,230 VERIFIED CIVILIAN DEATHS
UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE, VIA REUTERS

ACUTE HUNGER · NOW

266M

AT LEAST; WFP PLANS TO ASSIST 91M
WFP 2027 OUTLOOK, 11.20

FED DECEMBER HIKE · 11.20

92.5%

MARKET ODDS OF A 25BP HIKE
POLYMARKET; MINUTES: "ALMOST ALL" SEE MORE

US RETAIL SALES · OCT

+0.2%

NOMINAL; NOT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT
CENSUS; SEPTEMBER UNREVISED AT +0.8%

US IMPORTS FROM CHINA · SEP

$31.5B

HIGHEST MONTH OF 2026; NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED
CENSUS, RELEASED 11.04

VERIFICATION AT A GLANCE

SOURCES CHECKED	PRIMARY SOURCES	EVIDENCE CARD	OPEN FORECASTS	CORRECTIONS
68	**71%**	**EC-007**	**18**	**0**
53 match · 15 partial	48 of 68 checked	Supported · Supported · Thin	4 graded, 1 provisional · next due 11.30 · 5 with outside view	none this edition

#	THE WORLD IN FIVE MINUTES	SOURCES	PRIORITY
01	**Shenzhen:** Trump, Xi and Putin issue a four-point declaration with no trade terms; the Taiwan line appears only in China's readout.	GOV PRESS	MUST READ
02	**Ebola:** Congo reaches 11,504 confirmed cases; Africa CDC says most new cases come from outside contact lists.	GOV PRESS	MUST READ
03	**Iran war:** US strikes on Qeshm, more tankers hit, and the Senate rejects a war powers limit 48 to 51.	PRESS	MUST READ
04	**Ukraine:** strikes on the Kerch Bridge; Putin says Russia "will not negotiate" after them, as Europe is promised a seat.	PRESS	KNOW IT
05	**Measles:** PAHO finds the United States, Mexico and Bolivia have lost elimination status.	GOV PRESS	KNOW IT
04S	**Special Coverage:** the United States and China, from the 1972 communiqué to this week's readouts, with the trade data, Taiwan and the wider West.	GOV DATA PRESS	SPECIAL

READING PRIORITY INDEX

10 MINUTES — The world in 5 minutes (01) · Verification at a glance (00) · Evidence Card (EC-007, in 01) · Forecasting lab, Outside View (09)

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MUST READ — The world in 5 minutes · Special Coverage: The United States and China · Three issues worth understanding deeply · Red Team / Blue Team · Early signals

KNOW IT — The view from elsewhere · Global human impact dashboard · Policy & law tracker · The argument map · Forecasting lab · Intervention vs. non-intervention · This week in five sentences · Ask Mind Club and corrections

SCAN — Follow the power · Where the discourse is happening · Ideological Turing test · Human progress · One conversation worth having · Intellectual cross-training · Signal vs. noise · Philosophy lens · Political science lens · Sources

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01 / THE WORLD IN 5 MINUTES — RANKED BY CONSEQUENCE FOR PEOPLE, NOT ATTENTION

THE WORLD IN FIVE MINUTES

A summit that produced a declaration but no trade text leads, ahead of an outbreak that is outrunning its contact lists and a war at sea that has returned to exchanges of fire.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

The world brief with accountability. Every important claim carries a label: FACT supported by the cited source, ASSESSMENT our reasoned reading, FORECAST a judgment with odds, DISCOURSE an argument, not a verified claim, and EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT when the evidence can't settle it. Key claims are checked against their source before print, with a verdict MATCH PARTIAL OPEN. Badges show the kind of source: GOV government, court or intergovernmental body PEER peer-reviewed PRE preprint or working paper DATA curated dataset ORG an organization's own release PRESS journalism MKT prediction market. In Red Team / Blue Team the colors are war-game roles, never parties. An Evidence Card grades the evidence for one claim, part by part, never the policy. Items are ranked by how many people a development reaches, how badly, how hard it is to reverse and how soon.

01 Four points on paper in Shenzhen, and no trade text MUST READ

WHAT HAPPENED

Presidents Trump, Xi and Putin met in Shenzhen on 11.19, on the sidelines of APEC, in what the White House fact sheet calls a "first ever trilateral meeting of the Presidents"; AP puts it at roughly 70 minutes, CBS at

about an hour and a half. The White House posted a "U.S.-Russia-China Heads of State Declaration toward Peace" with four points: reform of the UN; more refined petroleum products and stable energy flows; state consent and the immunities of state officials as "of paramount importance," with the ICC and similar bodies told not to "abuse their jurisdiction"; and "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought," with a dialogue on nuclear risk. FACT

WHY IT MATTERS The declaration does not mention Ukraine, Taiwan or trade. New START expired in February, and AP gives China more than 600 warheads against more than 5,000 each for the United States and Russia; the text sets no limit on any of them. FACT

WHO IS AFFECTED US exporters and farmers, because no tariff rate changed and the truce agreed in Busan "now runs to 10 January 2027" (China Briefing); the ICC, named in a text issued by three of the Security Council's five permanent members; and Taiwan, through the wording in Beijing's readout. FACT

WHAT CHANGED China's foreign ministry says Xi and Trump, meeting on 11.19, "agreed to formulate an action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability." According to that readout, Trump said: "The United States does not support 'Taiwan Independence.'" We found no White House readout of the bilateral meeting; the White House posted the joint declaration and, on 11.20, a fact sheet that mentions China only in general terms. Three days earlier, on 11.16, the US Commerce Department required licenses for advanced AI chips shipped to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Brazil, which it designated an "unacceptable risk of diversion" (Al Jazeera); China's commerce ministry replied, "If the U.S. persists, China will take countermeasures" (Fortune). FACT

WHY IT RANKS HERE Reach: the leaders of three nuclear powers, and a tariff truce that lapses on 01.10.2027 unless it is renewed. What changed this week is mostly the paper record, not the terms. ASSESSMENT

HEADLINES MISS The Taiwan sentence exists only in China's account. With no US readout of the bilateral, the two governments' records of the same meeting can't be compared line by line, and the US position should not be read from Beijing's text alone (see 04S). ASSESSMENT

SOURCES MATCH "agreed to formulate an action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability": China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11.19.

SOURCE · WHITE HOUSE, JOINT DECLARATION (11.19) GOV · WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET (11.20) GOV · CHINA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (11.19) GOV · AP VIA PBS NEWSHOUR (11.19) PRESS · CBS NEWS (11.19) PRESS · CHINA BRIEFING (11.20) PRESS · AL JAZEERA, CHIP RULE (11.17) PRESS · FORTUNE (11.18) PRESS

02 Ebola passes 11,500 confirmed; Africa CDC says most new cases were on no one's list

MUST READ

WHAT HAPPENED ECDC's 11.19 update counts 11,504 confirmed Bundibugyo cases and 5,630 related deaths in Congo, in data through 11.16, with 81.6% of identified contacts under follow-up (80.9% a week earlier). Opening WHO's third IHR Emergency Committee meeting on 11.17, the Director-General said: "Between 400 and 500 new cases are still reported every week, and the outbreak is still expanding in some areas." FACT

WHY IT MATTERS Kaseya, for Africa CDC, told Reuters (via Al Jazeera, 11.15) that over 80% of new cases emerged outside contact lists and over 65% of deaths occurred in the community, and that the outbreak is "still not under control." He said $1.3 billion of $2.9 billion pledged has been released. FACT

WHO IS AFFECTED Ituri, with 7,911 confirmed cases, and North Kivu, with 2,925 (ECDC). Young children most of all: in UNICEF data to 11.04, cited by ECDC, 72% of under-fives with confirmed Ebola died. FACT

WHAT CHANGED WHO's last Ebola Disease Outbreak News is still DON625, at 10,668 confirmed as of 11.03. At a media briefing on 11.17 the Director-General put "reported cases" at "over 11 300" and said WHO expects two candidate vaccines developed for Bundibugyo to "begin testing as early as next week." Nigeria's only patient has been discharged, and Kenya's 42-day countdown to being declared free of the virus runs to 12.23 if no new case appears. FACT

WHY IT RANKS HERE Severity and irreversibility: about half of confirmed patients have died, and there is still no licensed vaccine or treatment for this species. ASSESSMENT

HEADLINES MISS ECDC's 81.6% and Africa CDC's "over 80%" measure different things: the first is the share of known contacts being followed, the second the share of new cases who were never on a list. Both can be true. Together they

suggest the follow-up rate can look steady while most new chains of transmission start out of view. ASSESSMENT

SOURCES MATCH "has reported a total of 11 504 confirmed cases, including 5 630 related deaths": ECDC, 11.19.

SOURCE · ECDC (11.19) GOV · WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (11.17) GOV · WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MEDIA BRIEFING (11.17) GOV · WHO DON625 (11.06) GOV · REUTERS VIA AL JAZEERA, AFRICA CDC (11.15) PRESS · THE STANDARD, KENYA (11.11) PRESS

03 Strikes on Qeshm, tankers hit, and a war powers limit fails 48 to 51 MUST READ

WHAT HAPPENED — On 11.17 the United States struck an IRGC missile site on Qeshm Island; a US official called it "self-defense" and said, "The strike was in response to IRGC aggression targeting U.S. personnel and assets" (CBS). On 11.19 the Senate rejected a war powers resolution 48 to 51, with three Republicans voting in favor. Pentagon deputy comptroller Arthur Miller put the war's cost at over $48 billion since late February, not counting damage to US bases. FACT

WHY IT MATTERS — The blockade is tightening at sea. A CENTCOM advisory says ships that take cargo by ship-to-ship transfer from blockaded vessels "may be stopped, boarded, diverted, captured" (Al Jazeera, 11.20). Reuters, citing TankerTrackers.com, reported a transfer that could be Iran's first successful crude export since July if it arrives; Iran has not confirmed it. FACT

WHO IS AFFECTED — Seafarers: ADNOC said one of its tankers was struck in the strait on 11.17, and UKMTO reported a tanker hit by an unknown projectile on 11.18; the two accounts differ on whether a crew member is missing. Gulf residents: Bahrain and Kuwait said they intercepted Iranian drones and missiles on 11.18, and a tower in Riyadh was damaged, with no injuries, after Houthi strikes were claimed (CBS). FACT

WHAT CHANGED — Trump told Fox News on 11.18: "They're looking at gases, looking at bio, because we've shut them out with the nuclear." Iran's Baqaei called that "the same fraudulent script." Trump told Channel 12 he is "not rushing": "We'll see what happens after the new year starts." The IRGC claimed two more tankers hit mines on 11.19, a claim not corroborated. DISCOURSE

WHY IT RANKS HERE — Reach: energy prices touch most households, and the conflict returned this week to direct US and Iranian exchanges of fire. ASSESSMENT

HEADLINES MISS — Iran's talk of a shipping corridor is now with Oman, not Washington, and still needs formal approval; Gulf News found "no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect." Brent fell 3.4% on the week to $92.57, a third weekly loss, as "traders weighed the risk of renewed US strikes on Iran against ample crude supplies" (Bloomberg via Rigzone). We found no transit count for the strait this week. FACT

SOURCES MATCH "no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect": Gulf News, 11.19.

SOURCE · CBS NEWS LIVE (11.17 TO 11.20) PRESS · AL JAZEERA (11.20) PRESS · GULF NEWS (11.19) PRESS · BLOOMBERG VIA RIGZONE (11.20) PRESS

04 The bridge is struck, Moscow rules out talks, and Europe is promised a seat KNOW IT

WHAT HAPPENED — Ukraine struck the Kerch (Crimean) Bridge on 11.16 and 11.17, damaging the road section, and then the railway section, a strike confirmed on 11.19 that the General Staff said used Neptune missiles (hromadske). On 11.19 President Putin said, via TASS: "But after the strikes on the Crimean Bridge, we will not negotiate." He warned of a "much more painful" response; CBS reports Russia struck two major bridges in Kyiv the same day. FACT

WHY IT MATTERS — Also on 11.19, Berlin hosted a Coalition of the Willing summit with nearly 40 delegations, Witkoff and Kushner among them. Kyiv Post reports Kushner said Russia "had agreed to engage in a multilateral format with the European representatives." Chancellor Merz: "We want to be involved in these negotiations. We want to do it as a team with Kyiv and Washington." FACT

WHO IS AFFECTED — Prisoners of war and their families: the exchange agreed in principle at Abu Dhabi (11.10 to 11.11) has no reported date or size, and we found no report that it was carried out this week. Civilians in Kyiv, where the

bridges were hit. FACT

WHAT CHANGED — Europe moved from outside the room to a promised place in a next round; Zelensky said it would be four-way, with timing open. Ukraine was not part of the Shenzhen talks, and AP reports Trump rejected new Russia sanctions there. FACT

WHY IT RANKS HERE — Duration and reach: the largest war in Europe since 1945, where this week's statements point in opposite directions on whether talks continue. ASSESSMENT

HEADLINES MISS — Kushner's account of Russian agreement to a European format and Putin's "we will not negotiate" came on the same day. We found no Kremlin confirmation of the European format, so the next round's shape rests on the US envoy's word alone. ASSESSMENT

SOURCES MATCH "But after the strikes on the Crimean Bridge, we will not negotiate": Putin via TASS, as reported by hromadske, 11.19.

SOURCE · HROMADSKE (11.19) PRESS · CBS NEWS (11.19) PRESS · KYIV POST (11.19) PRESS · BRUSSELS SIGNAL (11.13) PRESS · AP VIA PBS NEWSHOUR (11.19) PRESS

05 Measles is endemic again in three countries of the Americas KNOW IT

WHAT HAPPENED — PAHO said on 11.17 that "endemic measles transmission was determined to have been re-established in Bolivia, Mexico, and the United States," after its regional verification commission met from 11.10 to 11.13 and Director Jarbas Barbosa accepted its recommendations. The test is one genotype and lineage circulating without interruption for 12 months or more. Barbosa: "This is a serious warning for our Region, but it is not an irreversible setback." FACT

WHY IT MATTERS — PAHO counts 58,213 confirmed cases and 82 deaths in the region as of 11.13, against 12,806 cases in the same period last year. Each of the three countries must now submit a corrective action plan (Al Jazeera). FACT

WHO IS AFFECTED — In the United States, the CDC counts 5,838 confirmed cases in 2026 as of 11.19, and preschool MMR coverage is about 92% (Al Jazeera). AP reports that "Ten measles-associated deaths have been reported in the U.S. this year" and that "at least five of the dead were children." FACT

WHAT CHANGED — It is the first US loss of the status since elimination in 2000; our forecast F-006 (0.85) resolves Yes (see 09). FACT CDC Director Erica Schwartz responded: "The measles elimination designation is not what protects Americans. Vaccination does." (Al Jazeera, 11.17). EC-007 · SUPPORTED · THIN AP reports that HHS Secretary Kennedy and other federal leaders "argued that vaccination rates were waning for years before Trump took office a second time," while state and local health officials say the cost of the response is "far higher" than the $100 million the CDC awarded. DISCOURSE (the responses)

WHY IT RANKS HERE — Reach: three countries at once, in a region whose confirmed cases are about four and a half times last year's, by our arithmetic. Ranked fifth because the harm builds over months rather than landing this week. ASSESSMENT

HEADLINES MISS — The federal and state death counts differ. The CDC confirms six deaths this year, while Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and New York report 10 between them (Al Jazeera). FACT

SOURCES MATCH "All three countries have therefore lost their measles elimination status.": PAHO, 11.17.

SOURCE · PAHO (11.17) GOV · CDC MEASLES (DATA TO 11.19) GOV · AL JAZEERA (11.17) PRESS · AP VIA OPB (11.17) PRESS

EVIDENCE CARD EC-007 CHECKED 11.20.2026

"The measles elimination designation is not what protects Americans. Vaccination does."

CDC DIRECTOR ERICA SCHWARTZ, AS REPORTED BY AL JAZEERA, 11.17.2026, RESPONDING TO PAHO'S FINDING OF THE SAME DAY; A GOVERNMENT HEALTH AGENCY'S STATEMENT, NOT A PARTY'S

PART OF THE CLAIM	VERDICT	CERTAINTY
Vaccination protects the vaccinated person against measles	SUPPORTED	■■■□ MODERATE
Vaccination also protects others: high coverage keeps measles from spreading	SUPPORTED	■■□□ LOW
The elimination designation itself is not what protects	THIN	■□□□ VERY LOW

SHORT VERSION A Cochrane review puts one dose at about 95% effective in preventing measles in the person vaccinated, at moderate certainty. Evidence that vaccination also protects other people is smaller and weaker but points the same way, including a model in which current US coverage may let measles become endemic again. No study tests whether the designation protects anyone; the research treats elimination status as a result of coverage, not as a cause.

HOW THE BRIEF SHOULD LABEL IT ASSESSMENT SUPPORTED ON VACCINATION; THE DESIGNATION POINT IS UNTESTED

THE STUDIES · STRONGEST DESIGN FIRST

STUDY	DESIGN	PROTECTS THE VACCINATED	PROTECTS OTHERS	DESIGNATION NOT WHAT PROTECTS
Di Pietrantonj et al. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (2020)	SYSTEMATIC REVIEW · 138 STUDIES	BACKS "Vaccine effectiveness in preventing measles was 95% after one dose" (7 cohort studies; moderate certainty)	BACKS 81% after one dose "in preventing cases among household contacts or preventing transmission to others" (3 cohort studies; low certainty)	NOT TESTED Vaccine effects only
Phadke et al. JAMA (2016)	REVIEW OF US MEASLES OUTBREAK REPORTS SINCE ELIMINATION	BACKS Vaccine refusal "associated with an increased risk for measles among people who refuse vaccines"	BACKS The same refusal is linked to higher risk "among fully vaccinated individuals"	NOT TESTED
Kiang et al. JAMA (2025)	SIMULATION MODEL · US STATES · A MODEL, NOT OBSERVED DATA	NOT TESTED Assumes vaccine effect	BACKS "At current state-level vaccination rates, the simulation model predicts measles may reestablish endemicity"	NOT TESTED Models endemicity as a result of coverage; consistent with the claim, does not test it

WHAT WOULD MOVE IT

A study of whether gaining or losing elimination status changes vaccination uptake, public-health funding or outbreak response; new US data on effectiveness among household contacts.

COVERAGE

Three studies shown, with result sentences quoted from their PubMed abstracts. One left out: Nyathi et al. (PLoS Medicine, 2019), on California's school-entry law and MMR coverage, which tests a policy lever, not this claim. Part 2 clears the Thin bar because the Cochrane estimate pools three cohort studies; its certainty is the review's own low rating. Part 3 has no study that tests it. Blind-checked 11.20 from the PubMed result sentences: 9 of 9 calls agreed; the Cochrane "protects others" estimate pools household-contact protection with onward transmission, so it backs Part 2 only indirectly.

VERDICT SUPPORTED · MIXED · NOT SUPPORTED · THIN GRADES THE EVIDENCE, NEVER THE POLICY

CERTAINTY ■■■■ HIGH ■■■□ MODERATE ■■□□ LOW ■□□□ VERY LOW

BACKGROUND: HOW MEASLES WAS ELIMINATED, AND WHY IT IS BACK

Before the vaccine. Measles once reached almost every American child: the CDC says that in the decade before a vaccine, "nearly all children got measles by the time they were 15 years old." It estimates that 3 to 4 million people in the United States were infected each year. Among reported cases each year, an estimated 400 to 500 people died and 48,000 were hospitalized. "A vaccine became available in 1963." FACT

Two doses, then elimination. After a 1989 outbreak among vaccinated school-aged children, medical groups recommended "a second dose of MMR vaccine for all children," the CDC says. Measles was declared eliminated from the United States in 2000, which meant the absence of continuous spread for more than 12 months. PAHO applies a similar test today: the same genotype and lineage circulating uninterrupted for 12 months or more. FACT

WHEN	MILESTONE	SOURCE
1963	Measles vaccine becomes available in the United States	CDC
1989	Outbreak among vaccinated schoolchildren; second MMR dose recommended for all children	CDC
2000	Measles declared eliminated from the United States	CDC
2018 and 2019	Endemic transmission re-established in Venezuela, then Brazil	PAHO
2024	The Americas regain elimination status after both interrupt transmission	PAHO
November 2025	Regional status lost after sustained transmission in Canada	PAHO
11.17.2026	Endemic transmission re-established in Bolivia, Mexico and the United States	PAHO

What may be driving the return. Coverage among US kindergartners has slipped. The CDC says MMR coverage was 92.4% in the 2025 to 2026 school year, as coverage for every reported vaccine decreased, and that exemptions from one or more vaccines rose to 4.2% from 3.6% the year before. PAHO says "Sustaining at least 95% coverage with both doses of the measles vaccine in every community remains essential." FACT

National averages can hide local gaps. The CDC says falling national MMR rates leave some communities "more vulnerable to measles introductions and rapid spread," and that rising global cases in 2025 and 2026 raise the risk "especially in communities with lower MMR vaccination coverage." WHO says that in countries close to elimination, "cases imported from other countries remain an important source of infection." FACT

Global coverage has not returned to its 2019 level. WHO puts first-dose coverage at 84% in 2025, "slightly below the 2019 level of 86%," and says 77% of children received both doses. PAHO links the region's resurgence to "persistent gaps in population immunity" and lists "barriers to health services, missed vaccinations, misinformation and vaccine hesitancy." FACT

The sources describe several pressures at once rather than one cause. Lower kindergarten coverage, more exemptions, pockets of low coverage and imported cases may each contribute; none of the sources we read measures their relative weight, and the CDC and PAHO present them as risks, not as a breakdown of this year's cases. Which factor mattered most in Bolivia, Mexico or the United States is not established by the evidence we found. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · CDC MEASLES HISTORY GOV · CDC SCHOOLVAXVIEW (2025 TO 2026) GOV · PAHO (11.17) GOV · WHO MEASLES FACT SHEET GOV

THE VIEW FROM ELSEWHERE

Shenzhen read as order under a Chinese host in Beijing, as a carve-up that smaller states fear in Abu Dhabi and Jakarta, and as a symbolic prize for the host in a Saudi-owned magazine.

OUTLET	COUNTRY	FRAMING	IN THEIR WORDS
Global Times PRESS state-owned, People's Daily group	China	Leader diplomacy as a stabilizer, with China as the host that brings order.	"Trump said that every meeting with Xi had been very pleasant."
The National PRESS private, Abu Dhabi-owned (International Media Investments)	UAE	A great-power settlement that smaller states fear.	"The summit has drawn comparisons to the 1945 Yalta Conference, unnerving smaller nations fearful of being sidelined by great-power agreements."
CNBC Indonesia PRESS private, CT Corp (Trans Media), CNBC licensed brand	Indonesia	The world's fate at stake; ceremony against results; worry in Europe, Ukraine and the Middle East (our translation).	"Kekhawatiran terutama muncul di Eropa, Ukraina, dan Timur Tengah." (Concerns mainly arose in Europe, Ukraine and the Middle East.)
MercoPress PRESS private	Uruguay	Xi and Putin side by side on the eve, with low expectations.	"No agreements are expected." Xi, quoted: "Openness brings progress and isolation inevitably leads to backwardness."
Al Majalla PRESS private, Saudi Research and Media Group, London-based	Saudi Arabia	Not a Yalta: no alliance was formed, and the meeting itself is Beijing's prize.	"For him, the summit's greatest achievement may simply be that it took place."

Where they converge and split. All five expected little of substance, and AP's account of the result, "a far narrower agenda," bears them out. They split on whom the meeting serves: Global Times frames it as stability China hosted, The National and CNBC Indonesia as a risk to smaller states, Europe and Ukraine, and Al Majalla as a symbolic win for Beijing. ASSESSMENT

What English-only readers miss. The CNBC Indonesia row was read in Indonesian and translated by us; the rest are English editions. Every row is dated 11.18 or 11.19, written before or during the meeting; we could not open a non-US outlet's reading from after it, and we found no Russian, Ukrainian or African outlet's own coverage this week. Ownership is given at the level widely recorded; we did not check each outlet's filings this week. FACT

SOURCE · AP VIA PBS NEWSHOUR (11.19) PRESS

GLOBAL HUMAN IMPACT DASHBOARD

No arrow moved. Monthly readings carried: FAO October 133.9 (next 12.04); Copernicus October +1.75°C; NOAA advisory 11.12; UNHCR end-2025.

DOMAIN	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	EVIDENCE THIS WEEK	WHAT WOULD FLIP IT
Geopolitics & conflict	↓	↓	US strikes on Qeshm and tankers hit near Hormuz; Ukraine struck the Kerch Bridge and Putin said Russia "will not negotiate." Pulling the other way: the three leaders' meeting, which the White House calls the "first ever" of its kind.	A dated four-way Ukraine round; a signed US-Iran framework.
Democracy & governance	↓	↓	Israel's opposition accused Netanyahu of an attempted "coup"; Likud denies the reports (Al Jazeera). Pulling the other way: Georgia certified its results on 11.20 after its largest statewide risk-limiting audit.	North Carolina certified on 11.24 without court reversal; a Knesset government formed on time.
Human rights	↓	↓	The UN human rights office says drones killed more than 1,630 of the 2,230 civilians verified killed in Sudan this year (Reuters). Pulling the other way: the ICJ found Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya, 9 to 6.	Independent access for responders in Kordofan and Ituri.
Global health	↓	↓	Ebola at 11,504 confirmed (ECDC, through 11.16); WHO says 400 to 500 new cases a week.	Three weeks of falling Ebola cases in WHO data.
Poverty & inequality	→	→	No new global data this week.	A World Bank poverty update.
Migration & refugees	↓	↓	A preliminary OCHA estimate, reported by RFI, puts more than 323,000 people displaced in South Kivu in four days; more than 1.7 million are displaced in Gaza (UN News).	A UNHCR mid-2026 figure below end-2025.
Food & water security	↓	↓	WFP's 2027 outlook: at least 266 million people face acute hunger; it plans to reach 91 million. In Gaza's camps, WFP is down to "one hot meal every two days."	Two monthly FAO readings below 130.
Climate & environment	↓	↓	COP31 ran past its close; Reuters reports Thursday's draft dropped all references to phasing out fossil fuels and a $120 billion adaptation target.	An adopted COP31 text with an adaptation finance number.
Education	→	→	No new global data.	A new UNESCO out-of-school estimate.
Technology & AI	→	→	No US-China AI dialogue meeting reported; the White House had said the next exchange would come "by November 2026."	A held second round of the US-China dialogue.
Economic opportunity	↓	↓	Fed minutes: "almost all participants" see further tightening; October retail sales +0.2% in nominal terms, not adjusted for prices and not statistically significant; Fed staff estimated PCE inflation at 3.6% in September. Pulling the other way: jobless claims at 203,000.	Wage growth above inflation for two months.
Trade & globalization	↓	↓	US chip licenses now cover five more countries (11.16), and China's commerce ministry warned of countermeasures; the first US-China Board of Trade meeting (11.13) reached no agreement.	A truce extended past 01.10.2027 with tariff cuts.
Scientific progress	↑	↑	WHO expects two Bundibugyo-specific vaccine candidates to begin testing; a Science study traces the outbreak's early spread to human movement.	A failed or halted countermeasure trial for Ebola.
Healthcare access	→	→	Up: Gilead's royalty-free obeldesivir licenses for 127 countries, for a drug not yet approved for this use. Down: Nebraska denied 533 Medicaid renewals under work rules by August, 91.9% for missing documents (Stateline).	The first 2027 US enrollment figures.
Public health	↓	↓	PAHO: the US, Mexico and Bolivia lost measles elimination status (11.17); CDC counts 5,838 US cases.	A month of falling US measles counts.

DOMAIN	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	EVIDENCE THIS WEEK	WHAT WOULD FLIP IT
Biosecurity	↓	↓	No licensed Bundibugyo vaccine or treatment; Africa CDC says over 80% of new cases emerged outside contact lists.	A licensed Bundibugyo vaccine or therapeutic.
Freedom & civil liberties	↓	↓	Haaretz reported, via Al Jazeera, that the Shin Bet head sought to wiretap Joint List leaders and the attorney general refused; Likud denies the reports.	Entry rules for Congo travelers replaced by health screening.

SOURCE · CBS NEWS LIVE (11.17 TO 11.20) PRESS · AP VIA PBS NEWSHOUR (11.19) PRESS · AL JAZEERA, ISRAEL (11.16) PRESS · CAPITOL BEAT (11.20) PRESS · REUTERS VIA TIMESLIVE (11.17) PRESS · AL JAZEERA, ICJ (11.20) PRESS · ECDC (11.19) GOV · DAILY NEWS EGYPT, OCHA VIA RFI (11.18) PRESS · UN NEWS, GAZA (11.17) GOV · UN NEWS, WFP OUTLOOK (11.20) GOV · REUTERS VIA WIKY (11.20) PRESS · THE NEXT WEB, WHITE HOUSE (09.28) PRESS · FEDERAL RESERVE MINUTES (11.18) GOV · CENSUS RETAIL SALES (11.17) GOV · DOL CLAIMS (11.19) GOV · AL JAZEERA, CHIP RULE (11.17) PRESS · CHINA BRIEFING (11.20) PRESS · WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL (11.17) GOV · EBENGO ET AL., SCIENCE (11.12) PEER · GILEAD (11.16) ORG · STATELINE VIA PENNSYLVANIA CAPITAL-STAR (11.18) PRESS · PAHO (11.17) GOV · CDC MEASLES GOV · REUTERS VIA AL JAZEERA, AFRICA CDC (11.15) PRESS · FAO (11.06) DATA · COPERNICUS DATA · NOAA CPC (11.12) GOV · UNHCR GOV

A. ELIMINATION LOST; THE CLOCK RESTARTS

PAHO found endemic measles re-established in the United States, Mexico and Bolivia. The region's count is about four and a half times last year's, and the status returns only when chains stop running for a year.

SITUATION

On 11.17 PAHO Director Jarbas Barbosa accepted his verification commission's finding that "endemic measles transmission was determined to have been re-established in Bolivia, Mexico, and the United States." The test is one genotype and lineage circulating without a break for 12 months or more. As of 11.13 the Americas had 58,213 confirmed cases and 82 deaths. The same period last year had 12,806 cases (PAHO). FACT

The CDC counts 5,838 confirmed US cases this year as of 11.19, and six deaths; 96% of cases are tied to outbreaks. The death count is disputed: Al Jazeera reports that Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and New York report 10 combined, and AP reports ten deaths, at least five of them children. Preschool MMR coverage is about 92% (Al Jazeera). FACT

HISTORY

The United States had held elimination status since 2000; Canada lost its own in 2025 (AP). Worldwide, WHO estimates about 95,000 measles deaths in 2024, down 88% since 2000, and says "Nearly 59 million lives have been saved by the measles vaccine since 2000." A 2025 JAMA model found that at state vaccination rates then current, measles "may reestablish endemicity" in 83% of simulations, after a mean of 20.9 years. The event came far sooner than that model's average. FACT ASSESSMENT (the last sentence)

STAKEHOLDERS

Verifier: PAHO and its Regional Monitoring and Re-Verification Commission. **Federal health officials:** CDC Director Erica Schwartz and HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. **State and city health departments**, which AP reports say the cost of the response is "far higher" than the $100 million the CDC awarded. **Mexico's and Bolivia's health ministries**, which, like the US, must submit a corrective action plan in the coming weeks (Al Jazeera). **Parents**, who make the vaccination decision.

HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

WHO BENEFITS

Few this week. Children reached by catch-up campaigns, if the corrective plans pay for them. ASSESSMENT

WHO BEARS THE COST

Children first: at least five of the ten US deaths AP counts were children.

WHO HAS LITTLE VOICE

Vaccinated people in low-coverage communities, whose risk rises with their neighbors' refusals (Phadke et al., JAMA 2016).

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Politically, AP reports that Kennedy and other federal leaders argue that vaccination rates were falling before President Trump's second term and that the US handles measles better than other countries; AP also reports that Kennedy and Schwartz have called vaccination the best prevention. Ethically, the dispute is over who answers for coverage when parents make the decision and the harm can reach their neighbors. ASSESSMENT

The administration's first reply came from the CDC Director: "The measles elimination designation is not what protects Americans. Vaccination does" (Al Jazeera, 11.17). EC-007 · SUPPORTED · THIN DISCOURSE

COMPETING POLICY APPROACHES (STRONGEST CASE FOR EACH, UNRANKED)

APPROACH	STRONGEST ARGUMENT ITS ADVOCATES MAKE
School-entry requirements	California's law ending non-medical exemptions raised MMR coverage by 3.3 percentage points against a synthetic control (Nyathi et al., PLoS Medicine, 2019).

APPROACH	STRONGEST ARGUMENT ITS ADVOCATES MAKE
Outbreak response first	With 96% of US cases outbreak-linked, finding and vaccinating around each chain is the fastest route back to 12 months without one.
Vaccination, not status	Schwartz's case: the designation is a label, and resources belong in shots, not in defending a certificate.
Trust before mandates	Where refusal clusters, local clinicians and community outreach may move parents that a requirement would harden.

SOURCE · PAHO (11.17); AL JAZEERA (11.17); AP VIA OPB (11.17); CDC MEASLES DATA (11.19); WHO (11.28.2025); KIANG ET AL., JAMA (2025); PHADKE ET AL., JAMA (2016); DI PIETRANTONJ ET AL., COCHRANE (2020)

B. A GENOCIDE VERDICT AGAINST A STATE, BY 9 VOTES TO 6

The International Court of Justice held Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. The argument has already moved from Myanmar to the method, and to the case against Israel, not expected to be argued until 2029.

SITUATION

On 11.19 the ICJ found Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya, the first time the court has found that a state committed genocide, Crisis Group's Richard Horsey told Reuters. In 2007 the court found Serbia had failed to prevent the Srebrenica genocide but had not committed it (UN News, 02.26.2007). The genocide finding passed 9 to 6 and the reparations order 10 to 5 (Al Jazeera). Reuters reports that the court counted about 10,000 killings, the razing of homes, widespread sexual violence and the flight of more than 700,000 people in 2017 as genocide. FACT

UN Secretary-General Guterres said impunity for "such horrific acts must not stand"; The Gambia called it "a historic day for international justice"; a US official said "We are studying the decision to fully assess its implications"; the UK expelled Myanmar's defense attaché (Al Jazeera, 11.19). Myanmar's military-led government's response was not in the reports we could open. FACT

HISTORY

The Gambia, a small state, brought the case with the backing of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and 219 Rohingya and Myanmar civil-society organizations (Al Jazeera). The verdict came on the same day the US, Russian and Chinese leaders issued a declaration saying the International Criminal Court, a separate tribunal, and "similar institutions" must not "abuse their jurisdiction" (White House, 11.19). South Africa's case against Israel is not expected to be argued until 2029 (Reuters). FACT

STAKEHOLDERS

Parties: The Gambia (applicant) and Myanmar. **Victims:** the Rohingya, more than 700,000 of whom fled in 2017. **Governments reacting:** the UN Secretary-General, the UK and the US. **Watching for precedent:** South Africa and Israel, and the lawyers on both sides of that case.

HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

WHO BENEFITS

Rohingya survivors seeking a record. Wai Wai Nu: "the world's highest court has permanently shattered that state-sponsored lie" (Al Jazeera). DISCOURSE

WHO BEARS THE COST

Myanmar's military-led government, in law; ordered reparations depend on it paying.

WHO HAS LITTLE VOICE

Survivors waiting on reparations from a court with no enforcement arm. Nazmus Sakib: "The court has established the truth. Now justice has to bring it home."

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

The legal dispute is over method. Reuters reports that the court kept the rule that genocidal intent must be the "only reasonable inference" while widening the contextual factors it weighs; Israeli scholar Yuval Shany reads that as giving "South Africa more avenues to argue for genocide." Marieke de Hoon, of the University of Amsterdam, says arguments that a military objective "would erase the idea" of genocidal intent are now rejected. Andrew Tucker of the Hague Initiative for International Cooperation, which Reuters describes as funded by pro-Israeli groups, says the ruling imposes a "lower threshold" (all via Reuters, 11.20). DISCOURSE

Richard Horsey of Crisis Group: "The legal bar is extremely high, but what this case shows is that it is surmountable." A Policy Exchange report, quoted by The Jewish Chronicle, warns that "An enlarged definition would invite the ICJ to hand

down judgments against the UK." Both readings were published within a day of a judgment we have not read in full, so neither is settled. ASSESSMENT

COMPETING POLICY APPROACHES (STRONGEST CASE FOR EACH, UNRANKED)

APPROACH	STRONGEST ARGUMENT ITS ADVOCATES MAKE
Keep the bar strict	Genocide is the gravest charge in law; if intent can be read from context, the word spreads to every war and loses its force (Policy Exchange; Tucker).
Read intent from the pattern	States rarely write down an intent to destroy; a standard that needs a confession can never be met (Philippe Sands, for The Gambia: "The evidentiary standard has been defined very clearly").
Enforcement first	A finding without compliance changes little for survivors; Security Council and state pressure on reparations is the test.

SOURCE · REUTERS VIA CYPRUS MAIL (11.20); AL JAZEERA, SAKIB (11.20); AL JAZEERA, REACTIONS (11.19); THE JEWISH CHRONICLE (11.19); WHITE HOUSE, DECLARATION (11.19)

C. WAR POWERS FAIL BY THREE VOTES. THE BUDGET IS THE NEXT VENUE.

The US struck Qeshm, tankers were hit and the Senate rejected a war powers resolution. Four senators who caucus with the Democrats now tie the December stopgap to it, while oil prices fell for a third week.

SITUATION

On 11.17 the US carried out what a US official called "self-defense" strikes on an IRGC missile site on Qeshm Island, "in response to IRGC aggression targeting U.S. personnel and assets" (CBS). ADNOC said one of its tankers was struck in the strait the same day, and UKMTO reported another tanker hit on 11.18; the two differ on the crew, with UKMTO saying it was safe and ADNOC that one member was missing. Bahrain and Kuwait said they intercepted Iranian drones and missiles on 11.18; the IRGC's claim of two more tankers hitting mines on 11.19 is uncorroborated. FACT

On 11.19 the Senate rejected, 48 to 51, a House-passed concurrent resolution under section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, with three Republicans in favor (Senate roll call 269). Such resolutions do not go to the President, and their binding force is disputed; the Senate adopted a similar one, 50 to 48, on 06.23 (roll call 184). Pentagon deputy comptroller Arthur Miller put the war's cost at over $48 billion since late February, not counting damage to US bases. Trump told Channel 12 he is "not rushing": "We'll see what happens after the new year starts" (CBS). FACT

HISTORY

Two weeks ago the question was whether Qatari mediation would reopen the strait; Trump now calls the June memorandum of understanding "a waste of time" (CBS). The blockade is tightening at sea: a CENTCOM advisory says ships taking Iranian cargo by ship-to-ship transfer "may be stopped, boarded, diverted, captured" (Al Jazeera, 11.20). Iran, meanwhile, is negotiating a shipping corridor with Oman, but Gulf News finds "no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect." FACT

STAKEHOLDERS

Decision authority: the President, after the Senate vote. **Congress:** Sens. Duckworth, Bennet, Sanders and Van Hollen, who committed to block "any short-term package" that does not limit the war (Washington Examiner, 11.19). **Iran:** the government and the IRGC; spokesman Baqaei called Trump's claim that Iran is "looking at gases, looking at bio" "the same fraudulent script." **Israel:** Netanyahu is reportedly pushing a 4 to 7 day joint campaign (Bloomberg and The New York Times, via CBS). **Gulf states and Oman.**

HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

WHO BENEFITS

Fuel buyers, slightly: Brent settled at $92.57 on 11.20, its third weekly loss (Bloomberg via Rigzone). FACT

WHO BEARS THE COST

Tanker crews, including the ADNOC seafarer reported missing; residents of Gulf states under drone and missile fire.

WHO HAS LITTLE VOICE

Iranian civilians, whom none of the week's sources quote.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Economically, Bloomberg says oil fell "as traders weighed the risk of renewed US strikes on Iran against ample crude supplies," and Polymarket gives about a 3.5% chance that Hormuz transits reach a 7-day average of 60 by 12.31 (11.19). Politically, the 12.11 appropriations deadline is the next scheduled lever; further war powers resolutions remain possible, and the Senate has held at least 15 roll calls on them this year, from 03.04 to 11.19 (Senate vote list). Ethically, the dispute is over who authorizes a war that has run for months and cost tens of billions, and whether "self-defense" strikes need a vote at all. ASSESSMENT

COMPETING POLICY APPROACHES (STRONGEST CASE FOR EACH, UNRANKED)

APPROACH	STRONGEST ARGUMENT ITS ADVOCATES MAKE
Congress decides	A war costing over $48 billion should rest on a vote; if a resolution fails, the power of the purse is the constitutional fallback.
Presidential latitude	The administration's case: the strikes answer attacks on US personnel, and tying a commander's hands mid-campaign invites more of them.
Blockade without escalation	Cutting exports raises Iran's cost without new strikes; Trump's "after the new year" leaves room for it to work.
A regional corridor	An Iran-Oman route could restore traffic without a US-Iran deal, though it would give Tehran a say over ships.

SOURCE · CBS NEWS LIVE (11.17 TO 11.20); AL JAZEERA (11.20); GULF NEWS (11.19); WASHINGTON EXAMINER (11.19); BLOOMBERG VIA RIGZONE (11.20); POLYMARKET (11.19)

FOLLOW THE POWER

A regional commission withdrew a country's status; fifteen judges split on a state's intent; the Senate rejected a war powers resolution of disputed force. In Congo, the money has not caught up with the pledges.

QUESTION	A. MEASLES STATUS	B. GAMBIA V. MYANMAR	C. IRAN WAR POWERS	EBOLA'S MONEY
Decision authority	PAHO's commission recommended; Director Barbosa accepted (PAHO, 11.17). DOCUMENTED	The ICJ's judges, 9 to 6 on genocide and 10 to 5 on reparations (Al Jazeera, 11.20). DOCUMENTED	The President; the Senate rejected a war powers resolution, 48 to 51 (CBS, 11.19). DOCUMENTED	Congo's government runs the response with WHO and Africa CDC (WHO DON625). DOCUMENTED
Capital	No figure published for the corrective action plans.	Reparations ordered; the court has no enforcement arm (Sakib).	Over $48 billion so far, a Pentagon official says; the 12.11 funding deadline.	$1.3 billion of $2.9 billion pledged has been released, Africa CDC's Kaseya says (Al Jazeera, 11.15).
Information	Two death counts: CDC six; states ten combined (Al Jazeera).	Vote counts via Al Jazeera and Reuters; we did not read the judgment or the dissents.	IRGC mine claims uncorroborated; ADNOC and UKMTO differ on a tanker's crew.	ECDC: 81.6% of identified contacts followed; Kaseya: over 80% of new cases arose outside contact lists. Both can be true.
Who is lobbying whom	State and local health officials say the cost of the response is "far higher" than the $100 million the CDC awarded (AP). DOCUMENTED	The Jewish Chronicle reports experts warning of "legal risk" for the UK and Israel, citing a Policy Exchange report (JC, 11.19). DOCUMENTED	Netanyahu is reportedly pushing a 4 to 7 day joint campaign (Bloomberg and NYT via CBS). SPECULATIVE	Kaseya calls donor and government coordination "a collective failure." DOCUMENTED
Externalities	Risk to vaccinated people where refusal clusters.	A method the court may apply in South Africa v. Israel, not expected to be argued until 2029.	Gulf states under fire; fuel prices; seafarers' safety.	Deaths in the community: over 65% of them, Kaseya says.
Missing from the room	Children, whose vaccination others decide.	Myanmar's military-led government's response, not in sources we opened.	Iranian civilians.	Communities off the contact lists.

RED TEAM

The catch: the measles column points at federal officials and a regional commission, but coverage is set by parents, schools and state exemption laws, and the sources do not show how much of the decline any one of them caused. A table of decision authority can make a diffuse failure look like a single one. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

THE US AND CHINA: FROM A SHARED RIVAL TO MUTUAL CHOKEPOINTS

For four decades each side had its own reason to draw closer. Those reasons have worn out; what holds the relationship in place now is the damage each could do to the other, and that damage is not evenly shared.

Built from primary texts and official data opened on 11.20.2026. Each government's own words are quoted by name and date. Sections E to H, the scenarios, the Red and Blue Team boxes, the strongest counterargument and the dates to watch follow in the second part of this desk.

THE ARGUMENT OF THIS DESK

For about forty-five years the relationship rested on shared reasons, first a common rival and then a bet that closer ties would serve both sides; those reasons have given way to a contest in which each side holds some of the other's chokepoints, and the question now is whether that mutual, but unequal, leverage can be kept stable, with Taiwan as the place where it is hardest to keep. ASSESSMENT

The two governments do not use the same word for what they have. Beijing's current term came from Xi Jinping on 11.19.2026 in Shenzhen: "building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability," in China's foreign ministry readout (MFA, 11.19). Washington's word for most of the past decade was competition. President Biden "emphasized that the United States and China are in competition," by the White House readout of 11.15.2023 (White House), and the 2022 strategy called China the "most consequential geopolitical challenge" (NSS 2022). FACT

The current administration's strategy, dated 11.2025, describes something else: a relationship that "has transformed into one between near-peers," with the aim of "a genuinely mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing" (NSS 2025). In the passages we searched, it does not call China a competitor or a rival. So the spine's "contest" is our word, not Washington's current one; the 2017 strategy, by contrast, grouped China with Russia as "revisionist powers" (NSS 2017). ASSESSMENT

Hook Shenzhen: one readout, one declaration, no trade text

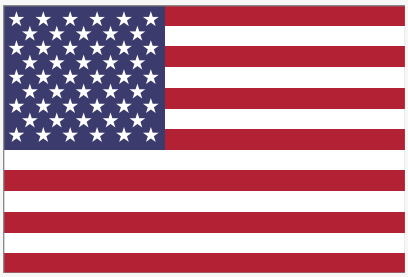
Trump says he and Xi talked for about two hours on 11.18; they met again on 11.19, before a session with Putin of roughly 70 minutes (AP) to an hour and a half (CBS) on the APEC sidelines; Trump rated the meeting "12" on a scale of zero to ten (CBS, 11.19); neither side announced new tariff rates (China Briefing, 11.20). Beijing published a bilateral readout. We found no White House readout of the Trump and Xi bilateral meeting on whitehouse.gov; the White House posted the three-power declaration of 11.19 and a fact sheet of 11.20 that mentions China only in general terms (declaration; fact sheet). FACT

China's readout says the two sides "agreed to formulate an action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability." It also says Trump told Xi: "The United States does not support 'Taiwan Independence.'" That sentence is China's account; we found no US text with the wording, so the two readouts cannot be compared line by line (MFA, 11.19). The declaration, issued in the names of all three, first released by the Kremlin and then posted by the White House (CBS), covers UN reform, refined fuel supply, the immunities of state officials and nuclear risk, and does not mention trade or Taiwan (White House, 11.19). FACT

The meeting left the trade clock where it was. "Neither side announced new tariff rates, and the truce agreed in Busan in October 2025 now runs to 10 January 2027," China Briefing reports. USTR's suspension of its Section 301 maritime actions runs to "11:59 PM ET on January 9, 2027"; the Commerce Department's Affiliates Rule suspension runs "through January 10, 2027" (China Briefing, 11.20; AFS Law). The leaders met, talked of stability and issued nothing on the instruments this desk is about. ASSESSMENT

Feature **Side by side**

SIDE BY SIDE · THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA



UNITED STATES



CHINA

MEASURE, YEAR	UNITED STATES	CHINA	SOURCE
Population, 2025	341.8 million	1,406.6 million	World Bank
GDP at market exchange rates, 2025	$30.77 trillion	$19.50 trillion	World Bank
GDP at purchasing power parity, 2025	$30.77 trillion	$41.26 trillion	World Bank (current international $)
GDP per person at market rates, 2025	about $90,000	about $13,900	Our calculation from the two rows above
Military expenditure, 2025	$954.4 billion	$335.5 billion	World Bank series from SIPRI data; China's published budget is lower (note)
Military expenditure, share of GDP, 2025	3.1%	1.7%	World Bank series from SIPRI data
Goods sold to the other, 2025	$106.0 billion	$308.7 billion	US Census (both values: US exports to and imports from China)

All values are nominal US dollars except the PPP row. Both columns of each row come from the same source and year. The World Bank lists US GDP at PPP equal to market GDP, since the US is the reference economy. Two measures in the brief were left out because no source opened this run gives both countries in the same units: the share of advanced chip production, and holdings of the other's government debt (China held $563.9 billion of US Treasuries in 09.2026, by Treasury's count, and we found no matching US figure). Rare earth refining appears in D. The China military figure is SIPRI's, not Beijing's published budget: China's 2025 defense budget was 1.784665 trillion yuan, which the State Council puts at about $249 billion (State Council, 03.05.2025). FACT

SOURCE · WORLD BANK, POPULATION (UPDATED 11.11.2026) DATA · WORLD BANK, GDP (10.08.2026) DATA · WORLD BANK, GDP PPP (10.08.2026) DATA · WORLD BANK, MILITARY EXPENDITURE (11.11.2026) DATA · SHARE OF GDP DATA · US CENSUS, TRADE WITH CHINA DATA

A History: each era rested on a shared reason

Thesis. Each era of the relationship rested on a reason both sides shared, and the frame changed when that reason weakened: a common rival from 1972, a contested interval after 1989, then a bet on trade locked in by 2001 that each side read in its own way. The record supports this, with one limit: Washington's reading of the bet is on paper in its own words, Beijing's mostly in a state newspaper's summary of a government paper. ASSESSMENT

The first reason was the Soviet Union. The State Department's historians write that Washington sought "leverage against the Soviet Union" and that "Sino-Soviet tension contributed to the Chinese leadership's desire for a rapprochement" (Office of the Historian). The Shanghai Communique of 02.27.1972 never names Moscow; its shared line is that "neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region" and each opposes efforts "by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony" (FRUS). FACT

Taiwan was handled by careful verbs from the start. In 1972 the United States "acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China" and "does not challenge that position"; in the 1979 communique it "recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China" and "acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China" (1972; 1979, as read by Carter). The brief asked us to set the English "acknowledges" against the Chinese-language text; we did not open the Chinese text this run, so we make no claim about it. FACT

Congress then wrote its own terms. The Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8 of 04.10.1979, is US domestic law; it says the United States will "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character" and calls any non-peaceful effort to decide Taiwan's future "of grave concern to the United States" (TRA). The historians note that "PRC officials saw the law as a direct challenge to the normalization agreement" (Office of the Historian). The 08.17.1982 communique put limits on future arms sales without a date to end them, and in a cable of 08.17.1982 Secretary Shultz sent the AIT director in Taipei the Six Assurances, executive assurances that include "Has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan"; a cable of 07.10.1982 from Under Secretary Eagleburger had set out related points on arms sales (1982; AIT archive). FACT

DATE	EVENT	WHAT IT DID	TEXT
02.27.1972	**Shanghai Communique**	Common rival era opens; the hegemony clause is the shared line.	FRUS
01.01.1979	**Diplomatic relations**	US "recognizes" the PRC government; "acknowledges" the one-China position.	FRUS
04.10.1979	**Taiwan Relations Act**	US law on arms "of a defensive character"; never accepted by Beijing.	Statute
12.1979 on	**Soviet invasion of Afghanistan**	"increased Sino-American military cooperation," by the historians' account.	Office of the Historian
08.17.1982	**Arms sales communique; Six Assurances**	Limits on arms sales, no end date; Six Assurances cabled to Taipei on 08.17 (an earlier 07.10 cable, from Eagleburger, covered arms sales).	Historian; AIT
06.1989 on	**Tiananmen sanctions**	Still extended by Clinton in 1994 "as a result of the events in Tiananmen Square."	Public Papers
12.25.1991	**Soviet Union ends**	The common rival is gone.	Office of the Historian
05.26.1994	**MFN delinked from human rights**	Clinton moves "to delink human rights from the annual extension of most-favored-nation trading status."	Public Papers
05.1999	**Belgrade embassy bombing**	Clinton on 05.10: "I have already expressed our apology."	Public Papers
10.10.2000	**PNTR, Public Law 106-286**	Permanent normal trade relations, after Clinton's 03.08 case for it.	Statute; speech
12.11.2001	**China joins the WTO**	The bet is locked in.	WTO
12.18.2017	**US National Security Strategy**	Washington declares the bet lost (quoted below).	NSS 2017

The interval after 1989 was contested, not settled. Clinton kept the Tiananmen sanctions in 1994 even as he ended the yearly link between trade status and human rights, saying "we have reached the end of the usefulness of that policy" (Public Papers, 05.26.1994). Five years later he was apologizing to Jiang Zemin for the Belgrade bombing, calling it "an isolated, tragic event" (Public Papers, 05.10.1999). We did not open a primary record of the 1995 to 1996 Strait crisis this run and leave it out of the timeline. FACT

Washington's reading of the bet is on the record twice, once at each end. On 03.08.2000 Clinton said that in joining the WTO China "is agreeing to import one of democracy's most cherished values, economic freedom," and that China's effort to "crackdown on the Internet" was "sort of like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall" (SAIS remarks). On 12.18.2017 the

National Security Strategy wrote the verdict: “For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China’s rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others” (NSS 2017). FACT

Beijing’s reading was different in kind: trade as mutual gain, with no promise about its political system. When the State Council published its white paper on the trade dispute on 09.24.2018, People’s Daily summarized its position as “mutual benefit and win-win are the essence of China-US economic and trade relations” (People’s Daily, 09.25.2018; State Council notice). We could not open the white paper’s own text, so this is the newspaper’s wording. Read together, the two sides signed up for the same trade and expected different things from it. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, FRUS 1969 TO 1976 VOL. XVII, DOC. 203 GOV · OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, RAPPROCHEMENT GOV · CARTER ADDRESS WITH 1979 COMMUNIQUE, FRUS 1977 TO 1980 VOL. I, DOC. 104 GOV · OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, 1977 TO 1980 GOV · PUBLIC LAW 96-8 (GOVINFO) GOV · OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, 1982 COMMUNIQUE GOV · AIT ARCHIVE, SIX ASSURANCES CABLES GOV · OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, SOVIET COLLAPSE GOV · PUBLIC PAPERS 1994 GOV · PUBLIC PAPERS 1999 GOV · CLINTON SAIS REMARKS, 03.08.2000 (AMERICAN PRESIDENCY PROJECT) ORG · PUBLIC LAW 106-286 GOV · WTO, CHINA ORG · NSS 2017 GOV · PEOPLE’S DAILY VIA GLOBALSECURITY.ORG (09.25.2018) PRESS

B What shifted: the ties became instruments

Thesis. Since about 2017 both governments have turned trade, technology and finance ties into tools of pressure, building on earlier precedents. The record holds this up on both sides, by statute, rule and announcement. It is not a story of one side acting and the other reacting: some of the first moves were Beijing’s, and some of the newest are Washington’s. ASSESSMENT

The precedents are older than the trade war. The United States took China’s export duties and quotas on rare earths to the WTO in 2012, and the panel found in 2014 that the quotas “were designed to achieve industrial policy goals rather than conservation” (WTO DS431). The 2018 Section 301 action then put an extra 25% duty on a first list of Chinese goods (Federal Register, 06.20.2018). The brief’s other precedent, the Made in China 2025 plan of 2015, is left out because we could not open the State Council text this run. FACT

The table reads across time. An up arrow means the tie deepened or pressure eased in that period; a down arrow means it was cut or used as pressure; a flat arrow means no net change in the instruments we found. Each arrow cites the instrument that moved it. Weight is our judgment of how much the domain counts in the balance of leverage. ASSESSMENT

DOMAIN	WEIGHT	ENGAGEMENT ERA 2001 TO 2016	FIRST TRADE WAR 2018 TO 2020	CHIPS AND PELOSI 2022 TO 2023	NOW 2025 TO 11.2026	INSTRUMENT THAT MOVED IT	WHAT WOULD FLIP “NOW”
Trade	High	↑	↓	→	↓	PNTR, Public Law 106-286 (10.10.2000), and WTO entry (12.11.2001). Section 301 duty of 25% (83 FR 28710, 06.20.2018). Now: China’s share of US goods imports 9.0% in 2025; a Section 301 tariff of 12.5% in force since 07.24.2026; China’s extra 24% suspended to 01.10.2027 (China Briefing).	China’s extra 24% tariff and its port fees on US-linked vessels return on 01.10.2027 without an extension.

DOMAIN	WEIGHT	ENGAGEMENT ERA 2001 TO 2016	FIRST TRADE WAR 2018 TO 2020	CHIPS AND PELOSI 2022 TO 2023	NOW 2025 TO 11.2026	INSTRUMENT THAT MOVED IT	WHAT WOULD FLIP "NOW"
Technology	High	→	↓	↓	↓	Huawei added to the Entity List (84 FR 22961, 05.21.2019). Advanced computing and chip tool rule (87 FR 62186, 10.13.2022); China's gallium and germanium licensing from 08.01.2023 (MOFCOM and Customs Joint Announcement No. 23, as described by Mayer Brown). Now: China's rare earth controls of 04.04.2025 and 10.09.2025 (IEA); BIS Affiliates Rule (90 FR 47201, 09.30.2025), suspended; BIS licenses for chips to five countries (11.16.2026, Al Jazeera).	A US or Chinese control lifted rather than suspended.
Finance	Medium	→	→	↓	↓	Outbound investment order, EO 14105, 88 FR 54867, 08.11.2023. Now: China's reported Treasury holdings $563.9 billion in 09.2026, from $699.2 billion a year earlier (TIC); a data point, not an instrument.	A rule that reopens a closed investment category.
Military and law enforcement contact	High	→	→	→	→	On 08.05.2022 China cancelled theater commander calls and maritime security talks and suspended drug control and other cooperation, as translated by the US Air Force's China Aerospace Studies Institute; restored by agreement on 11.15.2023 (White House): net flat. Now: the 11.19.2026 readout lists counternarcotics and AI security (MFA).	Another suspension of theater commander calls.
People to people	Medium	→	↓	→	→	Proclamation 10043, 85 FR 34353, 06.04.2020, suspending entry of certain PRC graduate students and researchers. No later instrument found this run; student and visitor numbers not opened. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT	A visa rule widened or rescinded.
Taiwan policy (US and PRC instruments)	High	→	→	↓	→	TRA and the 1982 terms carry the engagement era. China's 08.05.2022 countermeasures followed Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan (CASI translation). Now: the US strategy says it "does not support any unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait" (NSS 2025); China's readout gives Trump's words on independence (China's account). Taiwan is a party with its own stated positions; see F, Taipei in its own words.	A change in US wording on Taiwan in a US text.

Labels: each instrument and date is FACT ; each arrow and weight is ASSESSMENT . Engagement-era arrows for technology and finance are flat because we opened no instrument from those years, not because none existed.

Two patterns stand out. The newest instruments are often suspended rather than repealed, so they stay on the books as a threat with a date: BIS suspended its own Affiliates Rule for a year to 11.09.2026 and then to 01.10.2027, while IEA notes

China's expanded rare earth measures were suspended but "the vulnerabilities remain" (90 FR 50857; AFS Law; IEA). And a truce does not stop new controls: the US chip licensing rule for five countries was released on 11.16.2026 and took effect on 11.19, the day of the Shenzhen bilateral (Al Jazeera, 11.17; Federal Register, 11.19). ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · WTO DS431 ORG · USTR, 83 FR 28710 GOV · BIS, 84 FR 22961 GOV · PROCLAMATION 10043 GOV · BIS, 87 FR 62186 GOV · EO 14105 GOV · BIS, 90 FR 47201 GOV · BIS, 90 FR 50857 GOV · IEA COMMENTARY (2025) ORG · IEA GLOBAL CRITICAL MINERALS OUTLOOK 2026 ORG · MAYER BROWN (07.2023) PRESS · US AIR FORCE CASI GOV · WHITE HOUSE (11.15.2023) GOV · CHINA BRIEFING (11.20) PRESS · AFS LAW (11.2026) PRESS · AL JAZEERA (11.17) PRESS · US TREASURY TIC DATA

C The theories: is the rivalry structural?

Thesis. The main schools disagree on whether the rivalry is structural, and so on whether the leverage in B can stay stable. Power transition and offensive realism say the contest is built into the distribution of power; the peaking-power reading says the danger is greatest now; the interdependence readings say the economic web both restrains and arms each side, so stability depends on how the ties are managed. The table gives each its strongest form, from its own published text. ASSESSMENT

THEORY	AUTHORS AND WORKS	WHAT IT PREDICTS	EVIDENCE FOR	EVIDENCE AGAINST	TEST TO WATCH
Power transition ("Thucydides's Trap")	Graham Allison, *Destined for War* (2017); Harvard's case file	A rising power that threatens to displace a ruling one creates structural stress; war is the common, not the certain, outcome. The case file: "Twelve of these sixteen rivalries ended in war."	Pressure has spread from trade to chips, minerals, finance and visas (B).	Four of the sixteen cases ended without war, by the same file; the two governments still meet and renew truces.	A deadly military clash between the two forces.
Offensive realism	John Mearsheimer, Hintze Lecture, 2010	"China cannot rise peacefully"; it "will try to dominate the Asia-Pacific region," and the US "can be expected to go to great lengths to contain China."	US chip controls target capability, not trade balances, and kept coming during the truce (11.16.2026).	The 2025 US strategy seeks "a genuinely mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing."	Whether chip controls tighten after any trade deal.
Peaking power	Hal Brands and Michael Beckley, Foreign Policy, 09.2021; *Danger Zone*	"The most dangerous trajectory in world politics is a long rise followed by the prospect of a sharp decline"; the risk is China's "impending decline."	China's population fell from 1,410.7 million in 2023 to 1,406.6 million in 2025 (World Bank).	China's GDP at PPP rose from $35.5 trillion to $41.3 trillion over the same years (World Bank, current prices).	Sustained falls in China's growth alongside more military pressure, or neither.
Weaponized interdependence	Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, *International Security*, 2019	States controlling network hubs can use a "panopticon effect" and a "chokepoint effect" to deny access to adversaries.	The Huawei listing (2019); China's rare earth controls (2025), which forced some automakers to cut output (IEA).	Both sides suspended their newest measures when costs bit, which the theory allows but does not predict.	Whether the top rare earth refiner's share falls toward the 70% IEA projects for 2035.
Managed competition (liberal internationalist)	Thomas Wright, *All Measures Short of War* (2017), as summarized in a TNSR roundtable	Competition "will not take the form of a major conflagration because all of the great powers want and intend to avoid it" (Rosemary Foot's summary).	Military channels restored in 11.2023; three-power nuclear line on 11.19.2026.	Truce terms expire on fixed dates and are renewed for months, not years.	A multiyear agreement replacing the rolling suspensions.

Labels: the "predicts" column quotes each source and is FACT ; the evidence and test columns are ASSESSMENT . Allison's and Wright's books were not opened this run; their rows rest on Harvard's case file and the TNSR reviewers' wording.

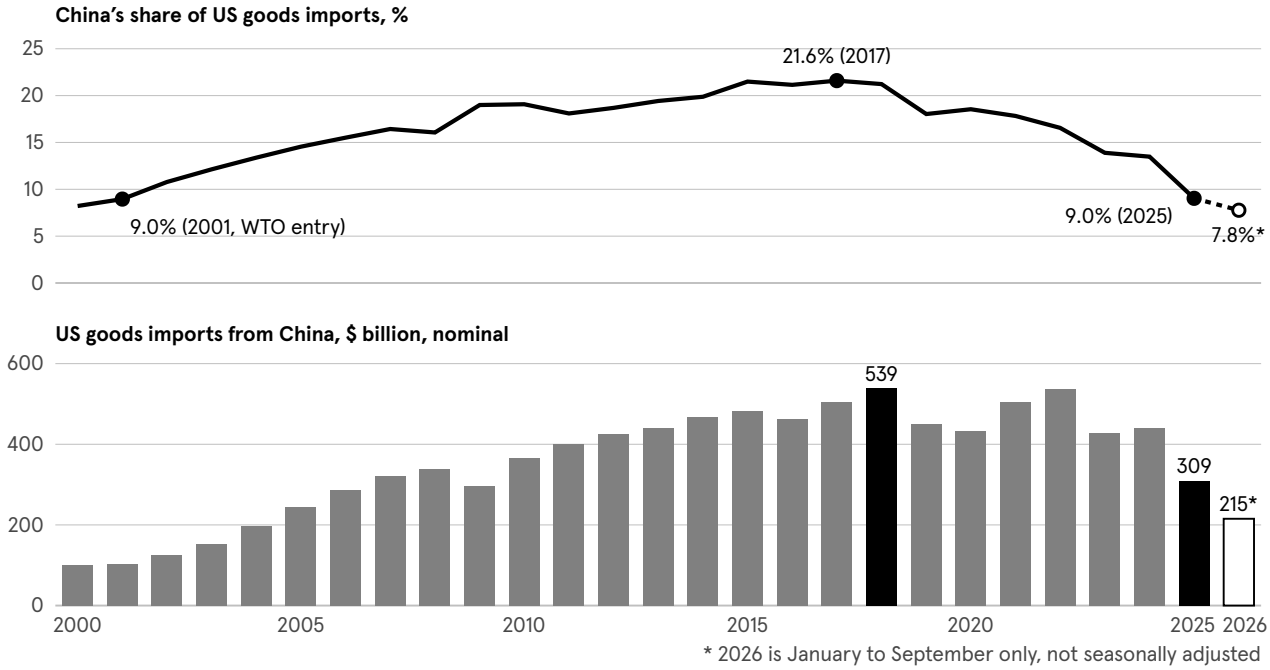
The data in this desk fit more than one school. The spread of instruments in B fits the structural readings, but the habit of suspending them on dated clocks fits the interdependence reading better: each side keeps the weapon and holds fire

while the cost of using it is high. On this record no school has been tested yet; the test for all of them is what happens at the first lapse a truce does not survive. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · HARVARD BELFER CENTER, THUCYDIDES'S TRAP CASE FILE ORG · MEARSHEIMER, CHINESE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (2010) PEER · BRANDS AND BECKLEY, FOREIGN POLICY (09.24.2021) PRESS · W. W. NORTON ORG · FARRELL AND NEWMAN, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY 44:1 (2019) PEER · TEXAS NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW (11.01.2017) PEER · WORLD BANK DATA

D The economics: the direct figures fell; the chokepoints did not move

Thesis. Separation shows up in the direct trade figures more than in the supply chain, and its costs fall unevenly. The first half holds strongly in Census data. The supply chain half holds for rare earths, where China's refining share fell only a few points; how much Chinese trade now arrives through third countries we could not measure from official data this run. The costs half is the thinnest: we found official figures for US exporters, a US estimate of who paid earlier tariffs, and none for who pays the tariffs in force now. ASSESSMENT



SOURCE · US CENSUS BUREAU, TRADE IN GOODS WITH CHINA AND TRADE IN GOODS WITH WORLD, NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED DATA; NOMINAL DOLLARS, NOT ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION; SHARE IS OUR CALCULATION, CHINA IMPORTS DIVIDED BY WORLD IMPORTS; DATA THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2026, RELEASED 11.04.2026

China's share of US goods imports peaked at 21.6% in 2017 and fell to 9.0% in 2025, the same share as in 2001, the year China joined the WTO. In January to September 2026 it was 7.8%. The dollar level tells a slower story: imports from China peaked at $538.5 billion in 2018 and were $308.7 billion in 2025, all in nominal dollars, so the real fall is larger than the chart shows (Census). FACT

The direction may have turned this year. Imports from China rose every month from May to September 2026, in data not adjusted for the usual autumn rise. September's $31.5 billion was 33.9% above a weak September 2025 and about 27% below September 2024, our calculation from Census monthly data. One interpretation is buying ahead of the 01.10.2027 truce date; the data do not show motive. Even so, January to September 2026 imports were $215.0 billion, 11.5% below the same months of 2025. ASSESSMENT

Some of the trade moved rather than stopped, though the official data cannot say how much is Chinese. US goods imports from Vietnam rose from $46.5 billion in 2017 to $193.9 billion in 2025. Imports from Mexico rose from $312.7 billion to $534.3 billion over the same years, and from Taiwan from $42.4 billion to $201.4 billion. In January to September 2026, imports from Taiwan ($215.3 billion) matched those from China (Census, Vietnam; Mexico; Taiwan).

Estimates of Chinese content or transshipment exist, but we opened none of them this run, so we print none. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The leverage that matters sits where one side holds a step the other cannot quickly replace. In rare earths that side is China: by the IEA's count it "represented 91% of global refined output" and made 94% of sintered permanent magnets in 2024 (IEA, rare earths). New US projects and Malaysian output "reduced the share of the top supplier from over 90% in 2023 to 85% in 2025." If planned projects stay on schedule, the IEA projects 70% by 2035 (IEA, 2026 outlook release). China's April 2025 controls forced "some automakers to reduce utilisation rates," and the IEA estimates full use of the October 2025 rules could put "USD 6.5 trillion per year of downstream production outside China at risk," a model estimate (IEA). FACT

On the US side the chokepoints are the chip rules and the dollar, and we can document the instruments better than the shares. BIS controls on advanced computing items and chip tools date from 10.2022 and were widened in a rule released 11.16.2026 and in effect from 11.19, to remote access by D:5 firms and to licenses for five countries (B). We opened no official series for shares of advanced chip production. On finance, China's reported holdings of Treasuries fell to $563.9 billion in 09.2026, behind Japan's $1,063.1 billion and the UK's $985.8 billion. Treasury itself warns the data "may not provide a precise accounting of individual country ownership," since securities held in custody abroad may not be attributed to their owners (TIC, table 5). FACT

WHO CARRIES THE COST

US EXPORTERS

US goods exports to China fell from $143.3 billion in 2024 to $106.0 billion in 2025. In January to September 2026 they were $83.5 billion (Census). Farm exports are inside that total; we opened no USDA series, so we give no soybean figure. FACT

US CONSUMERS AND IMPORTERS

For the Section 232 and 301 tariffs it studied, the US International Trade Commission found that "U.S. importers bore nearly the full cost of these tariffs" (USITC, 03.2023). FACT

Who pays a tariff, the importer, the buyer or the foreign seller, is an empirical question. We found no official estimate of incidence for the tariffs in force now. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

CHINESE WORKERS AND FIRMS

China's customs and labor data for exposed sectors were not opened this run, so we name the group and not a number. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The unevenness the data do show runs both ways. China's goods sales to the US, $308.7 billion in 2025, were about three times US sales to China, which gives US tariffs a larger base to hit; China's hold on refined rare earths gives it a narrower lever with a wider reach into US factories. Which of those weighs more in a crisis cannot be read from trade totals. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · US CENSUS, CHINA DATA · US CENSUS, WORLD NSA DATA · US CENSUS, VIETNAM DATA · US CENSUS, MEXICO DATA · US CENSUS, TAIWAN DATA · BEA, SEPTEMBER 2026 RELEASE GOV · IEA, RARE EARTH ELEMENTS ORG · IEA, GLOBAL CRITICAL MINERALS OUTLOOK 2026 RELEASE ORG · IEA, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ORG · US TREASURY, TIC TABLE 5 (DATA TO 09.2026) DATA

04S / SPECIAL COVERAGE: THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA

E Trump and Xi: four meetings, two records, one clock

The leaders have met four times in thirteen months, and each meeting produced terms. Those terms are either purchase pledges, new boards and dialogues, or suspensions that need renewing; the one that matters most now runs to 01.10.2027. Washington and Beijing also publish different records of the same meetings: the White House writes fact sheets about purchases and boards, and China's foreign ministry writes readouts that lead with Taiwan and the "constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability". Neither record is complete without the other. ASSESSMENT

MEETING	WHAT WASHINGTON PUBLISHED	WHAT BEIJING PUBLISHED	WHAT EACH LEFT OUT
Busan 10.30.2025	Fact sheet, 11.01.2025: China "will suspend the global implementation" of its 10.09.2025 rare earth controls and buy "at least 12 million metric tons" of soybeans in late 2025 and at least 25 million a year in 2026 to 2028; the US cuts its fentanyl-related tariff by 10 points and keeps "heightened reciprocal tariffs" suspended "until November 10, 2026".	China's readout of Busan was not opened in this run.	The White House text gives no end date for China's rare earth suspension. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT on Beijing's account.
Beijing 05.14.2026	Fact sheet, 05.17: China buys "at least $17 billion per year" of US farm goods in 2026 (prorated) to 2028 and approves "an initial purchase of 200" Boeing aircraft; a Board of Trade and a Board of Investment are created.	Readout, 05.14: "the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-U.S. relations"; the two leaders agreed "a new vision of building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability". Wang Yi, 05.15, names the two boards.	The fact sheet does not mention Taiwan. The readout does not mention the boards, Boeing or soybeans.
Washington 09.24.2026	Fact sheet, 09.25: a US-China "Super Intelligence (SI) Dialogue", with "the next exchange" by November 2026, and a "communication channel for SI incidents"; Board of Trade recommendations on "$30 billion of non-sensitive goods in each direction"; coal purchases in 2027 and 2028.	Readout, 09.25: Xi asked the US to "handle the Taiwan question with caution"; the trade teams "reached a new joint arrangement"; the leaders agreed to support each other in hosting APEC and the G20.	The fact sheet does not mention Taiwan. The readout records no formal AI channel. Neither text mentions a military communication memorandum.
Shenzhen 11.18 to 11.19	No White House readout of the bilateral found (see 01). The White House posted the three-power declaration with Russia and a fact sheet with no China trade terms.	Readout, 11.19: the sides "agreed to formulate an action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability"; on Taiwan, Trump is quoted as saying "The United States does not support 'Taiwan Independence.'"	Beijing's readout mentions no tariffs and no Board of Trade. The Taiwan sentence has no US text beside it.

SOURCE · WHITE HOUSE (11.01.2025) GOV · WHITE HOUSE (05.17) GOV · CHINA MFA (05.14) GOV · CHINA MFA, WANG YI (05.15) GOV · WHITE HOUSE (09.25) GOV · CHINA MFA (09.25) GOV · CHINA MFA (11.19) GOV · WHITE HOUSE DECLARATION (11.19) GOV

The standing channels have widened on paper more than in practice. The two boards exist, but the Board of Trade's first meeting, by video on 11.13, ended with "no agreement" announced, according to China Briefing. The SI Dialogue's second exchange, promised "by November 2026", has not been reported as held. A military crisis-communication memorandum, reported in desk notes as part of China's September readout, appears in neither government's September text, so we do not print it. FACT

That weakens one half of the working thesis. The channel between the two leaders produces terms; the newer channels below them have produced meetings and recommendations, not yet a published agreement. Calls between the leaders were not compiled for this desk. ASSESSMENT

THE LEGAL LEDGER: WHAT IS IN FORCE, WHAT IS SUSPENDED, AND TO WHEN

The Supreme Court decided *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump* on 02.20.2026, together with *Trump v. V.O.S. Selections*. The syllabus reads: "Held: IEEPA does not authorize the President to impose tariffs." Chief Justice Roberts wrote for six justices on that holding; Justice Kavanaugh dissented, joined by Justices Thomas and Alito, and Justice Thomas also filed his own dissent. FACT

The two China tariffs that rested on IEEPA were ordered ended the same day. An order signed 02.20 says duties under Executive Order 14195 (the synthetic opioid tariff on China) and 14257 (the reciprocal tariff) "shall no longer be in effect and, as soon as practicable, shall no longer be collected". A 10% surcharge under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 ran from 02.24 for its statutory 150 days, to 07.24. Section 301 tariffs on "all products" of 60 economies, with listed exemptions, took over on 07.24: 10% for those with forced labor import bans or commitments, 12.5% for the rest. China Briefing reports China at 12.5%. FACT

SIDE	MEASURE	LEGAL AUTHORITY	STATUS	RUNS TO
US	Synthetic opioid tariff on China; reciprocal tariff	IEEPA (EO 14195, EO 14257)	Ended after the 02.20 ruling	Not collected
US	10% import surcharge, all countries, with product exceptions	Trade Act 1974, Section 122 (Proclamation 11012)	Expired at its 150-day limit	07.24.2026
US	Forced labor tariff, 12.5% on Chinese goods (China Briefing)	Trade Act 1974, Section 301 (USTR notice, 07.28)	In force since 07.24; under review at the Court of International Trade (AFS Law)	No end date
US	Earlier Section 301 tariffs on China; Section 232 product tariffs	Trade Act 1974, Section 301; Trade Expansion Act 1962, Section 232	Not affected by the ruling (CFR); rates not rechecked this run	No end date
US	Port fees and cargo-handling equipment duties on China's maritime sector	Section 301 (maritime investigation)	Suspended	01.09.2027, 11:59 p.m. ET
US	Affiliates Rule: export controls on firms 50% or more owned by listed parties	Export Administration Regulations (BIS)	Suspended	01.10.2027
US	Licenses for advanced AI chips to five third countries; remote access for Chinese and other D:5 firms	Export Administration Regulations (BIS interim final rule, released 11.16; 91 FR 74970)	Interim final rule, effective 11.19; data centers already serving D:5 firms have 90 days to obtain licenses; comments to 01.19.2027	No end date
China	10% tariff on US goods	Not verified in this run	In force	No end date
China	Additional 24% tariff on US goods	Not verified in this run	Suspended	01.10.2027
China	Rare earth export controls announced 10.09.2025	Commerce ministry announcements; numbers not verified in this run	Suspended	01.10.2027
China	Port fees on US-linked vessels	Not verified in this run	Suspended	01.10.2027
China	Earlier rare earth licensing (reported as Announcement 18, 04.2025)	Not verified in this run	EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT	Not verified

SOURCE · SUPREME COURT, NO. 24-1287 (02.20) GOV · FEDERAL REGISTER, ENDING CERTAIN TARIFF ACTIONS GOV · FEDERAL REGISTER, PROCLAMATION 11012 GOV · FEDERAL REGISTER, USTR (07.28) GOV · FEDERAL REGISTER, USTR MARITIME (11.10) GOV · FEDERAL REGISTER, BIS (11.09) GOV · CFR (02.23) ORG · AFS LAW (11.2026) PRESS · CHINA BRIEFING (11.20) PRESS · FEDERAL REGISTER, BIS (11.19) GOV

The ruling changed what the truce is made of. The US "reciprocal" tariff whose suspension Busan extended no longer exists under IEEPA, while China's 10% tariff stays and its 24% sits on the 01.10.2027 clock. On the US side, the clock now runs on two measures: the maritime Section 301 action and the Affiliates Rule. Each government can still restore its suspended measures by its own notice, which is why the renewal point, scored in G, carries the weight. ASSESSMENT

F Taiwan: one sentence in Beijing's readout, none in Washington's

F follows the Shenzhen readouts, as the brief required. The only new language on US policy this week is China's: its readout quotes Trump as saying "The United States does not support 'Taiwan Independence.'" We found no White House text confirming or denying it. Earlier US administrations used similar wording; the State Department removed "we do not support Taiwan independence" from its Taiwan fact sheet in 02.2025, having also dropped it in 05.2022 and restored it weeks later (CBS, 02.17.2025). Whether this readout marks a return to that wording cannot be told without a US text. The nearest wording from Trump himself on record is on Fox News on 05.15: "I'm not looking to have somebody go independent." After the September talks, Taiwan's Deputy Foreign Minister Chen Ming-chi said: "President Trump did not use such wording at all this time." FACT

WHAT US LAW SAYS, AND WHAT IT DOES NOT

The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 is US domestic law; Beijing has never accepted it. Section 2(b) makes it US policy "to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States"; "to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character"; and "to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion". Section 3(a) says the US "will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability." FACT

The act provides arms and calls coercion a grave concern; it does not commit US forces to Taiwan's defense. Section 3(c) leaves any response to "the President and the Congress" acting "in accordance with constitutional processes". The Six Assurances of 1982 are executive assurances given to Taipei, not law. "Strategic ambiguity" is a description of that policy, not a legal term. FACT

TAIPEI IN ITS OWN WORDS

Taiwan's government and its main opposition answered Trump's May remarks differently, and each speaks for itself here. FACT

WHO, WHEN	WHAT THEY SAID
Presidential Office, spokeswoman Karen Kuo, 05.16	"It is an undeniable fact that the Republic of China is a sovereign and independent democratic nation." (Taipei Times)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, statement, 05.16	"Arms sales to Taiwan are not only a security commitment to Taiwan," but also "a joint deterrent against regional threats." (Al Jazeera)
Deputy Foreign Minister Chen Ming-chi, 05.16	Taiwan still needed to understand the "true intent" of Trump's remarks on arms sales. (Taipei Times)
President Lai Ching-te, 05.17	Arms purchases are "the most important deterrent"; "Taiwan will not provoke or escalate conflict," but "it will also not relinquish its national sovereignty and dignity, or its democratic and free way of life, under pressure." (AP via PBS)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 09.27	There was "in fact, no need for Taiwan to be discussed in U.S.-China talks." (Focus Taiwan)
Mainland Affairs Council, Deputy Minister Shen Yu-chung, 09.2026	Paraphrase only: the summit showed Beijing had not achieved the Taiwan breakthrough it sought (Taiwan News, 09.28). The council's website could not be reached in this run, and no council statement on Shenzhen was found.
KMT Chair Cheng Li-wun, Washington, 06.12	On Trump: "I think our basic stances are the same," on "peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait." Dialogue with Beijing "doesn't mean that we will give up the deterrence strength in Taiwan." Her party would not write a "blank check" for the government's arms budget proposal. (AP)

SOURCE · TAIPEI TIMES (05.17) PRESS · AL JAZEERA (05.16) PRESS · AP VIA PBS (05.17) PRESS · FOCUS TAIWAN (09.27) PRESS · TAIWAN NEWS (09.28) PRESS · AP VIA WKMG (06.12) PRESS · TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT, PUBLIC LAW 96-8 GOV

BEIJING IN ITS OWN WORDS

Beijing's documents this year are consistent. Xi told Trump on 05.14 that "the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-U.S. relations" and that "'Taiwan independence' and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water." Wang Yi added on 05.15 that "the Taiwan question is China's internal affair." On 09.24 Xi asked Washington to "handle the Taiwan question with caution", and on 11.19 to "keep doing the right thing and avoid major setbacks in China-U.S. relations." FACT

THE BARGAINING QUESTION, ON THE RECORD

Whether arms sales could enter a wider bargain is a question Trump raised himself. Asked on Fox News on 05.15 about a $14 billion package, he said: "I'm holding that in abeyance and it depends on China," and "It's a very good negotiating chip for us, frankly." Lai answered two days later by thanking Trump for "the continuous increase in the scale and amount of arms sales to Taiwan." Focus Taiwan reported on 05.21 that the top US envoy in Taipei affirmed that commitments had not changed; the full interview is paywalled. We print this as statements, not as a prediction. DISCOURSE

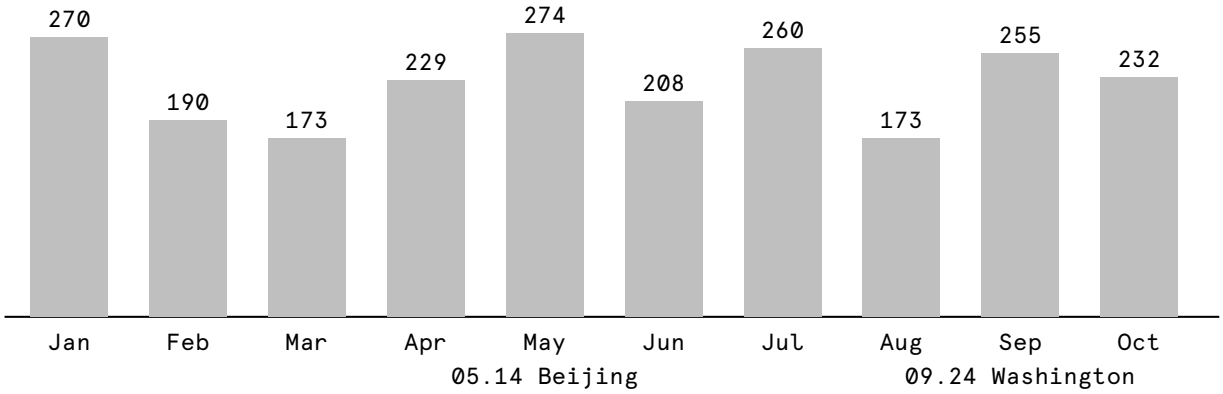
Taiwan's chip industry may raise the cost of any conflict for every party, including China, which buys from it. That reading is plausible but not tested here: no source opened in this run measures what each party would lose. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

THE MILITARY RECORD

PLA air activity around Taiwan in 2026 is about half of 2025's. Through October, Taiwan's defense ministry counted 2,264 PLA aircraft sorties, against 4,569 in the same ten months of 2025, by the Taiwan Security Monitor's compilation of the ministry's daily reports. Every month of 2026 ran below the same month of 2025. October did set a 2026 high for official and government ship detections, at 165. FACT

The quiet is not even. On 11.03 the ministry reported 49 PLA aircraft in one day, 31 of them across the median line, the highest daily count of 2026, as RTP reported. The lower annual count coincides with a year of summits; the data cannot show whether one caused the other. ASSESSMENT

PLA AIRCRAFT SORTIES DETECTED BY TAIWAN'S DEFENSE MINISTRY, 2026, BY MONTH



Same ten months of 2025: 4,569 sorties. August is printed as 173 in later updates, 171 in the first.

SOURCE · TAIWAN MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE DAILY REPORTS, COMPILED BY TAIWAN SECURITY MONITOR, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY (OCTOBER 2026 UPDATE) ORG · RTP (11.03) PRESS · CHART DRAWN 11.20.2026

Two gaps remain. Date-of-risk claims such as a "2027" window circulate widely, but none was checked against the speaker's own text in this run, so none is printed. We used no Taiwan opinion poll: National Chengchi University's Election Study Center updated its long-running unification and independence series on 07.03 with data to 06.2026, but its figures could not be read in this run. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

H Beyond the two: shared diagnosis, separate remedies

The governments we could check on the record share Washington's worry about China's place in sensitive supply chains and choose their own instruments. The European Commission's president said in 2023 that it is "neither viable" nor "in Europe's interest" to decouple from China, and that "we need to focus on de-risk". The Netherlands writes its chip-tool controls country-neutral. Southeast Asian governments answered this week's US chip rule by studying it or saying they were ready. No government in the table reports a cost figure. ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY OR BLOC	STATED POSITION	US MEASURE IT IS ASKED TO FOLLOW	WHAT IT DID	COST REPORTED
European Union	"Our relations are not black or white" (von der Leyen, 03.30.2023)	No specific request found in this run	Its own countervailing duties on Chinese electric vehicles, 17.0% to 35.3% by producer, for five years (Commission, 10.29.2024)	None found
Netherlands	"It is important that we do not disrupt the chip industry unnecessarily"; "It does not constitute an export ban" (government, 01.15.2025)	The Dutch text names no country and cites no US request	Licenses for chip-tool exports to all destinations outside the EU, widened 09.07.2024 and 04.01.2025	None quantified
Singapore	"We are studying the details of this new measure carefully" (trade and digital ministries, 11.17)	US licenses for advanced AI chips, released 11.16	Seeks "trusted access" for its firms (Al Jazeera)	None found
Indonesia; Thailand	Indonesia reviewing; Thailand's vice commerce minister said it was ready (paraphrase)	The same rule	No measure announced	None found
Malaysia; Brazil	No response found	The same rule	Not known	None found
Russia	Joined with the US and China in a declaration: "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" (11.19)	Not applicable	Joined a three-power leaders' declaration; Trump "rejected new Russia sanctions" (AP)	Not applicable

SOURCE · EUROPEAN COMMISSION, VON DER LEYEN (03.30.2023) GOV · EUROPEAN COMMISSION (10.29.2024) GOV · GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS (01.15.2025) GOV · W.MEDIA (11.17) PRESS · AL JAZEERA (11.17) PRESS · WHITE HOUSE DECLARATION (11.19) GOV · AP VIA PBS (11.19) PRESS

Japan, South Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada are not in the table. Their governments' own statements on China trade and on US measures could not be opened in this run, and we do not summarize them from memory. The working thesis that several allies hedge by deepening their own ties with Beijing is therefore untested here, not refuted. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The China and Russia side is thinner on the record than the declaration suggests. The Shenzhen text covers UN reform, refined fuel supply, limits on the International Criminal Court and nuclear risk, and AP describes "a far narrower agenda" than expected. China's customs figures for its trade with Russia and the Global South could not be retrieved, so we print no magnitude for those ties. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

"East versus West" is a framing, and its users disagree. The National wrote that the summit "has drawn comparisons to the 1945 Yalta Conference, unnerving smaller nations." The Russian economist Vladislav Inozemtsev called a "new Yalta" "more of a case of wishful thinking than a realistic possibility." Wenran Jiang of the University of Alberta argued that "China's greatest power may lie in the wars it has chosen not to enter", and von der Leyen's own line was that relations "are not black or white". DISCOURSE

Yalta's three were the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union; China was not among them, and they agreed that the Soviets would have a sphere of influence in Manchuria after Japan's surrender (Office of the Historian). FACT

SOURCE · THE NATIONAL (11.18) PRESS · INOZEMTSEV, AL JAZEERA (11.19) PRESS · JIANG, AL JAZEERA (11.20) PRESS

G What comes next: four scenarios to 11.30.2028

In our reading, managed rivalry with periodic crises is the likeliest path. The thresholds below are written so a reader can check them, and one definition of a sharp break serves the scenarios and both team boxes. ASSESSMENT

ONE DEFINITION: SHARP BREAK

A sharp break occurs if, within 60 days after any measure now suspended to 01.10.2027 lapses without a renewal or replacement published by its own government, either government (a) raises tariffs on most of the other's goods by 20 percentage points or more above the rates in force on 11.20.2026, or (b) keeps China's October 2025 rare earth export controls or the US Affiliates Rule in force for 30 consecutive days. The suspended measures are those in E's ledger: China's 24% tariff, rare earth controls and port fees; the US maritime Section 301 action and the Affiliates Rule. If, as reported, China's 24% returns when its suspension ends, an unrenewed lapse of that measure would itself be a sharp break; China's own notice was not opened this run (China Briefing, 11.20).

SCENARIO	THRESHOLD A READER CAN CHECK	ODDS	SIGNPOSTS
1. Managed rivalry with periodic crises	Through 11.30.2028, no sharp break and no military crisis as defined; each lapse ends in a renewal or replacement, however short.	55%	Federal Register extensions by 01.10.2027 (F-032); a leaders' meeting at the G20 (F-033).
2. A broader trade and technology deal	By 11.30.2028, a text published by both governments that ends, not suspends, China's 24% tariff, its October 2025 rare earth controls and the US maritime action, or puts in force tariff cuts on at least $30 billion of goods each way; no sharp break first.	15%	Publication of the 11.19 action plan (F-036); a Board of Trade agreement.
3. A sharp economic break	A sharp break as defined, with no military crisis.	20%	No extension notice in the last week before 01.10.2027; Chinese countermeasures against the 11.16 chip rule, which its commerce ministry threatened (Fortune, 11.18).
4. A military crisis	Taiwan's defense ministry or Coast Guard Administration reports a PLA or China Coast Guard blockade or quarantine of Taiwan or its outlying islands lasting 72 hours or more, or US and Chinese forces exchange fire.	10%	Monthly ministry tallies back at 2025 levels; daily counts above 49, the 2026 high.

Where scenarios overlap, the more severe one counts: 4, then 3, then 2. The odds sum to 100 and are FORECAST . China-side terms rest on press reports of Beijing's notices. **Outside view.** Polymarket prices "Will China invade Taiwan by December 31, 2027?" at 8.5% (updated 11.08) and a China and Taiwan "military clash before 2027" at 2.7%; neither matches our scenario 4, which is broader in kind and longer in time. Its "US x China tariff agreement by December 31?" market, last updated 09.23 at 89%, is stale and defines agreement differently, so we do not compare it. MKT

RED TEAM

"By 11.2028, a major truce will lapse unrenewed and a sharp break, as defined, will follow." The case: every term reached at the top is a suspension or a pledge, the Board of Trade's first meeting produced nothing, and Washington widened chip controls to five third countries during the truce. Beijing still holds the switch on rare earths, and its 24% tariff, as reported, returns without an extension. **Proved wrong if:** every measure in E's ledger is renewed or replaced before it lapses through 11.30.2028, or any lapse is followed within 60 days by no tariff rise of 20 points and no 30-day return of the rare earth controls or the Affiliates Rule. Our odds: 25%, scenario 3 plus the military crises that would bring a break with them. FORECAST

BLUE TEAM

"Through 11.2028, every lapse or crisis will end in a renewed or new deal within six months, and no sharp break, as defined, will occur." The case: each suspension has been extended at least once since 11.2025, both leaders keep meeting, and the phrase "strategic stability" appears both in China's readouts and in the three-power declaration the White House posted, though the declaration uses it for nuclear security, not for the bilateral relationship. **Proved wrong if:** a sharp break occurs, or any lapse or crisis runs six months without a published renewal or new agreement. Our odds: 65%, close to scenarios 1 and 2 combined, less the lapses that would run past six months. The two boxes are not mirror images: a lapse that ends in a deal after seven months, with no sharp break, would prove both wrong. FORECAST

LOGGED IN THE FORECAST LEDGER

ID	FORECAST	OURS	OUTSIDE VIEW	RESOLVES
F-032	USTR and BIS each publish in the Federal Register a further suspension or replacement of the maritime Section 301 action and the Affiliates Rule before they lapse	80%	None found	01.10.2027
F-033	Trump and Xi meet in person at or beside the G20 leaders' meeting in Doral, Florida, as recorded by either government	65%	None found	12.16.2026
F-036	The White House or China's foreign ministry publishes the text or an official summary of the 11.19 "action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability"	30%	None found	03.31.2027

Why these numbers. F-032: both suspensions have been extended before, most recently on 11.09 and 11.10, by only two months, and Shenzhen added no new terms. F-033: AP reports the leaders meet again at the G20, and Beijing's 09.25 readout pledged support for the US hosting; we discount because no Chinese source in this run confirms Xi's attendance. F-036: the readout gives the plan no timeline, and neither government has published texts for the boards created in May. FORECAST

· The strongest objection, answered

The objection runs like this. There was never one bet to replace: Washington always hedged with arms sales and alliances, Beijing never accepted the openness half of the bargain, and trade, students and dialogue still run at scale. The shift is one of degree, and calling the leverage "mutual" flatters the symmetry. Much of this is right. US imports from China were $31.5 billion in September alone, the highest month of 2026 in data not seasonally adjusted, and the leaders have met four times in thirteen months. FACT

What changed is the instruments, which is where the objection is weakest. Every term in E's ledger is now written as a revocable switch with a date: suspensions to 01.10.2027, licenses that can be widened to third countries in one rule, purchase pledges by the year. China's holdings of US Treasury securities fell to $563.9 billion in September 2026 from $699.2 billion a year earlier, by Treasury's count, which may understate holdings kept through custodians elsewhere. Treasury's form for this series also records fair value changes, so part of the fall may reflect bond prices rather than sales. That is degree, but a degree that each side may now manage partly by notice. ASSESSMENT

The objection is right that the leverage is unequal, and it is unequal in kind. China's strongest lever, the rare earth controls, can be suspended and restored by one announcement, and it already has been. Washington's instruments are more numerous and cover more countries: chip licenses now apply to five third countries, and the Section 301 tariffs cover 60 economies. Whether that gives it more leverage over China in a crisis is not shown here (D). D carries the chokepoint shares. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · US CENSUS, TRADE WITH CHINA DATA · US TREASURY TIC, MAJOR FOREIGN HOLDERS DATA

What to watch, with dates

DATE	EVENT	PRIMARY SOURCE
12.08.2026	October trade data, including imports from China	Census release schedule
12.14 to 12.15.2026	G20 leaders' meeting, Doral, Florida (F-033)	Treasury schedule, as reported by Yonhap (02.20); Treasury's own text not opened
01.07.2027	November trade data	Census release schedule
01.09.2027, 11:59 p.m. ET	US maritime Section 301 suspension ends unless extended (F-032)	Federal Register (11.10)
01.10.2027	US Affiliates Rule suspension ends unless extended (F-032); China's 24% tariff, rare earth controls and port fees suspensions end, as reported	Federal Register (11.09); China's side via China Briefing, commerce ministry text not opened
2027 and 2028	China's farm purchase pledge, at least $17 billion a year, and coal, at least 10 million tonnes a year	White House (05.17); (09.25)

Not listed: Taiwan's election calendar and any PLA exercise window, because no date for either was confirmed in a primary source in this run.

EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

WHERE THE DISCOURSE IS HAPPENING

The week's arguments ran from what a three-power summit was for to whether a run of outages meant anything at all.

SIX DEBATES THIS WEEK

DEBATE	WHO ARGUES WHAT	ARENA
Did Shenzhen sideline Europe?	Marco Carnelos: "Shenzhen was not Yalta. The danger is that it might have been a rehearsal" (Middle East Eye, 11.20); Vladislav Inozemtsev: a "new Yalta" "appears to be more of a case of wishful thinking than a realistic possibility" (Al Jazeera, 11.19). See 04S.	Op-eds, European capitals
Did the ICJ keep the genocide bar?	Richard Horsey: the bar is "surmountable"; Andrew Tucker: a "lower threshold"; Yuval Shany: "more avenues" for South Africa (Reuters via Cyprus Mail, 11.20).	The Hague, law faculties
Outages: attack or fragility?	Karoline Leavitt: "transparency is key"; Poynter's Tom Jones: "there's no evidence of anything nefarious behind these breakdowns" (Poynter, 11.18); Kelly McKinney: "No matter how smart a system is, it gets really dumb when it breaks" (Deseret News, 11.20).	Cable news, op-eds
Fossil fuels in the COP31 text	The EU: the draft "risks turning this climate COP into a fossil summit"; Panama's Juan Carlos Navarro: "we simply will not put up with it"; Saudi Arabia and Venezuela argued for a future role for fossil fuels (Reuters; AFP, 11.20).	COP31, Antalya
Who decides on Iran?	The Senate rejected a war powers resolution 48 to 51; four senators who caucus with the Democrats vowed to block "any short-term package" that does not limit the war (Washington Examiner, 11.19); Trump: "We'll see what happens after the new year starts" (CBS). Mapped in 03 C.	Senate, appropriations
AI rules under a new Congress	Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.): "We can't afford to wait for a major catastrophe before putting meaningful safeguards in place"; Rep. Nathaniel Moran (R-Texas): "We don't have to choose between innovation and safety" (TNND, 11.20).	House, statehouses

Labels: the Senate vote is FACT ; everything else in the table is DISCOURSE .

IDEAS ON THE MOVE THIS WEEK

IDEA	PATH OBSERVED	STAGE NOW
Claim: the ICJ widened genocide, and adversaries will use it	A Policy Exchange report: "We could expect geopolitical adversaries of the UK to invoke an enlarged definition of genocide" → The Jewish Chronicle the evening of the verdict, 11.19 → a Spectator column by Policy Exchange's Richard Ekins, 11.20 → a Reuters wire analysis quoting Tucker's "lower threshold," 11.20 (JC; Reuters via Cyprus Mail). The counter-reading traveled in the same wire story.	Wire and national weekly within 24 hours; no government statement yet
"Correlated fragility" in digital systems	A Cloud Security Alliance research note finds that failover and recovery systems began several November outages (CSA, 11.18) → a Deseret News op-ed on a "fragile digital monoculture," 11.20. We did not establish that one drew on the other.	Research note and op-ed, in parallel
Data centers as a development prize	US county moratoriums (Reason, 11.12) → Francisco Morandi asks whether Latin America can win the projects, warning that "attracting data centers should not be the end goal" (Americas Quarterly, 11.16).	Regional policy essay

PEOPLE WORTH FOLLOWING THIS WEEK

PERSON	WHAT THEY ADD THIS WEEK
Michael D. Swaine Quincy Institute, restraint school	The closest reading of Shenzhen's nuclear line: "the joint declaration sets no timetable or agenda and contains no commitment to negotiate limits on arsenals" (Responsible Statecraft, 11.19).
Marco Carnelos Former Italian ambassador to Iraq	A European diplomat's case that the format, not the text, sidelined Europe (Middle East Eye, 11.20).

PERSON	WHAT THEY ADD THIS WEEK
Wenran Jiang University of Alberta, China Institute	"China's greatest power may lie in the wars it has chosen not to enter" (Al Jazeera, 11.20).
Vladislav Inozemtsev Russian economist, Kremlin critic	Explains why the three powers want incompatible things (Al Jazeera, 11.19).
Omar Faruk Osman Federation of African Journalists	A survey of 1,586 journalists in 45 countries: 84% self-censor frequently or occasionally (Al Jazeera, 11.18).
Francisco Morandi Energy strategist, Latin America	Asks what Latin America should want from the US data-center backlash (Americas Quarterly, 11.16).
Kelly McKinney NYU Langone, emergency management	"Resilience is what we will need the day it doesn't" (Deseret News, 11.20).
Christian Britschgi Reason, libertarian	Reports on the local moratoriums stalling data-center projects (Reason, 11.12).

DEBUNKED THIS WEEK

CHECKED BY FACT-CHECKERS

US, social media posts: a claim that an AI system caused the 11.13 nationwide ground stop after its maker's PAC gave to the campaign of Transportation Secretary Duffy's son-in-law was rated Mostly False; the PAC gave $2,500 and the firm later won an FAA contract, but "The rollout of the SMART system was unrelated to the outage" (PolitiFact, 11.18). **US, TikTok:** a manipulated Trump clip promising a "nationwide 90-day blackout" on 11.17 was rated False; the date was FEMA's routine alert test, and "There is no evidence that is going to happen" (PolitiFact, 11.16). **UK, social media:** a National Grid warning of a major blackout on 11.19 is fake; "There is no outage expected" (Full Fact, 11.17). **UK, social media:** a video said to show the suspected drone incident at RAF Lakenheath "has been online since at least 31 May 2026, months before the incident" (Full Fact, 11.18). FACT

POLICY & LAW TRACKER

Four changes with human consequences, three of them in how US agencies and courts decide who keeps coverage, status or a hearing.

P1 States may hold off Medicaid work-requirement denials to 06.30.2027 FACT

CHANGE	An 11.13 CMS letter lets states suspend denials and disenrollments for people who cannot show compliance through 06.30.2027; states must still verify compliance and must notify CMS by 12.11 (KFF, 11.14).
PREVIOUS	Enforcement from the statutory start of 01.01.2027, which is unchanged.
POPULATION	Medicaid adults subject to the new requirement, who must show work, education, job training or community service.
FOR	CMS says the rule "helps Americans build skills and independence through work, education, job training, or community service" (CMS, 06.01); KFF: "CMS makes clear that states must be moving toward full implementation."

AGAINST	Jennifer Wagner (CBPP): “This idea of looking back at a month instead of what your current circumstances are is not a concept in Medicaid” (Stateline, 11.18).
EVIDENCE	In Nebraska, 533 renewals were denied by August, 91.9% for missing documents (Stateline); AP says 43 lost coverage for not meeting the requirement itself (AP, 11.16). In Arkansas, “work requirements did not increase employment over eighteen months” (Sommers et al., Health Affairs, 2020).
WATCH	Which states notify CMS by 12.11.

P2 Immigration appeals rule made final FACT

CHANGE	The Justice Department’s final rule on appellate procedures for the Board of Immigration Appeals, published 11.17, takes effect 12.17: “the Department responds to comments received and finalizes the IFR with minor changes” (Federal Register, 2026-23320).
PREVIOUS	An interim final rule, in effect since 03.09.2026, which this rule finalizes with minor changes.
POPULATION	People appealing immigration judges’ decisions, and their lawyers.
FOR	The department says it responded to the comments it received.
AGAINST	Challengers have the rule in federal court in Washington, D.C., a law-firm summary reports; we did not verify that docket.
EVIDENCE	A procedure rule; no measured effects yet. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT
WATCH	12.17, when the minor changes take effect.

P3 The Labor Department proposes ending Schedule A for green cards FACT

CHANGE	A proposed rule, published 11.17, would rework the PERM labor certification process, including “eliminating further administration of Schedule A, which exempts certain job opportunities from the statutorily required labor market test” (Federal Register, 2026-23370).
PREVIOUS	Schedule A occupations skip the labor market test.
POPULATION	Employers sponsoring foreign workers for permanent residence, and workers in Schedule A occupations.
FOR	The department frames it as “Improving Protections for U.S. Workers.”
AGAINST	Not yet on the record in sources we opened; the comment period is the venue.
EVIDENCE	No impact estimate in the abstract. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT
WATCH	Comments close 01.19.2027.

P4 The Supreme Court turns away gun, speech and grant cases FACT

CHANGE	On 11.16 the Court denied review in *Novotny v. Moore*, No. 25-1324, on Maryland’s “sensitive places” gun limits; *Khatibi v. Yip*, No. 25-1240, on required implicit-bias medical education; and *Trump v. Thakur*, No. 26-210, on university researchers’ grant cuts (SCOTUSblog, 11.16).
PREVIOUS	The lower-court rulings, which the denials leave in place.
POPULATION	Gun owners in Maryland; doctors under continuing-education rules; researchers whose grants were cut.
FOR	A denial sets no precedent and gives no reasons; the Court waits for a case it wants. ASSESSMENT
AGAINST	Justice Thomas, joined by Justice Alito, dissenting in *Khatibi*: “First Amendment protections do not give way simply because a State heavily regulates speech.” On guns, Thomas wrote that the Court “should consider the scope of States’ authority to ban firearms in ‘sensitive places.’”
EVIDENCE	A question of law, not of measured effects. ASSESSMENT
WATCH	The next conference: transgender servicemembers, E. Jean Carroll’s award and acting US attorneys (SCOTUSblog, 11.17).

ADMIRABLE INTENTIONS, UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES · AN UPGRADE THAT GROUNDED THE FLEET

The FAA has been moving its network from copper to fiber. During that conversion, a contractor-installed router flooded legacy equipment and triggered the nationwide ground stop of 11.13 (Cloud Security Alliance, 11.18; PolitiFact, 11.18). The same research note finds that failover and disaster-recovery systems built to prevent outages started or spread several others that week, at Microsoft and Workday among them. Upgrades carry their own risk during the changeover, when old and new systems run side by side. FACT ASSESSMENT

SHOULD MEDICAID COVERAGE DEPEND ON WORK FROM 01.01.2027?

On 11.13 CMS let states hold off until 06.30.2027 on denying coverage to people who can't show compliance; the statutory start stays 01.01.2027. Both sides say they want people working and insured; they disagree on whether a reporting rule gets there.

CBO's estimate for the House-passed version of H.R. 1, as quoted by CRS, put the requirement at $344 billion less federal Medicaid spending from FY2025 to FY2034 and 4.8 million people losing health coverage in FY2034; the enacted text may differ, and we did not open CBO's estimate for the enacted law (CRS, R48569). FORECAST

Argument A: Require work, on schedule

Work, training or service builds independence, and a public program may ask for it. CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz said the rule "helps Americans build skills and independence through work, education, job training, or community service" (CMS, 06.01). On the 11.13 letter, KFF writes: "CMS makes clear that states must be moving toward full implementation of the requirements" (KFF, 11.14). DISCOURSE

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING A

A 2024 review of work programs: "In general, these programs seem to have modest improvements in employment but are better when implemented with work supports" (Folse, Bridges and DiGiorgio, Inquiry). It covers TANF and SNAP, not Medicaid. FACT

WEAKNESSES OF A

Both Medicaid tests to date found no employment gain. In Arkansas, "work requirements did not increase employment over eighteen months of follow-up" (Sommers et al., Health Affairs 2020); Georgia's program "did not increase health insurance coverage or employment during the first 15 months" (Johnson, Wadhera et al., BMJ 2025). FACT

Argument B: Don't tie coverage to monthly reports

Most people who lose coverage under these rules lose it to paperwork, not to a work test. Jennifer Wagner of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: "This idea of looking back at a month instead of what your current circumstances are is not a concept in Medicaid" (Stateline, 11.18). DISCOURSE

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING B

Nebraska, which started in May, denied 533 renewals by August, 91.9% for missing documentation (Stateline); AP reports that 43 of them lost coverage for not meeting the requirement itself (AP, 11.16). A second Arkansas study found the policy "was associated with an increase in uninsurance among the targeted age group and no significant change in employment or work effort" (Gangopadhyaya and Karpman, Health Services Research 2025). FACT

WEAKNESSES OF B

The 2027 rule is not Arkansas's or Georgia's: it sets 80 hours a month with exemptions (the statute), and after a court ruling the medically frail exclusion needs only a condition in one of five statutory categories, with no proof that it limits work (KFF). The studies B leans on are short and measure employment by survey, so they may say little about the national design. ASSESSMENT

WHAT EVIDENCE WOULD CHANGE THE DEBATE

States must tell CMS by 12.11 whether they will use the hold-harmless (KFF), which will show how many enforce denials from 01.01. Nebraska's later months will show whether paperwork denials fall as people learn the system. The review behind A points to one testable variable: whether states pair the rule with job supports. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · CMS (06.01) GOV · KFF (11.14) ORG · STATELINE (11.18) PRESS · AP (11.16) PRESS · HEALTH AFFAIRS, HSR, BMJ, INQUIRY PEER (RESULT SENTENCES FROM THE ABSTRACTS, VIA PUBMED)

RED TEAM / BLUE TEAM

Proposition: the United States should settle the largest questions, nuclear risk and the war in Ukraine, in a three-power format with China and Russia, even with Europe and Ukraine outside the room. Blue defends it; Red attacks it. We don't pick a winner.

BLUE TEAM · DEFENDS · THOMAS HOBBES, LEVIATHAN (1651)

The theory. Hobbes held that without a common power people live in "the condition of mere nature," which he calls "a condition of war." The Stanford Encyclopedia's summary of his view: "all sovereigns are in this state with respect to one another" (SEP, Sreedhar). DISCOURSE

Applied this week. Among sovereigns with no referee, rules are made by those able to enforce them. AP counts more than 5,000 warheads each for the US and Russia and more than 600 for China, and on 11.19 the three leaders issued a declaration that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" (White House). On Blue's reading, only those three can turn that line into limits. ASSESSMENT

Best evidence. The declaration adds a dialogue on nuclear risk and non-proliferation, with New START expired since February (AP via PBS). Michael Swaine of the Quincy Institute treats it as an opening: "The United States has a clear interest in reducing nuclear risks with both China and Russia" (Responsible Statecraft, 11.19). FACT

What would make Blue give ground. A year in which the three-way nuclear format never meets, or a Ukraine deal that Kyiv refuses to sign.

RED TEAM · ATTACKS · THUCYDIDES, THE MELIAN DIALOGUE (HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, BOOK 5)

The theory. Thucydides' Athenians tell the Melians that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." The Melians answer that Athens' own fall "would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon" (Crawley translation, FAS). DISCOURSE

Applied this week. A settlement made over the heads of Kyiv and Europe sets a precedent the next strong power can cite. Myroslava Gongadze of the Atlantic Council framed the risk before the meeting: "the old system of great-power politics, in which powerful nations decide the fate of smaller ones, is far from dead" (Atlantic Council, 11.17). ASSESSMENT

Best evidence. The same day, Putin said: "But after the strikes on the Crimean Bridge, we will not negotiate" (via TASS, hromadske, 11.19). Swaine himself notes "the joint declaration sets no timetable or agenda and contains no commitment to negotiate limits on arsenals," and Chancellor Merz said the trilateral format "will not bring peace" (CBS). FACT

What would make Red give ground. A three-way agreement with verifiable arsenal limits, or a Ukraine settlement that Kyiv and the European governments accept.

Where they really disagree. Partly on facts: whether the three-way nuclear dialogue meets at all, and whether Kushner's account that Russia agreed to a multilateral format with European representatives, as Kyiv Post paraphrased it on 11.19, holds (Kyiv Post). Partly on principle: whether order among sovereigns is made by those who can enforce it, which is Hobbes's view, or kept by the restraint the strong show the weak, which is the Melians' plea. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · SEP, HOBBES'S MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY · THUCYDIDES, MELIAN DIALOGUE (CRAWLEY), FAS · WHITE HOUSE DECLARATION (11.19) GOV · AP VIA PBS (11.19) PRESS · RESPONSIBLE STATECRAFT (11.19) PRESS · ATLANTIC COUNCIL (11.17) ORG · HROMADSKE (11.19) PRESS · CBS (11.19) PRESS

AFTER GAMBIA V. MYANMAR, HOW SHOULD "INTENT TO DESTROY" BE PROVED?

The ICJ found Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya on 11.19. Seven positions on what the ruling does to the standard of proof, each stated so its advocates would recognize it; two argue it lowers the bar.

THE SHARED EVIDENCE

The court found Myanmar responsible for genocide, the first time, Crisis Group's Richard Horsey told Reuters, that the court has found a state committed genocide; Al Jazeera reports the genocide finding passed 9 to 6 and the reparations order 10 to 5 (Al Jazeera, 11.20). South Africa's case against Israel is not expected to be argued until 2029 (Reuters via Cyprus Mail, 11.20). An unnamed US official: "We are studying the decision to fully assess its implications" (Al Jazeera, 11.19). We did not read the judgment or the dissents. FACT

THE GAMBIA'S COUNSEL

Philippe Sands KC, as reported by The Jewish Chronicle: "The evidentiary standard has been defined very clearly" (JC, 11.19).

CONFLICT ANALYST

Richard Horsey (Crisis Group): "The legal bar is extremely high, but what this case shows is that it is surmountable" (Reuters).

ISRAELI LEGAL SCHOLAR

Yuval Shany: the judgment "gives South Africa more avenues to argue for genocide" in Gaza (Reuters).

EUROPEAN ACADEMIC

Marieke de Hoon (University of Amsterdam): the court rejects arguments that a military objective "would erase the idea" of genocidal intent (Reuters).

ROHINGYA ADVOCATE

Wai Wai Nu: "the world's highest court has permanently shattered that state-sponsored lie" (Al Jazeera).

UK CONSERVATIVE THINK TANK

A Policy Exchange report, as quoted by The Jewish Chronicle: "An enlarged definition would invite the ICJ to hand down judgments against the UK" (JC, 11.19).

HAGUE THINK TANK CRITIC

Andrew Tucker (Thinc, which Reuters describes as funded by pro-Israeli groups): the ruling imposes a "lower threshold" for genocidal intent (Reuters).

Missing: EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT We could not open a page carrying Myanmar's military-led government's own response and left that slot empty rather than write one. Four quotes come through one Reuters analysis, and two through Al Jazeera, which is state-funded; the Policy Exchange report itself was not opened.

FORECASTING LAB

Probabilities are subjective and stated so they can be scored. Four calls were graded this week; one of them, F-024, is a provisional miss pending Alaska's certification.

A Ebola, mostly off the contact lists

KNOWN 11,504 confirmed and 5,630 deaths in data through 11.16 (ECDC); "Between 400 and 500 new cases are still reported every week" (WHO, 11.17); Africa CDC's Kaseya says over 80% of new cases arose outside contact lists (Reuters

	interview, via Al Jazeera); Kenya is due Ebola-free status on 12.23 if no new case emerges (The Standard).
UNCERTAIN	Whether slowing in early epicenters outweighs North Kivu; when national approvals let the two Bundibugyo-specific vaccines into the Tumaini trial.
INDICATORS	Weekly new cases; first doses of ChAdOx1 BDBV or mRNA-1469 (F-035); Kenya's 12.23 date (F-028); any case in South Sudan, where ECDC lists none (F-005).

HORIZON	BASE CASE	ALTERNATIVE	LOW-PROBABILITY, HIGH-IMPACT
By 12.31	Kenya is declared free of the outbreak (F-028). 85%	A new Kenyan case restarts the count. 15%	A confirmed case in South Sudan (F-005). 25%
By 12.31	A Bundibugyo-specific vaccine reaches a first trial participant (F-035). 75%	Approvals push first doses into 2027. 25%	A confirmed case in a new country.

Reference point. A reconstruction in Science estimates the outbreak's early doubling time at about 10 days and finds "human movement was a principle driver of early spatial expansion" (Ebengo, Kraemer, Mbala-Kingebeni et al., Science). FACT

B Bridges struck, and the table moves to Berlin

KNOWN	Ukrainian strikes hit the Kerch Bridge from 11.16 to 11.19; Putin: "But after the strikes on the Crimean Bridge, we will not negotiate" (via TASS, hromadske, 11.19); in Berlin the same day, Merz: "We want to be involved in these negotiations" (Kyiv Post); no report that the prisoner exchange agreed at Abu Dhabi has taken place.
UNCERTAIN	Whether the Kremlin confirms a format with European representatives; what Russia's promised response looks like.
INDICATORS	A Kremlin statement on the format; a date for the next round (F-029); the prisoner exchange.

HORIZON	BASE CASE	ALTERNATIVE	LOW-PROBABILITY, HIGH-IMPACT
By 12.31	Contacts continue bilaterally only. 60%	A round with US, Ukrainian and Russian officials, with or without Europe (F-029). 40%	A general ceasefire is announced.
1 year	War continues with periodic talks. 60%	A ceasefire holds for three months or more. 30%	Talks collapse and strikes on energy widen. 10%

C Hormuz: strikes at sea, a corridor on paper

KNOWN	US "self-defense" strikes on an IRGC missile site on Qeshm on 11.17; tankers hit on 11.17 and 11.18; the Senate rejected a war powers resolution 48 to 51 on 11.19 (CBS). Iran says it agreed route coordinates with Oman, but Gulf News finds "no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect" (Gulf News, 11.19). Brent settled at $92.57 on 11.20, a third weekly loss (Bloomberg via Rigzone).
UNCERTAIN	Transit counts (none opened this week); whether a ship-to-ship crude cargo reported by Reuters, citing TankerTrackers, reaches a buyer (Al Jazeera).
INDICATORS	PortWatch transits (F-001); Brent against $90 (F-003); CENTCOM interdictions; Trump's timing: "We'll see what happens after the new year starts" (CBS).

HORIZON	BASE CASE	ALTERNATIVE	LOW-PROBABILITY, HIGH-IMPACT
30 days	Exchanges of fire continue without a deal. 65%	Iran and Oman formally approve a corridor. 20%	A larger joint US-Israeli campaign, which Netanyahu is reportedly pushing (Bloomberg and NYT via CBS). 15%
By 12.31	Brent settles at or above $90 every day. 65%	Brent settles below $90 on some day (F-003). 35%	PortWatch 7-day average reaches 60 (F-001). 4%

All scenario odds above are FORECAST ; only those with an F-code are scored.

GRADED THIS WEEK

ID	FORECAST	OURS	OUTCOME	BRIER
F-024 (SE-5)	Alaska's Senate race goes to a ranked-choice tabulation	85%	No, provisional: no RCV report for the Senate in unofficial results; a miss pending certification	0.7225 (provisional)
F-018	WHO reports more than 11,000 confirmed Bundibugyo cases	80%	Yes, with a wording note: "over 11 300" (11.17)	0.0400
F-006	PAHO commission finds the US has lost measles elimination status	85%	Yes: PAHO, 11.17	0.0225
F-017	WHO or Nigeria's NCDC reports a second confirmed Bundibugyo case in Nigeria	4%	No: one imported case only	0.0016

F-024, a provisional miss. The Alaska Division of Elections posted ranked-choice reports for the US House and state legislative races on 11.18, and none for the US Senate; it lists the results as unofficial until the State Review Board certifies them (Alaska DoE). We set 85% on 11.06, when no candidate was above 50%. FairVote, an RCV advocacy group, puts Peltola at 50.1% of first choices in the unofficial count; its own introduction gives 50.2% (FairVote). The grade, its 0.7225 and the running Brier score below are provisional pending Alaska's certification, on our calendar for 11.25 (the Division's page gives no date); we will rescore if certification requires a tabulation. **F-018, scored Yes with a wording note.** WHO's Director-General said on 11.17 that "the number of reported cases and deaths has more than doubled, to over 11 300 and 5500 deaths" (WHO). WHO did not use the word "confirmed" in that sentence, and we found no Disease Outbreak News above 11,000; the series is Congo's confirmed count, 11,504 as of 11.17 per ECDC. A stricter reading would score it a miss, at 0.64. F-006: PAHO, "All three countries have therefore lost their measles elimination status" (PAHO). F-017: "Nigeria has reported one imported case" (WHO, 11.17). F-025 (SE-6, Georgia's Senate race goes to a 12.01 runoff) stays No: Georgia's Secretary of State certified the 11.03 general election results on 11.20, as reported by Capitol Beat; one state House seat goes to a 12.01 runoff. No rescoring. FACT

FORECAST LEDGER WITH THE OUTSIDE VIEW

ID	FORECAST	OURS	OUTSIDE VIEW	RESOLVES
F-009	US-China AI dialogue holds its next meeting	15% (was 35%)	None found; the Manifold market we tracked asks about an arrangement, not a meeting	11.30.2026
F-034	COP31's adopted cover decision states a numerical goal for adaptation finance (new)	25%	None found	11.30.2026
F-007	Fed raises rates again at or before the 12.08 to 12.09 meeting	90% (was 85%)	Kalshi about 91%, read 11.20 (venue stamp unreliable), exact; Polymarket about 92.5%, 11.20, close: 25 bp only MKT	12.09.2026
F-001	IMF PortWatch 7-day average of Hormuz transit calls reaches 60 or more	4% (was 6%)	Polymarket about 3.5%, 11.19, exact MKT	12.31.2026
F-003	Brent settles below $90 on any day	35% (was 30%)	None found	12.31.2026
F-005	Confirmed Bundibugyo case reported in South Sudan	25% (was 30%)	Polymarket about 25%, last updated 11.06, close: any Ebola case MKT	12.31.2026
F-008	Federal funding lapse begins after the 12.11 continuing resolution expires	30%	Polymarket about 35.5%, 11.19, close: any shutdown by 12.31 MKT	12.31.2026
F-011	IPC or its Famine Review Committee classifies famine (Phase 5 area) in Sudan	40% (was 45%)	None found	12.31.2026
F-027	Security Council recommends a Secretary-General candidate by 12.31	45% (was 60%)	None found; Polymarket asks who, not when	12.31.2026
F-028	Kenya's health ministry or WHO declares Kenya's Ebola outbreak over by 12.31	85% (was 75%)	None found	12.31.2026

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ID	FORECAST	OURS	OUTSIDE VIEW	RESOLVES
F-029	US, Ukrainian and Russian officials hold a second trilateral round after Abu Dhabi by 12.31	40% (was 55%)	None found; Polymarket's talks market is stale and does not require the US	12.31.2026
F-035	A Bundibugyo-specific candidate vaccine is given to a first trial participant in Congo by 12.31 (new)	75%	None found	12.31.2026
F-021	Democrats control the Senate in the new Congress (SE-2)	97%	Polymarket closed at 100%, 11.07: a market settlement, not a race call. Senate control rests on race calls and state certifications not compiled in this edition; Alaska's count is unofficial MKT	01.31.2027
F-030	US Census annual data for calendar 2026 show China's share of US goods imports (imports from China divided by imports from the world, not seasonally adjusted, nominal) below 8.0% (04S)	45%	None found	03.15.2027
F-031	US Treasury TIC Table 5 reports holdings of US Treasury securities by China, Mainland below $550.0 billion for December 2026 (04S); the series records fair value changes, so a bond price move alone can decide it	65%	None found	02.28.2027
F-032	Before they lapse, USTR and BIS each publish in the Federal Register a further suspension or a replacement of (a) the Section 301 maritime, logistics and shipbuilding action against China (suspended through 11:59 p.m. ET on 01.09.2027) and (b) the Affiliates Rule (suspended through 01.10.2027) (04S)	80%	None found	01.10.2027
F-033	Trump and Xi meet in person at or beside the G20 leaders' meeting in Doral, Florida (scheduled 12.14 to 12.15.2026), as recorded in a readout, fact sheet or statement by either government (04S)	65%	None found	12.16.2026
F-036	The White House or China's foreign ministry publishes the text, or an official summary, of the "action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability" that the two sides agreed on 11.19.2026 to formulate (04S)	30%	None found	03.31.2027

Why we moved. F-009 down: AP's account of Shenzhen mentions no AI channel, and China's readout lists AI security as a topic, not a dialogue round (MFA); we found no report of a meeting at APEC. F-007 up: the October minutes say "almost all participants judged that, under their baseline outlooks" further action would be needed (Fed). F-001 down: strikes on Qeshm and tankers hit. F-003 up: a third weekly fall in Brent, with Bloomberg citing "ample crude supplies." F-005 down: no case in South Sudan in ECDC's 11.19 update. F-011 down: no new IPC or Famine Review Committee product. F-027 down: in the ninth straw poll every candidate drew a discourage from a permanent member, per a single press source (Jewish Insider, 11.20). F-028 up: Kenya's countdown began 11.12 (The Standard). F-029 down: Putin's no-talks line; a four-way round that includes all three would count. New: F-034, since the 11.19 draft dropped "a $120 billion target" (Reuters via WIKY); F-035, since WHO expects the two candidates to begin testing "as early as next week" (WHO, 11.17), subject to national approvals. **Why we differ.** No open call sits far from its outside reading; the widest gap is F-008, 5.5 points, where the market counts any shutdown by 12.31.

Graded so far. Eighteen forecasts resolved, running Brier score 0.179, provisional pending Alaska's certification (0 is perfect; 0.25 is always saying 50%), from 0.174 on fourteen. Largest misses: F-004 and F-024 (0.7225 each, F-024 provisional), F-015 (0.36), F-014 and F-023 (0.3025 each). None of this week's four had an outside reading, so the head to head is unchanged. Polymarket scored 0.0306 against our 0.0325 (F-002, F-016, close matches); Manifold, play money, 0.8556 against our 0.0625 (F-016); Kalshi 0.0144 against our 0.0900 (F-013). On F-020, three outside readings ran from 0.0025 to 0.0256 against our 0.0100. The outside view beat us in four of six. Markets are for comparison, never advice.

SOURCE · KALSHI, FED DECEMBER (11.20) MKT · POLYMARKET, FED 25 BP (11.20) MKT · POLYMARKET, HORMUZ (11.19) MKT · POLYMARKET, SHUTDOWN (11.19) MKT · PAHO (11.17) GOV · WHO (11.17) GOV · ALASKA DIVISION OF

ELECTIONS (11.18) GOV

A NUMBER FOR ADAPTATION FINANCE, OR NONE?

Chosen because the COP31 Presidency's 11.16 draft set a tripling of adaptation finance at "at least USD$120 billion," and the slimmed draft of 11.19 dropped the figure (Reuters), as talks ran past Friday's close.

Intervention scenario: a numbered goal

What it means: paragraph 73 of the Presidency's 11.16 draft would triple adaptation finance to "at least USD$120 billion" (UNFCCC draft, 11.16). FACT

The case for it: the same draft puts adaptation needs at about USD 305 billion a year by 2035, against USD 28 to 32 billion of international public adaptation finance in 2024. Ghana's Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings: "We didn't come here to beg" (AFP). FACT DISCOURSE

Human consequences: countries facing El Niño drought and heat, and small island states, gain a yardstick against which delivery can be measured. ASSESSMENT

Economic cost: contributor countries' promised obligations would rise; we found no text that divides the cost among them. ASSESSMENT

Feasibility: needs the consensus of all Parties; the Solomon Islands proposed moving the tripling into the cover decision (ENB, 11.18). FACT

Second-order effects: a number invites a yearly scorecard; a number that is missed may cost more trust than no number. ASSESSMENT

Non-intervention scenario: no figure

What it means: rely on the wider climate finance goal, stated in the 11.16 draft as "the goal of at least USD 300 billion per year by 2035," and name no figure for adaptation alone. FACT

The case for it: we found no delegation quoted in the window defending the removal, and Reuters gives no reason for it. The case as its holders might make it: a headline number without a formula for who pays is easier to adopt than to meet, and the wider goal already covers adaptation. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

Human consequences: vulnerable countries have no adaptation figure to measure delivery against. ASSESSMENT

Economic cost: lower promised obligations for contributor countries; the adaptation gap has no target to be measured against.

Feasibility: already the 11.19 draft. Panama threatened to walk out, and Brazil's negotiator said "At this point, no one is happy" (AFP). FACT

Unintended consequences: if vulnerable countries reject the package, the talks could end with less than either draft offered. ASSESSMENT

HORIZON	WITH A NUMBERED GOAL	WITH NO FIGURE
1 year	The first finance reports measured against the figure.	Whether adaptation flows rise from the 2024 base anyway.
5 years	Whether pledges reach the number, or the number is renegotiated.	Whether the gap to the estimated need narrows without a target.
10 years	Whether adaptation finance keeps pace with about 2.6°C of warming, the draft's estimate if current plans are fully implemented. Assumption: current national plans are fully implemented, the draft's own premise. ASSESSMENT	

RED TEAM

The catch: both texts are drafts, nothing had been adopted when this was written, and a figure in a cover decision is not a pledge by any named country. The test that matters is the adopted text against the 11.16 draft (F-034), not against last year's. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · UNFCCC PRESIDENCY DRAFT (11.16) GOV · REUTERS VIA WIKY (11.20) PRESS · AFP VIA FREE MALAYSIA TODAY (11.20) PRESS · ENB (11.18) ORG

MEASLES DEATHS FELL 88% SINCE 2000. THIS WEEK, THREE COUNTRIES LOST GROUND.

WHO credits measles vaccine with nearly 59 million lives saved since 2000; on 11.17 PAHO found the US, Mexico and Bolivia had lost elimination status.

INDICATOR	THE LONG RUN	CHANGE	CAVEAT
Measles deaths WHO, 11.28.2025	Down 88% from 2000 to 2024, to an estimated 95,000.	−88%	Modeled estimates; an estimated 11 million infections in 2024. The 2025 report is the latest.
Lives saved by measles vaccine WHO, 11.28.2025	Nearly 59 million since 2000.	59M	A counterfactual model.
Measles vaccine coverage WHO, 11.28.2025	First dose 84%, second dose 76%, in 2024.	84%	WHO calls 2024 "a slight improvement from the previous year"; no longer trend checked.
Measles in the Americas PAHO, 11.17	58,213 confirmed cases and 82 deaths as of 11.13, against 12,806 cases a year earlier.	4.5×	Our arithmetic on PAHO's figures; three countries lost elimination status.
Under-five deaths UN IGME via WHO, 03.18.2026	About 4.9 million in 2024, including 2.3 million newborns; more than half below 2000.	slower	"Since 2015, the pace of reduction in child mortality has slowed by more than 60 per cent."
Ebola testing, Congo WHO, 11.17	From two laboratories to more than two dozen.	>24	400 to 500 new cases are still reported each week.

COOPERATION THAT PRODUCED MEASURABLE PROGRESS · MEASLES VACCINE, AND THE WARNING THIS WEEK

WHO and its partners credit nearly 59 million lives since 2000 to measles vaccination, delivered through national immunization programs. PAHO's Director Jarbas Barbosa, announcing this week's losses: "This is a serious warning for our Region, but it is not an irreversible setback" (PAHO, 11.17). PAHO's test is a single transmission chain running 12 months or more, the same test a country must pass to regain the status. FACT

SOURCE · WHO (11.28.2025) GOV · PAHO (11.17) GOV · UN IGME VIA WHO (03.18) DATA · WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL (11.17) GOV

ONE CONVERSATION WORTH HAVING

When systems fail and no one yet knows why, how soon should officials say what it was not?

Between 11.12 and 11.17, Microsoft 365 was down for about 24 hours, the FAA ordered a nationwide ground stop and JPMorgan Chase was out for about 7 hours; officials saw no "indicia of a coordinated cyberattack," per a Cloud Security Alliance research note (CSA, 11.18). The FAA attributed its outage to data flooding after a router installation in El Dorado, Arkansas (PolitiFact, 11.18). One newsletter objected that "Officials ruled out an attack before the FAA knew what broke"

(AI Weekly, 11.18). In the same week, a claim that "A nationwide 90-day blackout will happen Nov. 17, 2026" was rated False (PolitiFact, 11.16).

THE OFFICIAL

An early "no sign of attack" can calm markets and starve rumors. What should an official say if the cause later proves otherwise?

THE PUBLIC

Poynter's Tom Jones: "So far, there's no evidence of anything nefarious behind these breakdowns." Does hearing that early make people trust the next statement more, or less?

THE OPERATOR

CSA found several failures began in failover and recovery systems built to prevent them. Should the first message be about cause, or about what still works?

THE FACT-CHECKER

Fake blackout warnings spread in the US and the UK the same week. Does a fast official denial help debunk them, or give hoaxes something to argue with?

SOURCE · CLOUD SECURITY ALLIANCE (11.18) ORG · POLITIFACT (11.18) PRESS · POLITIFACT (11.16) PRESS · FULL FACT (11.17) PRESS · POYNTER (11.18) PRESS · AI WEEKLY (11.18), A NEWSLETTER, QUOTED AS DISCOURSE. NO AGENCY OR COMPANY IS GRADED HERE.

INTELLECTUAL CROSS-TRAINING

FORMAT	PICK	WHY IT DESERVES YOUR TIME
Long-form	Peter Kuznick and Ivana Nikolić Hughes, "Could Trump, Putin and Xi end the nuclear age?", Al Jazeera, 11.19	Written before Shenzhen, it proposes a three-stage path to zero, starting with US and Russian cuts to about 600 warheads. Read it beside 07B.
Book	Charles Perrow, Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies (updated edition, Princeton University Press, 1999)	The classic account of failure in tightly coupled systems, the frame behind this week's outage debate (12). We have not read a current review.
Paper	Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh and Zijin Su, "Clouds of Credit: Mapping the Financial Web Behind AI Compute," NBER w36032	Estimates that debt funds about 60% of planned AI compute expansion, and traces who loses if productivity disappoints. A working paper, not peer reviewed.
Podcast	AQ Podcast, "Daniel Noboa's Ecuador: Crime, Protests and a Contested Vote," Americas Quarterly, 11.12	Sebastián Hurtado on Noboa's security strategy and the Bukele comparison, before Ecuador's 11.29 local elections. We read the description, not a transcript.
Dataset	Federation of American Scientists, Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories, via Our World in Data (1945 to 2026)	Lets readers check the Shenzhen warhead figures themselves; stockpiles "exclude retired warheads queued for dismantlement."
Course	Leiden University (Coursera), "International Law In Action: Investigating and Prosecuting International Crimes," Carsten Stahn and Sergey Vasiliev	Free to join; its second module covers genocide as a core crime, useful background for 08.

EARLY SIGNALS

Every source below was opened and checked; the event itself may still be unconfirmed, and we say so.

TOO EARLY TO CONFIRM

E1 A new front opens beside Congo's Ebola hotspot

What's reported. Critical Threats reports that the FRN, the Joseph Kabila-led successor to AFC/M23, began an offensive in South Kivu on 11.06 and took Bunyakiri and Bulambika by 11.08; the government announced a counteroffensive on 11.09. Daily News Egypt's Africa edition reports that drone strikes near Bunyakiri hospital on 11.13 forced MSF to move its services to the Maibano health center, and cites a preliminary OCHA estimate, via RFI, of more than 323,000 people displaced in Kalehe and Kabare within four days. FACT (that the reports say so)

Who's reporting. Daily News Egypt (Africa edition) PRESS Independent press (private, Egypt), relaying MSF, RFI and OCHA; Critical Threats ORG Think tank (American Enterprise Institute), which notes that many battlefield claims come from single-party sources.

Confirmed so far. Ebola has reached South Kivu: ECDC lists 3 cases and 1 death there in data to 11.16 (ECDC, 11.19). FACT

Not confirmed. The 323,000 figure, which is preliminary and third-hand, and who carried out the strikes near the hospital: MSF did not say, and Actualite.cd attributed them to the army. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The tell. An OCHA displacement update for Kalehe and Kabare, or Ebola cases reported from the health zones people are fleeing into.

E2 Gaza's winter tents wait on a pole measurement

What's reported. UN News reported on 11.17 that more than 100,000 tents are waiting for delivery from Egypt and that UN agencies call clearance "heavily bureaucratic"; IOM's Karl Baker said that for tent poles "Usually anything under 38 millimetres is okay; anything above, it's usually deemed as not acceptable." FACT (that IOM says so)

Who's reporting. UN News GOV Official (UN), relaying IOM and WFP.

Confirmed so far. OCHA said on 11.09 that more than 150,000 tents were outside Gaza ready for dispatch (Edition 010, S13). FACT

Not confirmed. COGAT's own account of the specification; we opened no COGAT statement, and no OCHA truck or crossing counts for this week could be read. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The tell. A published COGAT list of permitted shelter items, or OCHA counts of tents entering Gaza.

E3 Iran tests the blockade at sea, one transfer at a time

What's reported. Al Jazeera reported on 11.20 a CENTCOM advisory that ships receiving cargo by ship-to-ship transfer from blockaded vessels "may be stopped, boarded, diverted, captured, or directed to proceed to the Iranian port." It also relays a Reuters report, citing TankerTrackers.com, of a ship-to-ship crude loading in the Gulf that, if it arrives, could be the first successful Iranian crude export since July. FACT (that the advisory and the report exist)

Who's reporting. Al Jazeera PRESS State-funded press (Qatar), relaying CENTCOM and Reuters.

Confirmed so far. The CENTCOM warning, as reported. Iran has not confirmed the export. FACT

Not confirmed. Whether the cargo reaches a buyer, and whether US forces have stopped any receiving ship. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The tell. A tanker-tracking report of the cargo arriving, or a CENTCOM statement on a boarding.

E4 The UN plans for a year without a chosen leader

What's reported. Jewish Insider reported on 11.20 that UN officials are drafting contingency plans for 2027, with options including a brief extension for Secretary-General Guterres or a deputy as acting chief. In the ninth straw poll on 11.20, it reports, Rebeca Grynspan led with 10 encourage votes, and "two of Grynspan's discouragement votes came from permanent members." FACT (that it reports so)

Who's reporting. Jewish Insider PRESS Independent press (US, specialist); UG Diplomat PRESS Independent press (Uganda), on the move to Friday and the return to color-coded ballots.

Confirmed so far. The poll date and its color-coded format, which separates the permanent members' votes. FACT

Not confirmed. The contingency plans, which rest on one press account; straw-poll results are unofficial leaks, and Security Council Report's page did not load. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT

The tell. A Security Council recommendation before 12.31, or a General Assembly step on an acting arrangement.

LAST WEEK'S SIGNALS

#	SIGNAL	THEN	NOW	STATUS
E1	Ebola turns into a food crisis in eastern Congo	FAO assessment via Radio Okapi, 11.12	No IPC or FEWS NET update naming Ebola found in our sources	DEVELOPING
E2	Human H9N2 bird flu cases keep rising in China	UKHSA week 45, 11.12	No new count or change in WHO's risk wording found in our sources	DEVELOPING
E3	The Houthis aim at the pipeline that bypasses Hormuz	Houthi claims via Reuters, 11.13	Houthi strikes on Riyadh were claimed on 11.18 and 11.19, and a Riyadh tower was damaged with no injuries (CBS); no report of pipeline damage or Yanbu loadings found	DEVELOPING
E4	Scam compounds and ASEAN's Manila summit	Summit 11.14 to 11.17	Our sources carry no account of what leaders agreed on scam compounds	DEVELOPING

Signals resolved so far: 5; confirmed 3; debunked 0. Older signals still open: ECDC's view that Congo's outbreak is larger than reported (repeated 11.19, ECDC); Sudan's accusation that drones are launched at it from Ethiopia (Ethiopia rejects the accusations and accuses Khartoum of backing TPLF-linked rebels, Military Africa, 11.17); UN investigators on reported Egyptian airstrikes in Sudan (no findings found); Africa CDC's Ebola funds (Kaseya now says $1.3 billion of $2.9 billion pledged has been released, a different measure, Al Jazeera, 11.15); Rift Valley fever risk in East Africa (no outbreak found); South Korea's naval unit near Hormuz (no cabinet decision found); the second AAV vector-integration tumor and the Makkah defense pact (no update found).

TOO SLOW TO MAKE HEADLINES

S1 WFP plans for 91 million people; 266 million are acutely hungry

WFP plans to assist 91 million people in 2027 at a cost of $12.1 billion, while at least 266 million people face acute hunger; its Matthew Hollingworth said "the gap between those we can and cannot reach is probably going to grow larger" (UN News, 11.20). FACT **Why it matters over 1 to 5 years:** the plan sets the 2027 aid baseline before OCHA's global appeal, and WFP itself expects the share it cannot reach to grow. ASSESSMENT

S2 Sudan's war moves into the air

The UN human rights office verified 2,230 civilian deaths in Sudan in 2026, more than 1,630 of them from drones, and a UN statement released with the report says "the true scale of loss was likely higher" (Reuters via TimesLIVE, 11.17). FACT **Why it matters over 1 to 5 years:** drones let the parties "extend their reach far beyond areas of territorial control and front lines," so a ceasefire drawn along front lines may protect fewer civilians than it once would have. ASSESSMENT

SIGNAL VS. NOISE

Five signals ASSESSMENT

01 Africa CDC says over 80% of new Ebola cases emerged outside contact lists. ECDC's 81.6% of contacts followed measures the list; Africa CDC's figure measures what the list misses.

02 The Senate's 48 to 51 vote against a war powers resolution, two days after US strikes on Qeshm.

03 The only joint text from Shenzhen has no trade terms; the Taiwan sentence exists only in China's readout.

04 The $120 billion adaptation figure was in COP31's 11.16 draft and gone from Thursday's.

05 The ICJ's 9 to 6 finding that Myanmar is responsible for genocide against the Rohingya.

Five distractions ASSESSMENT

01 Trump's rating of the Shenzhen meeting, "12" on a scale of 0 to 10; the declaration's text matters more.

02 Claims that an AI system caused the 11.13 FAA ground stop (PolitiFact: Mostly False; the FAA attributed it to data flooding after a router installation).

03 A "90-day blackout" said to start 11.17; the event was FEMA's routine alert test (PolitiFact: False).

04 A fake National Grid warning of a UK blackout on 11.19 (Full Fact).

05 An old video passed off as the RAF Lakenheath drone incident (Full Fact); the incident's cause is the open question.

SOURCE · AL JAZEERA (11.15); CBS (11.17 TO 11.19); CBS (11.19); POLITIFACT (11.18); POLITIFACT (11.16); FULL FACT (11.17); FULL FACT (11.18)

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A TRIPLING WITHOUT A NUMBER: WHO OWES THE COST OF ADAPTING

COP31's 11.16 draft would have tripled adaptation finance to at least $120 billion; Thursday's draft dropped the figure. One text says the way of heaven takes from surplus to fill deficiency; the other says not every ton of emissions carries the same responsibility.

The Presidency's 11.16 draft put adaptation needs at about $305 billion a year by 2035. It put international public adaptation finance at $28 to 32 billion in 2024 (UNFCCC draft, 11.16). Talks ran past their Friday close with no final text adopted (AFP via FMT). FACT

Ghana's Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings: "We didn't come here to beg" (AFP). Panama's Juan Carlos Navarro: "we simply will not put up with it"; Saudi Arabia and Venezuela argued for a future role for fossil fuels (Reuters via WIKY). DISCOURSE

LAOZI, TAO TE CHING, CHAPTER 77 (CLASSICAL DAOIST TEXT)

Core claim. "It is the Way of Heaven to diminish superabundance, and to supplement deficiency. It is not so with the way of man." The chapter then asks: "Who can take his own superabundance and therewith serve all under heaven?" Its answer is only the one who has the Tao (tr. James Legge, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 39, sacred-texts.com).

How it reads this week. On Laozi's test, a gap of roughly ten to one between counted needs and public flows is "the way of man." The text offers no mechanism that compels the transfer, only the sage who makes it freely, which fits a consensus process in which no party can be made to pay. ASSESSMENT

ANIL AGARWAL AND SUNITA NARAIN, GLOBAL WARMING IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD (1991)

Core claim. They faulted a WRI report for making no effort to "separate out the 'survival emissions' of the poor, from the 'luxury emissions' of the rich," and noted that "the United States, with only 4.73 per cent of the world's population, emits as much as 26 per cent of the carbondioxide," figures for their time (Centre for Science and Environment).

How it reads this week. Their lens turns adaptation finance from aid into a debt owed by luxury emitters, the framing in Ghana's "We didn't come here to beg." It does not say how to split that debt among today's large emitters, and the sources this week give no current per-capita data, so we assign them no verdict on who owes what share. ASSESSMENT

Where they part. Laozi grounds the transfer in a norm of balance and expects it only from those who rise above ordinary interest; Agarwal and Narain ground it in who caused the harm and expect the harmed to claim it. Neither supplies the number. The adopted COP31 text, compared against the 11.16 draft, will show whether the parties accept either framing. ASSESSMENT

A WAR BARGAINED ABROAD AND RATIFIED AT HOME

Robert Putnam's "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games" (1988) argues that every negotiator bargains twice, with the other side and with the people at home who must accept the deal. The week's Iran news moved on both levels.

What it predicts. Putnam calls the set of deals a domestic constituency would accept the "win-set," and argues that "larger win-sets make Level I agreement more likely, ceteris paribus." A "small domestic win-set can be a bargaining advantage," but it raises the risk of involuntary defection, which "reflects the behavior of an agent who is unable to deliver on a promise" (International Organization, 1988). On that model, a negotiator whose legislature is about to tighten his room may gain leverage and lose reliability at the same time. ASSESSMENT

What the evidence shows. The Senate rejected a war powers resolution 48 to 51 on 11.19, with three Republicans in favor, so Washington's domestic constraint on the war stays loose for now (CBS). The Washington Examiner reports that four senators who caucus with the Democrats committed to block "any short-term package" that does not limit the war, ahead of the 12.11 funding deadline, and the new Congress, with what TNND calls "incoming Democratic majorities," is due to convene on 01.03.2027. Trump told Channel 12: "We'll see what happens after the new year starts." On Iran's side, the route agreed with Oman still needs formal approval, and Gulf News found "no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect." FACT ASSESSMENT

What it implies. If Putnam is right, the US win-set narrows after 01.03.2027, which could strengthen Washington's hand in talks or make any deal harder to deliver; Iran's parliament plays the same role for the Oman route. The test is countable: whether war limits attach to the 12.11 funding bill, and whether Iran's parliament formally approves the route. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · PUTNAM, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (1988) PEER; CBS (11.17 TO 11.19) PRESS; WASHINGTON EXAMINER (11.19) PRESS; GULF NEWS (11.19) PRESS

THIS WEEK IN FIVE SENTENCES

01 Trump, Xi and Putin met in Shenzhen and issued a four-point declaration on UN reform, refined fuels, international courts and nuclear war, with no trade terms; China's readout says Trump said the US "does not support 'Taiwan Independence'," and we found no US text that confirms it. FACT

02 Congo's confirmed Ebola count reached 11,504 in ECDC's tally, and Africa CDC said over 80% of new cases emerged outside contact lists. FACT

03 The US struck an IRGC site on Qeshm on 11.17 and the Senate rejected a war powers resolution 48 to 51, while Putin said Russia would not negotiate after Ukraine's strikes on the Kerch Bridge. FACT

04 PAHO found that the United States, Mexico and Bolivia had lost measles elimination status, and the ICJ found Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya by 9 votes to 6. FACT

05 One well-evidenced reason for hope: Nigeria completed monitoring of all 62 contacts of its Ebola case with no transmission, and Kenya, with no patient under treatment or quarantine, is set to be declared Ebola-free on 12.23 if no new case emerges. FACT

ASK MIND CLUB

No reader question arrived for this edition.

CORRECTIONS LOG

EDITION	WHAT WE GOT WRONG	WHAT IT SHOULD SAY	FIXED
007	00S Healthcare row and 03B: Medicaid work requirements “due by 12.31.2026.”	The federal rule says states must implement them no later than 01.01.2027 (Federal Register, 06.03.2026). First printed in Edition 008, section 19.	11.05.2026
004	Policy tracker P5: the customs exemption for mailed medicines would be “indefinitely suspended” as of 10.22.	CBP had moved the compliance date for its new international mail entry process to 01.20.2027 on 10.15, before Edition 004 was built (Reuters via AJOT, 10.15).	10.23.2026
003	Dashboard, Trade & globalization: “US-China truce expires 11.10 with no extension agreed.”	Treasury Secretary Bessent said on 09.23 that the truce due to expire on 11.10 had been extended by two months, to 01.10.2027 (Reuters via Korea Times, 09.24).	10.16.2026

No new corrections this edition.

SOURCES

CHECKED BEFORE PRINT

Sixty-eight claims checked on 11.20.2026, one row per early signal included, sixteen for the 04S Special Coverage desk and twenty (S49 to S68) from the expert review before print; fifteen are Partial, with the difference said in the row.

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT	BEFORE PRINT
S01	Xi and Trump agreed to draw up an action plan on "strategic stability"	China MFA, 11.19 GOV	"agreed to formulate an action plan on building a constructive relationship of strategic stability"	MATCH	China's readout; no White House bilateral readout found
S02	China's readout says Trump said the US does not support "Taiwan Independence"	China MFA, 11.19 GOV	"The United States does not support 'Taiwan Independence.'"	MATCH	China's account only; attributed so
S03	The three-power declaration on nuclear war	White House, 11.19 GOV	"a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"	MATCH	Nothing
S04	No new tariff rates; truce runs to 01.10.2027	China Briefing, 11.20 PRESS	"Neither side announced new tariff rates, and the truce agreed in Busan in October 2025 now runs to 10 January 2027."	MATCH	Consultancy publication; no wire account opened
S05	Congo: 11,504 confirmed Ebola cases, 5,630 deaths	ECDC, 11.19 GOV	"has reported a total of 11 504 confirmed cases, including 5 630 related deaths"	MATCH	Data to 11.16
S06	Africa CDC: outbreak "still not under control"; over 80% of new cases outside contact lists	Al Jazeera, 11.15 PRESS	"We are all in agreement today to say that this outbreak is still serious, and is still not under control"	PARTIAL	The 80% figure is Kaseya's, quoted by Al Jazeera from a Reuters interview
S07	WHO: 400 to 500 new cases a week	WHO Director-General, 11.17 GOV	"Between 400 and 500 new cases are still reported every week, and the outbreak is still expanding in some areas."	MATCH	Nothing
S08	The US, Mexico and Bolivia lost measles elimination status	PAHO, 11.17 GOV	"endemic measles transmission was determined to have been re-established in Bolivia, Mexico, and the United States."	MATCH	Nothing
S09	EC-007 claim: the designation does not protect; vaccination does	Al Jazeera, 11.17 PRESS	"The measles elimination designation is not what protects Americans. Vaccination does."	MATCH	CDC Director Schwartz, as reported
S10	US "self-defense" strikes on an IRGC site on Qeshm, 11.17	CBS live, 11.17 PRESS	"The strike was in response to IRGC aggression targeting U.S. personnel and assets"	MATCH	Unnamed US official, said so
S11	Iran-Oman route agreed in coordinates, not in force	Gulf News, 11.19 PRESS	"no confirmed evidence that a permanent, fully operational agreement has taken effect"	MATCH	Nothing
S12	ICJ finds Myanmar responsible for genocide; "the bar … is surmountable"	Reuters via Cyprus Mail, 11.20 PRESS	"The legal bar is extremely high, but what this case shows is that it is surmountable."	MATCH	Horsey (Crisis Group); 9 to 6 vote via Al Jazeera; judgment text not opened
S13	Putin: no negotiations after the Kerch Bridge strikes	hromadske, 11.19 PRESS	"But after the strikes on the Crimean Bridge, we will not negotiate"	PARTIAL	Via TASS; CBS translates the line differently
S14	Merz: Europe wants to be in the negotiations	Kyiv Post, 11.19 PRESS	"We want to be involved in these negotiations. We want to do it as a team with Kyiv and Washington."	MATCH	Nothing
S15	Panama objects to the COP31 draft	Reuters via WIKY, 11.20 PRESS	"we simply will not put up with it"	MATCH	Read in Reuters' syndicated copy

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT	BEFORE PRINT
S16	The 11.16 draft tripled adaptation finance to at least $120 billion	UNFCCC draft, 11.16 GOV	para 73: tripling adaptation finance to "at least USD$120 billion"	MATCH	Draft only; Thursday's text not opened (removal per Reuters)
S17	Brent settled at $92.57, a third weekly loss	Bloomberg via Rigzone, 11.20 PRESS	"Oil fell for a third straight week as traders weighed the risk of renewed US strikes on Iran against ample crude supplies."	MATCH	Same level as the 11.09 settle; checked, not an error
S18	Fed minutes: almost all see further action needed	Federal Reserve, 11.18 GOV	"almost all participants judged that, under their baseline outlooks"	MATCH	Nothing
S19	Initial jobless claims 203,000	Department of Labor, 11.19 GOV	"In the week ending November 14, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 203,000,"	MATCH	Nothing
S20	F-017: no second Nigerian case	WHO Director-General, 11.17 GOV	"Nigeria has reported one imported case."	MATCH	Nothing
S21	F-018: WHO reported more than 11,000 cases by 11.20	WHO Director-General media briefing, 11.17 GOV	"the number of reported cases and deaths has more than doubled, to over 11 300 and 5500 deaths."	PARTIAL	WHO says "reported," not "confirmed," in this sentence; wording note printed with the grade
S22	F-024 (provisional): no RCV tabulation for the US Senate	Alaska Division of Elections GOV	RCV reports listed for US House and legislative races; none for US Senate (page updated 11.18); "Results Status: Unofficial"	MATCH	An absence on the page; our reading. Results unofficial until certified; Peltola's 50.1% is FairVote's figure
S23	Georgia certified its results on 11.20	Capitol Beat, 11.20 PRESS	"The November 3 General Election results are certified"	MATCH	Raffensperger, as reported; one state House seat goes to a 12.01 runoff
S24	Nigeria: all 62 contacts monitored, no transmission	Sahara Reporters, 11.13 PRESS	"The 21-day monitoring period for all 62 identified contacts has been completed with no transmission from the index case."	MATCH	NCDC Director General, as reported
S25	Kenya set to be declared Ebola-free on 12.23	The Standard, 11.11 PRESS	"set to attain the status on December 23 if no new cases emerge"	MATCH	Health CS Duale, as reported
S26	Kenya has no Ebola patient under treatment or quarantine	Nation, 11.11 PRESS	"for the first time since Ebola was announced, Kenya has no patient under treatment or quarantine"	MATCH	Nothing
S27	E1: MSF moved Bunyakiri services; more than 323,000 displaced	Daily News Egypt (Africa), 11.18 PRESS	"We hope to be able to resume all of our medical activities in the area as soon as possible"	PARTIAL	Passage covers MSF only; displacement figure is preliminary OCHA via RFI, printed as such
S28	E2: Gaza tent poles above 38 mm usually refused	UN News, 11.17 GOV	"Usually anything under 38 millimetres is okay; anything above, it's usually deemed as not acceptable"	MATCH	IOM's account; no COGAT statement opened
S29	E3: CENTCOM warns ships receiving Iranian cargo	Al Jazeera, 11.20 PRESS	"Such ships may be stopped, boarded, diverted, captured, or directed to proceed to the Iranian port."	MATCH	Advisory as reported; export unconfirmed
S30	E4: two of Grynspan's discourage votes came from permanent members	Jewish Insider, 11.20 PRESS	"two of Grynspan's discouragement votes came from permanent members."	PARTIAL	Single press source for unofficial poll results
S31	S1: WFP expects the reach gap to grow	UN News, 11.20 GOV	"the gap between those we can and cannot reach is probably going to grow larger."	MATCH	WFP's own release not found

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT	BEFORE PRINT
S32	S2: drones behind more than 1,630 of 2,230 verified civilian deaths in Sudan	Reuters via TimesLIVE, 11.17 PRESS	drones let parties "extend their reach far beyond areas of territorial control and front lines."	PARTIAL	Figures via Reuters; OHCHR report not opened
S33	04S spine: Beijing's term, Xi, 11.19: "building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability"	China MFA, 11.19 GOV	"building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability is an unprecedented, groundbreaking endeavor."	MATCH	Xi's words in China's readout; verified in r1
S34	04S spine: Biden "emphasized that the United States and China are in competition"	White House, 11.15.2023 GOV	"President Biden emphasized that the United States and China are in competition"	MATCH	Archived Biden White House site
S35	04S spine: NSS 2025 says the relationship "has transformed into one between near-peers"	NSS 2025, 11.2025 GOV	"has transformed into one between near-peers"; "a genuinely mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing"	MATCH	Text search found no "competitor" or "rival" for China; "contest" is the desk's word, said so
S36	04S F: on 11.19 Xi asked Washington to "keep doing the right thing and avoid major setbacks"	China MFA, 11.19 GOV	"keep doing the right thing and avoid major setbacks in China-U.S. relations"	PARTIAL	Passage returned by the fetch reader, not yet spot-checked on the page
S37	04S A: the TRA says the US will "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character"	Public Law 96-8, 04.10.1979 GOV	"(4) to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means ... of grave concern to the United States; (5) to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character"	MATCH	Read from the statute text
S38	04S A: the Six Assurances include "Has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan"	AIT archive, 1982 GOV	"Has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan"	MATCH	Cables of 07.10 (Eagleburger) and 08.17.1982 (Shultz, the Six Assurances), to Lilley; executive assurances, not law
S39	04S E: "Held: IEEPA does not authorize the President to impose tariffs," decided 02.20.2026	Supreme Court, 02.20 GOV	"Decided February 20, 2026"; "Held: IEEPA does not authorize the President to impose tariffs."	MATCH	Read from the opinion PDF; 6 to 3 per the syllabus
S40	04S E: a 10% Section 122 surcharge ran from 02.24 for its statutory 150 days, to 07.24	Federal Register, 02.25 GOV	"a temporary import surcharge of 10 percent ad valorem"; "for a period of 150 days"	PARTIAL	Passage returned by the fetch reader, not yet spot-checked on the page; end date also in EY
S41	04S E: Section 301 tariffs on "all products" of 60 economies; 12.5% for China	USTR, Federal Register, 07.28 GOV	"imposing tariffs on all products of the investigated economy"; "For every other economy ... 12.5 percent is the appropriate rate of Section 301 duty"	MATCH	Read from the notice abstract, which adds "with certain exemptions"; China's 12.5% via China Briefing
S42	04S B: Affiliates Rule, export controls on firms 50% or more owned by listed parties	BIS, 90 FR 47201, 09.30.2025 GOV	"any entity that is at least 50 percent owned by one or more entities on the Entity List will itself automatically be subject to Entity List restrictions"	MATCH	Suspended through 01.10.2027 (BIS, 11.09)
S43	04S D: China's share of US goods imports fell from 21.6% in 2017 to 9.0% in 2025	US Census, 11.04 DATA	"TOTAL 2017 129,997.2 505,165.1"; "TOTAL 2025 105,977.8 308,651.9"	PARTIAL	Share is our calculation, China imports over world imports (Census c0015); nominal, NSA

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT	BEFORE PRINT
S44	04S D: China "represented 91% of global refined output" of rare earths	IEA, rare earth elements ORG	"the country represented 91% of global refined output"	MATCH	The 94% magnet share is from the same page
S45	04S D: China's Treasury holdings fell to $563.9 billion in 09.2026 from $699.2 billion	US Treasury TIC, table 5 DATA	"China, Mainland 563.9 590.7 618.0 633.4 659.3 ... 699.2"	MATCH	Treasury's custody caveat printed with the figure
S46	04S Side by side: GDP at market rates, 2025, $30.77 trillion and $19.50 trillion	World Bank, 10.08 DATA	GDP current US$ 2025: US 30,769,700,000,000; China 19,498,039,388,042.6	MATCH	API values, rounded in print
S47	04S Side by side: military expenditure, 2025, $954.4 billion and $335.5 billion	World Bank, 11.11 DATA	Military expenditure current US$ 2025: US 954,387,000,000; China 335,524,155,624.44	MATCH	World Bank series from SIPRI data, labeled so; China's published budget is lower (S51)
S48	04S Side by side: GDP per person, 2025, about $90,000 and about $13,900	World Bank, 11.11 DATA	our calculation from population and GDP rows (US 90,027; China 13,862)	PARTIAL	Our calculation, labeled so in the panel
S49	The three-power declaration was issued, not signed	White House, 11.19 GOV	"met in Shenzhen on November 19, 2026"	MATCH	No signing language in the text; CBS says the Kremlin released it first
S50	04S F: the State Department removed "we do not support Taiwan independence" from its fact sheet in 02.2025	CBS, 02.17.2025 PRESS	the phrase "we do not support Taiwan independence" was removed from the online fact sheet; also dropped in 05.2022 and restored weeks later	MATCH	AP report carried by CBS
S51	Side by side: China's published 2025 defense budget, 1.784665 trillion yuan, about $249 billion	State Council, 03.05.2025 GOV	"1.784665 trillion yuan"; "7.2-percent" increase	MATCH	Dollar conversion is the State Council's
S52	00 tape: September retail sales unrevised at +0.8%; October +0.2%, not adjusted for prices	Census, 11.17 GOV	"The August 2026 to September 2026 percent change was unrevised from up 0.8 percent (±0.2 percent)."; "not for price changes"	MATCH	Tape tile corrected from "revised"
S53	02: Fed staff put PCE inflation at 3.6% in September	Federal Reserve, 11.18 GOV	"rose to 3.6 percent in September"	MATCH	Nothing
S54	04S D: imports from China rose every month from May to September 2026; September about 27% below September 2024	US Census, 11.04 DATA	April 2026 19,789.2; May 23,507.8; September 31,484.6; September 2024 43,163.6 ($ millions)	PARTIAL	Percent change is our calculation; nominal, NSA
S55	04S: the fall in China's Treasury holdings may partly reflect bond prices	US Treasury TIC, table 5 DATA	Form SLT: "Aggregate Holdings, Purchases and Sales, and Fair Value Changes of Long-Term Securities"	PARTIAL	The notes do not split price effects from sales; hedged "may"
S56	11: under-five deaths have fallen by more than half since 2000	UN IGME via WHO, 03.18.2026 GOV	under-five deaths "have fallen by more than half since 2000"	MATCH	Nothing
S57	11: measles vaccine coverage in 2024 was a slight improvement on 2023	WHO, 11.28.2025 GOV	"This is a slight improvement from the previous year"	MATCH	Nothing
S58	03B: in 2007 the ICJ found Serbia failed to prevent the Srebrenica genocide but did not commit it	UN News, 02.26.2007 GOV	Serbia did not commit genocide (13 to 2) but failed to prevent it: "the Respondent has not shown that it took any initiative to prevent what happened"	MATCH	Summary of the judgment; judgment text not opened

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT	BEFORE PRINT
S59	04S F: Yalta's three were the US, UK and Soviet Union; the Soviet sphere in Manchuria was agreed there	Office of the Historian GOV	"the Soviets would be granted a sphere of influence in Manchuria following Japan's surrender"	MATCH	Nothing
S60	04S D: US importers bore nearly the full cost of the Section 232 and 301 tariffs studied	USITC, 03.15.2023 GOV	"U.S. importers bore nearly the full cost of these tariffs because import prices increased at the same rate as the tariffs."	MATCH	Earlier tariffs only; none for current rates
S61	07: CBO, House-passed H.R. 1: $344 billion less federal Medicaid spending, 4.8 million losing coverage in FY2034	CRS, R48569 GOV	"reduce federal Medicaid outlays by $344 billion from FY2025 to FY2034 and lead to 4.8 million people losing health insurance coverage in FY2034"	PARTIAL	House-passed version, quoted by CRS; enacted-law estimate not opened
S62	09: Peltola at 50.1% of first choices in unofficial results	FairVote, 11.18 ORG	"won the U.S. Senate race with 50.1% of first choices"; its introduction says 50.2%	PARTIAL	Advocacy group; two figures; count unofficial until certified
S63	03C: the Senate rejected H.Con.Res. 93, a section 5(c) concurrent resolution, 48 to 51; it adopted H.Con.Res. 86, 50 to 48, on 06.23	Senate roll call 269, 11.19 GOV	"Concurrent Resolution Rejected", 48 to 51; roll call 184: "Concurrent Resolution Agreed to (50-48)"	MATCH	Three Republicans in favor: Collins, Murkowski, Paul
S64	03C: at least 15 Senate roll calls on Iran war powers measures in 2026	Senate vote list, 2026 GOV	Iran war powers votes listed from 03.04 to 11.19	PARTIAL	Our count from the list; printed as "at least"
S65	04S B and E: the BIS remote access rule took effect 11.19; existing providers have 90 days for licenses; comments to 01.19.2027	Federal Register, BIS, 11.19 GOV	effective November 19, 2026; comments by January 19, 2027; existing providers to D:5 firms must obtain a license within 90 days	MATCH	Interim final rule; read on govinfo
S66	06 P2: the immigration appeals IFR has been in effect since 03.09.2026; the final rule takes effect 12.17	Federal Register, 2026-23320 GOV	an interim final rule "effective March 9, 2026"; "finalizes the IFR with minor changes"	MATCH	Read on govinfo
S67	04S E: the IEEPA duties "shall no longer be in effect and, as soon as practicable, shall no longer be collected"	Federal Register, 02.25 GOV	"shall no longer be in effect and, as soon as practicable, shall no longer be collected"	MATCH	Section 1 of the order; read on govinfo
S68	03C: Polymarket about 3.5% that Hormuz transits reach a 7-day average of 60 by 12.31	Polymarket, 11.19 MKT	Yes 0.0345; resolves on an IMF PortWatch 7-day average of transit calls "equal to or above 60"	MATCH	A market price, not a forecast of ours

EVERY LINK CITED

In order of first use, each with the badge for its kind of source.

1. White House, joint declaration (11.19) whitehouse.gov GOV
2. White House fact sheet (11.20) whitehouse.gov GOV
3. China Ministry of Foreign Affairs (11.19) fmprc.gov.cn GOV
4. AP via PBS NewsHour (11.19) pbs.org PRESS
5. CBS News (11.19) cbsnews.com PRESS
6. China Briefing (11.20) china-briefing.com PRESS
7. Al Jazeera, chip rule (11.17) aljazeera.com PRESS
8. Fortune (11.18) fortune.com PRESS
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5. NOAA CPC (11.12) cpc.ncep.noaa.gov GOV
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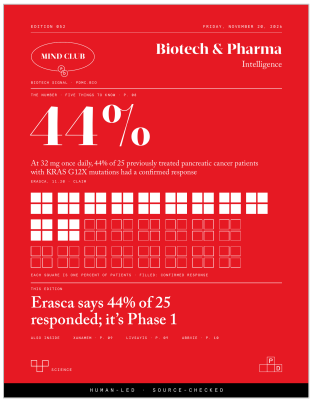
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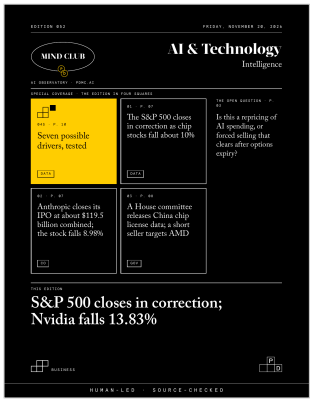
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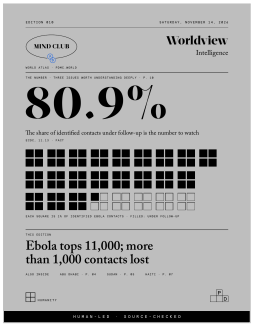


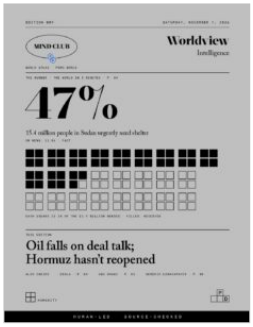
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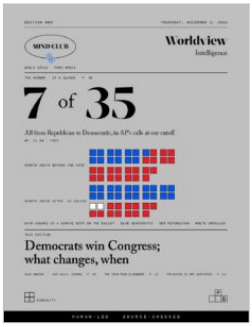
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