Brief — 22 November 2026

Information as of: 22 November 2026, 06:30 PST

BLUF

Finland's defence ministry, restated by BBC, said a Russian helicopter was suspected of violating Finnish airspace during the *Sparta II* rescue; Border Guard official English products name an aircraft and say the investigation continues. Additional W2-I1; W2 holds at **very unlikely**. Poland has not invoked Article 4. No new UKMTO Hormuz attack product after 216-26. T27 remains uncleared: PMA HTML is still the 18 Nov statement. No warning moved.

Warnings: none rising or imminent.

Developments

Additional W2-I1 — suspected Russian helicopter off Loviisa

Facts. BBC, restating Finland's defence ministry: a Russian helicopter was suspected of violating Finnish airspace, "potentially linked to 'rescue or tracking operations'" for *Sparta II*; NATO informed (BBC, 22 Nov, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj752ddve27ko). Finnish Border Guard, official: "The investigation into the aircraft's airspace violation continues" (21 Nov 20.42, https://raja.fi/en/-/the-finnish-border-guard-continues-to-lead-the-rescue-operations-in-the-gulf-of-finland); 22 Nov: "The investigation into the territorial airspace violation by an aircraft continues"; firefighting still underway; no danger to surrounding maritime traffic (https://raja.fi/en/-/rescue-operations-in-the-gulf-of-finland-continue-under-the-leadership-of-the-finnish-border-guard). MoD HTML unread this session. Al Jazeera quoting FDF: Saturday strike "likely carried out by Ukraine"; 16 crew evacuated (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/11/22/russian-cargo-ship-still-on-fire-off-finland-after-drone-attack). Al Jazeera quoting Nedelcu: Poland "stopped short of invoking Article 4" (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/11/21/russian-missiles-hit-poland-what-happened-and-could-nato-respond).

Assessment. Additional W2-I1 (already 23 Sep). Finland holds the required air-defence/ROE capability (CAPABILITIES, as-of prior NATO-flank entries). Shallow, no-engagement, investigation open. W2-I2 unfired. W2-I4 unfired. W2-I8 unfired. T1 does not newly clear. W2 holds at **very unlikely**, low confidence: still below the line. Alternative: Border Guard later finds a non-Russian or non-entry; an official product naming type, nationality, depth, and duration would discriminate. Assumes BBC accurately restates the unread MoD line.

Signposts. Border Guard product naming type and nationality (still additional I1 if crewed/shallow; I2 if engagement); Article 4 request (W2-I4).

Appendix — Warnings, watches, and indicators

Live catalog from the project files as of PDF generation. Not the observation log. Likelihoods are the current rungs.

Warnings

W1 — Russia opens a new ground axis in the north

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-20, provisional) - W1a: roughly even chance, low confidence. - W1b: very unlikely, low confidence.

Window. through 2027-03-31 (the source report says "winter").

Outcome. Russian ground forces begin sustained offensive operations across the border into Chernihiv, Sumy, or Kharkiv oblast on an axis that is not active today. Sustained means held territory and committed maneuver units, as opposed to raids by sabotage-reconnaissance groups.

W1-I1	New Russian formations identified in Bryansk, Kursk, or Belgorod oblast beyond border-cover levels, especially units moved from active fronts.
W1-I2	Offensive engineering and sustainment moved forward: bridging equipment, breaching of own border obstacles, field hospitals, fuel and ammunition depots.
W1-I3	Belarusian readiness activity: snap inspections, personnel recalls, units leaving garrison, movement toward the southern border. (W1b)
W1-I4	Russian ground forces deploying into Belarus, including under cover of announced exercises. (W1b)
W1-I5	Strike campaign concentrating on northern logistics, bridges, and air defense in Chernihiv, Sumy, or Kharkiv oblast.
W1-I6	Rising cross-border sabotage-reconnaissance activity on a quiet sector.
W1-I7	Airspace closures, border-zone civilian restrictions, or evacuations on the Russian or Belarusian side.
W1-I8	Unannounced or unusually frequent Putin–Lukashenko meetings. Weak: many explanations. (W1b)
W1-I9	Pretext narratives: claims of Ukrainian or NATO provocation on the Belarusian border, "buffer zone" rhetoric aimed at a new sector. Assess coordination, attribution, and purpose as three separate judgments.
W1-I10	Third-party signals: government warnings, embassy advisories, reported proposals for localized ceasefires covering quiet northern sectors.
W1-I11	Ukrainian reserves moved north, new fortification, evacuation orders in border districts. Shows Kyiv's assessment, not Moscow's intent.
W1-D1	Units in the northern grouping redeployed to active fronts.
W1-D2	Belarusian units return to garrison; inspection formally closed.
W1-D3	Ground-freeze period passes with no accumulation under I1–I2.

W2 — Direct Russia–NATO military clash

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-20, provisional): very unlikely, low confidence.

Window. through 2027-03-31.

Outcome. Russian and NATO-member regular forces deliberately fire on each other's crewed platforms, personnel, or territory, and at least one government acknowledges it as deliberate. Interception of uncrewed systems over NATO territory, sabotage, and jamming fall below this line; they are indicators.

W2-I1	Uncrewed or crewed Russian aircraft entering NATO airspace, with rising frequency, depth, or payload.
W2-I2	A NATO member shoots down a crewed Russian aircraft, or Russia fires on a NATO crewed platform.
W2-I3	Sabotage of NATO-state infrastructure (undersea cables, pipelines, rail, depots) attributed to Russia by a government.
W2-I4	Article 4 consultations requested; Article 5 language used by a head of government.
W2-I5	Russian force generation opposite the Baltic states, Finland, or the Suwalki corridor; Kaliningrad reinforcement.
W2-I6	NATO forces deploying into Ukraine, or a NATO member announcing an air-defense role over Ukrainian territory.
W2-I7	Russian statements naming a specific NATO member or facility as a legitimate target; matching pretext narratives (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W2-I8	Interference with Baltic or Black Sea shipping by either side: boardings, escorts, closures.
W2-I9	A cluster of plausibly deniable industrial or critical- infrastructure accidents in NATO states at an abnormal rate: three or more in 30 days in one NATO country, or three or more in 30 days against the same class (energy, rail, ATC/telecom, ports, chemicals, undersea cables) across NATO territory. Official per-event wording of accident, construction damage, equipment outage, or neglect does not block this fire. A single event does not fire it. Government attribution of one event still fires I3, not this. Kyle 2026-09-21: this rate is a classic signal that sabotage teams are active; plausible deniability is the method.

W2-D1	New or restored deconfliction channels; incident followed by visible restraint from both capitals.
W2-D2	Ceasefire or armistice in Ukraine taking effect.

W3 — PRC coercive military action against Taiwan

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-20, provisional): W3a unlikely; W3b very unlikely; W3c very unlikely. All low confidence.

Window. through 2027-12-31.

Outcome. - W3a, quarantine or blockade: PRC coast guard or military forces interdict or turn back commercial traffic to Taiwan's main ports for more than 72 hours. - W3b, outlying island seizure: PRC forces land on or take control of Kinmen, Matsu, Pratas, or Itu Aba. - W3c, invasion: PRC strikes on Taiwan proper or an amphibious or airborne assault on the main island. Named exercises that end on schedule fall below the line; they are indicators.

W3-I1	Exercises around Taiwan growing in scale, duration, or proximity; exercises announced without an end date; live fire inside the 24 nm zone.
W3-I2	Amphibious lift, civilian roll-on/roll-off ferries, and landing craft concentrating in Eastern Theater Command ports.
W3-I3	PLA Rocket Force dispersal; air and naval units surged forward from other theater commands.
W3-I4	Coast guard and maritime militia boardings or inspections of Taiwan-bound vessels; patrols inside Kinmen or Matsu restricted waters.
W3-I5	Maritime or airspace closure notices covering Taiwan's approaches.
W3-I6	Reservist call-ups, blood drives, field-hospital preparation, leave cancellations in the PLA.
W3-I7	Strategic stockpiling of fuel, food, and critical inputs; outbound restrictions on the same.
W3-I8	Financial insulation: reserve reallocation away from Western assets, capital controls, guidance to state firms on overseas exposure.
W3-I9	PRC advising its nationals to leave Taiwan, or restricting travel there.
W3-I10	Legal or doctrinal steps: Anti-Secession Law invoked, new
W3-I11	Subsea cable cuts near Taiwan or its outlying islands; cyber operations against Taiwan's power, finance, or communications.
W3-I12	Pretext narratives aimed at a specific Taiwanese or US act (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W3-I13	US, Japanese, or Philippine force movements or evacuation advisories; war-risk insurance repricing for the Strait; carriers and airlines rerouting.
W3-D1	Exercise forces return to home ports and bases on schedule.
W3-D2	Resumed cross-Strait or US–PRC military dialogue.
W3-D3	A favorable weather window (roughly April and October) passes without I2 or I6.

W4 — Sustained disruption of the advanced chip supply chain

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-20, provisional): W4a unlikely; W4b roughly even chance. Both low confidence.

Window. through 2027-12-31.

Outcome. - W4a, output loss: leading-edge logic or high-bandwidth memory output available to the market falls materially for 30 days or more, from any cause: conflict, disaster, utility failure, facility incident. - W4b, chokepoint restriction: a government restricts a chokepoint input, tool, or service (rare earths, gallium, germanium, lithography tools or their servicing, photoresist, specialty gases, substrates) and at least one major producer announces production cuts or allocation because of it. Announced controls with no production effect fall below the line; they are indicators.

W4-I1	New export controls, entity listings, or licensing regimes on chips, tools, or inputs, by the US, PRC, Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan.
W4-I2	Retaliation announced or signalled in response to I1.
W4-I3	Licenses for a chokepoint input slowed or denied in practice, reported by buyers.
W4-I4	Fab outage or yield loss at a leading-edge site, confirmed by the operator.
W4-I5	Earthquake of roughly M6.5 or greater near Hsinchu, Taichung, or Tainan; typhoon damage; water or power rationing affecting science parks.
W4-I6	Contract or spot prices, or lead times, moving abnormally for leading-edge wafers, HBM, DRAM, or advanced packaging.
W4-I7	Force majeure declarations, allocation notices, or inventory hoarding by major buyers.
W4-I8	Any fired W3 indicator that touches shipping, insurance, or power.
W4-D1	Licenses resumed or controls suspended by agreement.
W4-D2	Material new leading-edge or packaging capacity entering production outside Taiwan.

W5 — Government restriction on open-weight AI models or local inference

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-20, provisional): unlikely, low confidence.

Window. through 2027-12-31.

Outcome. the US, EU, or PRC adopts a binding rule that restricts publishing, distributing, or running open-weight models above a capability or compute threshold, or that licenses the hardware needed to run them locally. Voluntary commitments and proposed bills fall below the line; they are indicators.

W5-I1	Bills, executive actions, or agency rulemakings that name model weights, open release, or compute thresholds.
W5-I2	Export-control rules extended to model weights or to consumer-class accelerators.
W5-I3	A serious incident (cyber, biological, financial, infrastructure) attributed by a government to an open-weight model.
W5-I4	Major labs or industry groups lobbying for release restrictions, or reversing their own open-release policies citing risk.
W5-I5	Hosting platforms removing or gating model weights under legal pressure.
W5-I6	Government evaluations reporting dangerous-capability thresholds crossed by a released open-weight model.
W5-D1	Statute, ruling, or policy affirming open release; rules adopted with explicit open-weight exemptions.

W6 — Iran/Gulf: dual-chokepoint energy cutoff, Iran–Saudi war, or NPT withdrawal

Likelihood. (set 2026-10-07) - W6a: unlikely, low confidence. - W6b: unlikely, low confidence. - W6c: unlikely, moderate confidence.

Window. through 2027-12-31.

Outcome. - W6a, sustained dual-chokepoint cutoff: for 30 consecutive days, commercial transits of the Strait of Hormuz remain below 25% of the ~138/day pre-war JMIC baseline and either (i) the Saudi East–West pipeline (Petroline) / Yanbu route moves less than 2 million barrels per day, or (ii) Bab el-Mandeb is closed to commercial tankers of any flag. Named 72-hour outages and Saudi-only Houthi targeting fall below the line; they are indicators. - W6b, Iran–Saudi direct war: Iranian regular forces (IRGC or Artesh) and Saudi regular forces deliberately fire on each other's territory, crewed platforms, or personnel, and at least one government acknowledges it as deliberate. Houthi–Saudi fighting, and strikes launched from Iraqi territory, fall below this line; they are indicators. - W6c, NPT withdrawal: Iran deposits an Article X notice of withdrawal from the NPT, or the Majlis enacts a binding withdrawal statute. Rhetoric, committee discussion, and IAEA access denial fall below the line.

W6-I1	JMIC/UKMTO or equivalent reporting Hormuz commercial transits remaining below 25% of the ~138/day pre-war baseline, or the threat level at SEVERE with attacks on commercial shipping assessed as likely.
W6-I2	Projectile, mine, or uncrewed-vessel attacks on commercial ships in the Strait, the Persian Gulf, or the Gulf of Oman.
W6-I3	Attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea or Bab el-Mandeb, or a change of control at Perim, Mocha, or other points that dominate the strait. (Also shapes W6b.)
W6-I4	East–West pipeline (Petroline) or Yanbu terminal damaged, shut, or under attack; official or satellite confirmation that throughput is below 2 million b/d.
W6-I5	A second Gulf producer (UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar) loses its remaining export route or declares force majeure on crude or LNG.
W6-I6	War-risk or P&I cover withdrawn for Gulf or Red Sea transits; third-party naval escorts withdrawn.
W6-I7	IEA or a major consumer announces a strategic-reserve release, allocation, or rationing tied to Gulf supply. Iran–Saudi (W6b)
W6-I8	Iranian regular forces strike Saudi territory, or Saudi regular forces strike Iran; government acknowledgment.
W6-I9	Saudi request for, or receipt of, direct third-party combat intervention against Iran (not against Houthis only).
W6-I10	Closure of Iraq–Iran or Iraq–Saudi crossings after strikes launched from Iraqi territory; Baghdad attributing those strikes to Iranian direction. Nuclear (W6c)
W6-I11	Majlis bill on NPT withdrawal; Article X notice; official statement that withdrawal has been decided.
W6-I12	IAEA Board finding or UNSC action on non-compliance; Iranian statement that safeguards obligations have ended.
W6-I13	Collapse or revival of a written US–Iran instrument (the Islamabad MoU of 17 Jun 2026 is the precedent); named concessions or named breaches.
W6-I14	Pretext narratives aimed at a specific Saudi, US, or Iranian act (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W6-D1	Hormuz transits recover toward the pre-war baseline; JMIC threat level reduced.
W6-D2	Petroline or Yanbu restarted at or above 2 million b/d and held.
W6-D3	A new US–Iran ceasefire or memorandum taking effect, with blockade lift and mine-clearance underway.
W6-D4	IAEA inspectors returned to declared sites.
W6-D5	Houthi–Saudi ceasefire that restores Red Sea energy traffic.

W7 — US diesel export embargo

Likelihood. (set 2026-10-14; D3 applied 2026-10-24): unlikely, moderate confidence.

Window. scored 30-day window closed 2026-10-23 PDT (F1 MISS). Remaining

Outcome. the US administration imposes a full or partial ban, embargo, or equivalent export restriction on diesel fuel by proclamation, IEEPA / DOE / Commerce order, or a completed floor vote. Congressional calls, cabinet feasibility studies, and the president's public urging fall below the line; they are indicators.

W7-I1	The president or a cabinet secretary publicly urges or supports a diesel or gasoline export restriction.
W7-I2	A named official says the administration is examining the feasibility of a full or partial ban.
W7-I3	A congressional majority-party call for an embargo, or a floor vote scheduled.
W7-I4	Proclamation, IEEPA / DOE / Commerce order, or completed floor vote imposing a restriction. (The outcome.)
W7-I5	Refiner run-cuts, allocation notices, or SPR / Northeast-heating-oil actions tied to an export restriction.
W7-D1	An explicit White House decision against a ban, or a dated "no" from the president.
W7-D2	The national diesel retail average falls materially without a restriction.
W7-D3	Wright/Burgum opposition prevails and no order issues past the 30-day window.

W8 — Successful terror attack on a Five Eyes/NATO FOL used in the Iran war, or a mass-casualty Islamist attack in Five Eyes

Likelihood. (set 2026-09-27) - W8a: unlikely, low confidence. - W8b: unlikely, low confidence.

Window. through 2027-03-31.

Outcome. - W8a, FOL attack: an attack on a Five Eyes or NATO-Europe forward operating location used for US or allied operations against Iran kills personnel or suspends combat-sortie generation for more than 24 hours, and a government acknowledges it as an attack. Foiled plots, Explosives Act arrests, cordons, and FPCON raises fall below the line; they are indicators. - W8b, mass-casualty Islamist attack: an Islamist or Iran-aligned cell kills three or more people in a single attack in Five Eyes civilian space. The 29 Apr 2026 Golders Green stabbing and earlier attacks are baseline, not this outcome. Uncharged arrests fall below.

W8-I1	CT-led explosives or terrorism-statute arrest, or Army/EOD examination of vehicles, next to a FOL used in the Iran war.
W8-I2	A government charging or official product naming a terrorist organisation, an Iran-aligned network, or a state sponsor for a plot against such a FOL or a Five Eyes mass-casualty target.
W8-I3	UK national threat level raised to CRITICAL, or a US official product stating FPCON Delta at a named FOL used in the Iran war.
W8-I4	Successful attack on such a FOL with acknowledged casualties or more than 24 hours' combat-sortie suspension. (W8a outcome.) Mass casualty (W8b)
W8-I5	An Islamist or Iran-aligned attack in Five Eyes civilian space that kills three or more people in a single incident. (W8b outcome.)
W8-I6	IRGC or Iranian official claiming a specific FOL as a target, paired with a matching plot or attack in the same window. The 23 Jul Fairford "legitimate target" line alone is baseline, not this fire.
W8-D1	Charging that names a non-terror motive and no FOL or mass-casualty targeting.
W8-D2	All Whelford arrested released without an explosives or terrorism charge, and no viable device found.
W8-D3	Window passes with no I4 or I5.

Watches

T1 — Ukraine war

Covers. the course of the war outside the specific warnings (W1, W2).

Clears the bar.

- Change of control of an operationally significant town, line, or crossing,
- A step change in a strike campaign: new target class, new range, new system,
- Shifts in force generation, mobilization policy, or casualty trends reported
- Western or third-party aid decisions that add or remove a capability.
- Negotiation developments with a text, a date, or a named concession.
- Nuclear signalling that departs from the established pattern: warhead

T2 — Taiwan and the Western Pacific

Covers. cross-Strait and regional developments below W3's indicators.

Clears the bar.

- Taiwanese domestic politics that change defense policy, budgets, or
- US, Japanese, Philippine, or Australian basing, arms-transfer, or commitment
- South China Sea incidents involving casualties, vessel loss, or a treaty
- PLA force-structure or leadership changes bearing on Eastern Theater Command.

T3 — Semiconductor supply chain

Covers. the industry outside W4's indicators.

Clears the bar.

- Process-node, packaging, or memory milestones reaching volume production, or
- Fab siting, subsidy, or cancellation decisions that change geographic
- PRC domestic capability milestones in lithography, EDA, or leading-edge
- Demand shocks: accelerator orders, capex guidance, or inventory corrections

T4 — Significant AI events

Covers. AI developments outside W5's indicators.

Clears the bar.

- A capability result that is new in kind, with a reproducible evaluation or
- A real-world incident with harm or material loss where AI involvement is
- Open-weight releases that close the gap to the closed frontier, and changes
- Compute: cluster scale, accelerator supply, energy constraints, export rules.
- Governance with force: statutes, binding rules, enforcement actions, court
- Lab-level events that change the field's structure: mergers, government
- Frontier labs opening or expanding wet-biology facilities, or moving from

T5 — Quantum computing

Covers. progress toward cryptographically relevant quantum computers and the migration away from vulnerable cryptography.

Clears the bar.

- Error correction: logical qubits below threshold at increasing code
- Resource estimates: credible reductions in the qubits or runtime needed to
- Demonstrations of Shor-class factoring or discrete-log beyond toy sizes
- Cryptanalysis, classical or quantum, that weakens a standardized
- Government moves: migration deadlines advanced, mandates issued, advisories
- Roadmap evidence: a major program hitting or missing a dated milestone.

T6 — US/Israel–Iran war and the Gulf

Covers. the course of the war outside W6. The war began 28 Feb 2026 (US/Israel strikes on Iran; Iranian state media confirmed Supreme Leader Khamenei's death 1 Mar, Reuters). T6 is the Ukraine-war equivalent (T1): Hormuz, the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, Gulf-state spillover, Iraq, Yemen, the Red Sea, and the energy-market effects of all of that. Added 2026-09-20; W6 opened 2026-09-21.

Clears the bar.

- Change in Hormuz commercial transits or in the blockade's scope, with a
- Strikes on Gulf-state energy, desalination, or port infrastructure; attacks
- Petroline / Yanbu throughput change; Bab el-Mandeb control change (Perim,
- Ceasefire, memorandum, or negotiation developments with a text, a date, or a
- Iranian nuclear program: enrichment level, inspector access, withdrawal
- Entry, exit, or basing decisions by third parties (Gulf states, Russia, PRC,
- Official US or allied confirmation of strategic munitions or interceptor
- Energy-market effects large enough to move allocation: sustained price
- US diesel or gasoline export restriction moving from a congressional call
- A foiled or successful attack, or a CT-led explosives/terrorism arrest,
- Resumption of acknowledged US strikes on Iran after a dated presidential

T7 — Arctic and northern maritime routes

Covers. US, allied, Russian, and PRC military, diplomatic, and infrastructure moves in the Arctic and on northern sea routes, including Greenland. Standing topic per FO Looking Forward, 21 Sep 2026.

Clears the bar.

- New security, basing, or investment-veto agreements covering Greenland or
- Deployments, base expansion, or icebreaker/infrastructure decisions that
- A signed US–Japan–ROK (or other extra-regional) Arctic partnership, or its
- Russian or PRC military presence, dual-use investment, or base activity in

T8 — US homeland: immigration enforcement and legal-immigration policy

Covers. FO's standing domestic beat — ICE/CBP operations, protest violence around them, and legal-immigration pathways (H-1B and adjacent) that change labor or tech inflows. Not a catch-all US politics watch.

Clears the bar.

- A death in an ICE/CBP encounter or in an anti-ICE protest, or regular US
- A new statute or proclamation that closes or prices out a major legal-
- A named State visa-restriction policy (INA 212 or equivalent) that
- First panel installation in a previously unbuilt wall sector is below

T9 — Korean Peninsula

Covers. the Korean Peninsula under the 1953 armistice: DMZ/MDL incidents, DPRK missile and nuclear activity, ROK–USFK posture, and armistice-mechanism changes. Not T2 (Taiwan/Western Pacific), not T3 (ROK as a semiconductor producer), not T7 (US–Japan–ROK Arctic partnership).

Clears the bar.

- Fire across the Military Demarcation Line, or a DMZ/MDL incident with casualties that ROK JCS, MND, UNC, or USFK attributes as a hostile act.
- A ballistic or cruise missile that impacts ROK, Japanese, or US territory, or a launch that a government treats as a new range, payload, or target class.
- A nuclear test, or official test-preparation indicators (tunnel work, exclusion notices) that depart from the established pattern.
- US–ROK alliance posture changes: exercise cancellation or restoration, troop or OPCON decisions, basing, or a new or collapsed combined-defense instrument, with a text, a date, or a head-of-government announcement.
- Armistice-mechanism change: UNC, MAC, or NNSC status altered; a government declares the armistice void.
- Negotiation developments with a text, a date, or a named concession (DPRK–ROK, DPRK–US, or trilateral).

T10 — Plausibly deniable industrial accidents (sabotage-team activity)

Covers. industrial and critical-infrastructure accidents whose official picture is accident, construction, equipment outage, or neglect, where sabotage cannot be discriminated from that picture. Kyle 2026-09-21: Russian and Ukrainian sabotage teams are active; North Korean too; he would be shocked if Chinese teams were not. Method is plausible deniability. Not T6 (Gulf war damage), not W2-I3 (one attributed sabotage), not a catch-all for every plant fire.

Clears the bar.

- A cluster: three or more such events in 30 days in one country, or three
- A government attributes one such event to a named state's sabotage
- Until a class-specific public baseline is filed, count candidates and do

T11 — US–Canada trade rupture

Covers. the US–Canada trade relationship FO treats as deteriorating (Looking Forward, 22 Sep 2026): potash, oil, and named bilateral instruments. Not a catch-all North American markets watch.

Clears the bar.

- Canadian oil or potash redirected to a third country (especially the PRC)
- Collapse, replacement, or formal suspension of a named bilateral trade
- US executive action that cuts Canadian crude or refined-product imports,

T12 — US Western Hemisphere cartel-military campaign

Covers. Operation Southern Spear / Shield of the Americas and SOUTHCOM operations against designated cartels, outside T8 (ICE/homeland). Maritime strikes on alleged smuggling vessels are already underway. Not T21 (Cuba communist-government takedown).

Clears the bar.

- Acknowledged US land combat in Mexico or Venezuela, or operations without
- A new AUMF or equivalent authorizing land operations in the SOUTHCOM AOR.
- Death of US regulars in such operations, or a host government treating a

T13 — Drone, TBM, and C-UAS capability development

Covers. uncrewed aircraft (one-way attack, swarm, CCA/loyal wingman), tactical ballistic missiles, and counter-UAS, for the US, allies, and adversaries, as those capabilities develop. Not T1 or T6 theater employment already underway (Ukraine strike tallies, Gulf shipping strikes). Not W3 PLA lift or XXLUUV except where a new uncrewed-air or C-UAS class appears. Kyle 2026-09-22: particularly interested in this class as it develops — file development, not only combat employment.

Clears the bar.

- A named system, effector, or scale that is new for that actor:
- An official exercise or test that introduces a new class, new scale,
- Combat employment of a new drone, C-UAS, or TBM class, or official
- Adversary equivalent with evidence beyond a press release (imagery,

T14 — TCO kinetic/drone capability (Western Hemisphere)

Covers. designated-cartel and other TCO uncrewed, explosive-UAS, and related kinetic capability in the Western Hemisphere, as that capability develops. Not T12 (US campaign: land combat, AUMF, US deaths). Not T13 (state military drone/TBM/C-UAS). Not T8 (ICE/homeland). Not a catch-all crime or fentanyl-seizure watch.

Clears the bar.

- Government-acknowledged new class, scale, or effector for a named TCO:
- Ukraine-veteran or Ukraine-pipeline training of TCO drone operators
- FPV/OWA or explosive-UAS employment against a Mexican or US government
- TCO C-UAS against US ISR, with government acknowledgment.

T15 — Ethiopia-Tigray conflict

Covers. the course of fighting among Tigray forces (TPLF/TDF), Ethiopian federal forces, and allied militias in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and adjacent regions after the 23 Sep 2026 resumption of open fighting. The November 2022 Pretoria Agreement is baseline, already broken. Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, and Djibouti only when they enter this conflict. Sudan civil war itself is T16. Not T6. Not T1. Not a catch-all Horn or Somalia watch.

Clears the bar.

- Change of control of an operationally significant town, airport,
- A step change in the campaign: a newly confirmed region, a new
- Third-party combat entry, basing, or acknowledged arms: Eritrea,
- Negotiation, ceasefire, or Pretoria replacement with a text, a
- Djibouti, Red Sea, or Bab el-Mandeb shipping or basing effect of

T16 — Sudan civil war

Covers. the course of fighting among the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and named allied militias inside Sudan after April 2023. Neighboring states (Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic) and extra- regional backers only when they enter this conflict as combatants, with basing, or with acknowledged interstate fire. Not T15 (Ethiopia–Tigray). Not T6 (Gulf/Red Sea shipping already underway). Not T17. Not a catch-all Horn or Sahel watch.

Clears the bar.

- Change of control of an operationally significant town, airport,
- A step change in the campaign: a newly confirmed region, a new
- Third-party combat entry, basing, or acknowledged interstate
- Negotiation, ceasefire, or Jeddah replacement with a text, a
- Port Sudan or Red Sea shipping or basing effect of this war.

T17 — Sahel JNIM / Islamic State

Covers. the course of fighting among Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), and the juntas of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, including JNIM/ISSP expansion from those three into a named fourth country. Russia's Africa Corps, Algeria, and other extra-regional forces only when they take a new combat or basing role after this watch opened. Not T16. Not Lake Chad (ISWAP/Boko Haram). Not a catch-all West Africa or Puntland watch.

Clears the bar.

- Change of control of a national capital or an operationally
- A step change in the campaign: a newly confirmed country, a new
- Extra-regional regulars in a new ground-combat or basing role
- Named junta collapse, coup, or succession with a text or a date.
- Negotiation or local settlement with a text, a date, or a named

T18 — Critical minerals and rare-earth supply

Covers. Western offtake corridors and PRC export-control or concession moves on lithium, copper, rare earths, and magnets. FO Looking Forward 24 Sep treats rare-earth/magnet concessions at Trump–Xi as a standing watch item. Not T3 (semiconductors). Not W4b until a major producer announces production cuts or allocation because of a control.

Clears the bar.

- A signed corridor, offtake, or financing instrument that newly
- A PRC export-control change, or a US–China concession on rare
- A production cut or allocation at a major magnet or rare-earth

T19 — Ukrainian government institutional integrity

Covers. corruption as an indicator of two things: (1) loss of internal support — elite, Rada, military, or public — that could collapse warfighting capacity or the government; (2) a seam the other side can exploit — aid cutoff, negotiation leverage, IO. Not T1 (course of the war). Not a catch-all graft watch: Ukraine-is-corrupt is already true. Kyle 2026-09-24 after the Zhumadilov $140M-fridge rumor; same session: watch the support-loss and exploitation paths, not rot as such.

Clears the bar.

- NABU, SAPO, SBU, or VAKS charging document, detention, or
- A named minister, commander, party faction, or Rada bloc
- A named Western donor (US, EU, G7, IMF) suspends, withholds, or
- A named adversary (Russia, or a donor acting as one) cites a
- A law, decree, or force action that removes NABU or SAPO
- Rada no-confidence in the government, Zelensky departure or

T20 — Russian government institutional integrity

Covers. corruption as an indicator of two things: (1) loss of internal support — siloviki, federal elite, or a named region — that could collapse warfighting capacity or the regime; (2) a seam the other side can exploit — sanctions, negotiation leverage, targeting of a compromised channel. Not T1. Not a catch-all kleptocracy watch: Russia-is-a-kleptocracy is already true. Swap-test counterpart to T19. Kyle 2026-09-24 with T19; same session: watch the support-loss and exploitation paths, not rot as such.

Clears the bar.

- SK or FSB charging, detention, or court of a sitting federal
- Two or more such inner-circle deaths, arrests, or public
- A named region refuses a manpower or financing quota, with a
- Confirmed freeze or seizure of a named war-financing channel
- A named adversary (Ukraine, or a Western government) cites a

T21 — US action against Cuba's communist government

Covers. US military, covert, or acknowledged-snatch action aimed at taking down or replacing Cuba's communist government (PCC, FAR, GAESA), and Havana's response to that campaign. Rhetoric, sanctions, and unnamed-official planning since the January 2026 Maduro capture are baseline. Not T12 (designated-cartel campaign). Not T8 (ICE/homeland). Not a catch-all Cuba-politics or embargo watch.

Clears the bar.

• A named US official product (White House, Pentagon, SOUTHCOM, Army
• Acknowledged US land combat in Cuba, operations on Cuban territory
• A new AUMF or equivalent authorizing operations against Cuba, as
• Death of US regulars in such operations, or Havana treating a US
• Cuban government collapse, Díaz-Canel or Castro-family departure,

T22 — Islamist terrorism in Five Eyes and NATO Europe

Covers. plots and attacks by Islamist actors (IS, AQ and affiliates, homegrown jihadists) and Iran-aligned external-operations networks against military, government, or civilian targets in Five Eyes and NATO Europe. Kyle 27 Sep: wants foiled plots of this class in the brief; strongly suspects the Whelford arrests are an Islamic cell (his assessment, not a charging). Not T17 (Sahel JNIM / Islamic State in the Sahel). Not T10 / W2 (state sabotage teams). Not T8 (ICE). Not a catch-all for Extreme Right Wing terrorism, which JTAC also tracks; ERWT stays off this watch unless Kyle expands.

Clears the bar.

• CT-led explosives, firearms, or terrorism-statute arrests, or
• A successful attack with casualties or infrastructure damage.
• Official attribution of a plot or attack to a named Islamist
• UK national threat level to CRITICAL, or a US official product

T23 — France domestic unrest

Covers. nationwide metropolitan France protests that spill into rioting, looting, or government-stability tests. FO 19 Oct (M.H.): the government has lost control of domestic security; either protesters stop of their own will or the military will be required. Recast already-true “lost control” as the Assessment, not the bar. Not T8 (US homeland). Not W2 (Russia–NATO clash). Not a catch-all European protest watch.

Clears the bar.

• French armed forces deployed on metropolitan streets to restore order, or a nationwide état d’urgence / equivalent covering the unrest, with a government product.
• Government collapse under the unrest: PM resignation citing it, National Assembly no-confidence, or Macron departure, with a text or a date.
• A US or NATO product stating support for French domestic stability (FO Key Question, 19 Oct).

T24 — Haiti: gangs and extra-regional intervention

Covers. Haitian gang control of Port-au-Prince and extra-regional intervention (El Salvador, US, A3C) below a dedicated warning. FO 22 Oct (J.V.): Salvadoran troops in Haiti are currently non-combatants; an operation would likely receive A3C support. Recast already-true gang control as the baseline, not the bar. Not T12 (US land combat in Mexico/Venezuela). Not T16 (Sudan). Not T8 (US homeland ICE).

Clears the bar.

• El Salvador or the US acknowledges combat operations in Haiti beyond a hostage-rescue raid, with a government product.
• Death of the Salvadoran hostages, or Haitian government / MSS-mission collapse under gang pressure, with a text or a date.
• A US or A3C product stating support for an El Salvador combat campaign in Haiti.

T25 — Poland institutional dual-power

Covers. next-rung extra-constitutional transfer of executive power in Poland, or use of the armed forces against a constitutional organ, during the Tusk–Nawrocki cohabitation and the Constitutional Tribunal fight. Recast already-true rule-of-law dual-power (PiS-era TK vs Sejm-elected judges; presidential oath refused) as the baseline, not the bar. “Coup d’état” / “zamach stanu” is a party characterization, not the watch. Not W2 (Russia–NATO clash). Not T1 (Ukraine war). Not T23 (France). Not a catch-all Polish politics watch.

Clears the bar.

• Extra-constitutional removal, detention, or blocking of the
• Polish Armed Forces, Żandarmeria Wojskowa, or gendarmerie
• Constitution suspended, or two named power centers issuing
• Article 4 requested over this domestic fight, or a US/NATO

T26 — Industrial refrigeration / cold-chain ICS cyber

Covers. FO 9 Nov (M.H.) standing topic — malicious cyber against industrial refrigeration and cold-chain monitoring controllers. Europe supermarket and French blood-service incidents are the baseline, already true. Not T10 (accident-class deniable sabotage). Not T4 (AI events). Not a catch-all ICS-cyber watch.

Clears the bar.

• A confirmed attack on a named US grocer, food distributor, or hospital blood bank that alters refrigeration setpoints or spoils inventory, with an operator, CISA, FBI, HHS, USDA, or DoT product.

T27 — US West Coast container-port labor disruption

Covers. FO 19 Nov (R.C.) standing topic — ILWU Local 26 watchmen contract at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and sympathy stoppages by other ILWU crafts at those ports. Not T6 (Gulf energy/shipping). Not T10 (accident-class deniable sabotage). Not a catch-all US labor watch.

Clears the bar.

• An ILWU work stoppage that idles cargo operations at the Port of Los Angeles or the Port of Long Beach, confirmed by PMA, the port, or a terminal operator.

• Taft-Hartley invocation or an equivalent federal back-to-work order covering those ports.

Indicator index

W1-I1	New Russian formations identified in Bryansk, Kursk, or Belgorod oblast beyond border-cover levels, especially units moved from active fronts.
W1-I2	Offensive engineering and sustainment moved forward: bridging equipment, breaching of own border obstacles, field hospitals, fuel and ammunition depots.
W1-I3	Belarusian readiness activity: snap inspections, personnel recalls, units leaving garrison, movement toward the southern border. (W1b)
W1-I4	Russian ground forces deploying into Belarus, including under cover of announced exercises. (W1b)
W1-I5	Strike campaign concentrating on northern logistics, bridges, and air defense in Chernihiv, Sumy, or Kharkiv oblast.
W1-I6	Rising cross-border sabotage-reconnaissance activity on a quiet sector.
W1-I7	Airspace closures, border-zone civilian restrictions, or evacuations on the Russian or Belarusian side.
W1-I8	Unannounced or unusually frequent Putin–Lukashenko meetings. Weak: many explanations. (W1b)
W1-I9	Pretext narratives: claims of Ukrainian or NATO provocation on the Belarusian border, "buffer zone" rhetoric aimed at a new sector. Assess coordination, attribution, and purpose as three separate judgments.
W1-I10	Third-party signals: government warnings, embassy advisories, reported proposals for localized ceasefires covering quiet northern sectors.
W1-I11	Ukrainian reserves moved north, new fortification, evacuation orders in border districts. Shows Kyiv's assessment, not Moscow's intent.
W1-D1	Units in the northern grouping redeployed to active fronts.
W1-D2	Belarusian units return to garrison; inspection formally closed.
W1-D3	Ground-freeze period passes with no accumulation under I1–I2.
W2-I1	Uncrewed or crewed Russian aircraft entering NATO airspace, with rising frequency, depth, or payload.
W2-I2	A NATO member shoots down a crewed Russian aircraft, or Russia fires on a NATO crewed platform.
W2-I3	Sabotage of NATO-state infrastructure (undersea cables, pipelines, rail, depots) attributed to Russia by a government.
W2-I4	Article 4 consultations requested; Article 5 language used by a head of government.
W2-I5	Russian force generation opposite the Baltic states, Finland, or the Suwalki corridor; Kaliningrad reinforcement.
W2-I6	NATO forces deploying into Ukraine, or a NATO member announcing an air-defense role over Ukrainian territory.
W2-I7	Russian statements naming a specific NATO member or facility as a legitimate target; matching pretext narratives (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W2-I8	Interference with Baltic or Black Sea shipping by either side: boardings, escorts, closures.
W2-I9	A cluster of plausibly deniable industrial or critical- infrastructure accidents in NATO states at an abnormal rate: three or more in 30 days in one NATO country, or three or more in 30 days against the same class (energy, rail, ATC/telecom, ports, chemicals, undersea cables) across NATO territory. Official per-event wording of accident, construction damage, equipment outage, or neglect does not block this fire. A single event does not fire it. Government attribution of one event still fires I3, not this. Kyle 2026-09-21: this rate is a classic signal that sabotage teams are active; plausible deniability is the method.

W2-D1	New or restored deconfliction channels; incident followed by visible restraint from both capitals.
W2-D2	Ceasefire or armistice in Ukraine taking effect.
W3-I1	Exercises around Taiwan growing in scale, duration, or proximity; exercises announced without an end date; live fire inside the 24 nm zone.
W3-I2	Amphibious lift, civilian roll-on/roll-off ferries, and landing craft concentrating in Eastern Theater Command ports.
W3-I3	PLA Rocket Force dispersal; air and naval units surged forward from other theater commands.
W3-I4	Coast guard and maritime militia boardings or inspections of Taiwan-bound vessels; patrols inside Kinmen or Matsu restricted waters.
W3-I5	Maritime or airspace closure notices covering Taiwan's approaches.
W3-I6	Reservist call-ups, blood drives, field-hospital preparation, leave cancellations in the PLA.
W3-I7	Strategic stockpiling of fuel, food, and critical inputs; outbound restrictions on the same.
W3-I8	Financial insulation: reserve reallocation away from Western assets, capital controls, guidance to state firms on overseas exposure.
W3-I9	PRC advising its nationals to leave Taiwan, or restricting travel there.
W3-I10	Legal or doctrinal steps: Anti-Secession Law invoked, new
W3-I11	Subsea cable cuts near Taiwan or its outlying islands; cyber operations against Taiwan's power, finance, or communications.
W3-I12	Pretext narratives aimed at a specific Taiwanese or US act (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W3-I13	US, Japanese, or Philippine force movements or evacuation advisories; war-risk insurance repricing for the Strait; carriers and airlines rerouting.
W3-D1	Exercise forces return to home ports and bases on schedule.
W3-D2	Resumed cross-Strait or US–PRC military dialogue.
W3-D3	A favorable weather window (roughly April and October) passes without I2 or I6.
W4-I1	New export controls, entity listings, or licensing regimes on chips, tools, or inputs, by the US, PRC, Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan.
W4-I2	Retaliation announced or signalled in response to I1.
W4-I3	Licenses for a chokepoint input slowed or denied in practice, reported by buyers.
W4-I4	Fab outage or yield loss at a leading-edge site, confirmed by the operator.
W4-I5	Earthquake of roughly M6.5 or greater near Hsinchu, Taichung, or Tainan; typhoon damage; water or power rationing affecting science parks.
W4-I6	Contract or spot prices, or lead times, moving abnormally for leading-edge wafers, HBM, DRAM, or advanced packaging.
W4-I7	Force majeure declarations, allocation notices, or inventory hoarding by major buyers.
W4-I8	Any fired W3 indicator that touches shipping, insurance, or power.
W4-D1	Licenses resumed or controls suspended by agreement.
W4-D2	Material new leading-edge or packaging capacity entering production outside Taiwan.
W5-I1	Bills, executive actions, or agency rulemakings that name model weights, open release, or compute thresholds.
W5-I2	Export-control rules extended to model weights or to consumer-class accelerators.
W5-I3	A serious incident (cyber, biological, financial, infrastructure) attributed by a government to an open-weight model.
W5-I4	Major labs or industry groups lobbying for release restrictions, or reversing their own open-release policies citing risk.
W5-I5	Hosting platforms removing or gating model weights under legal pressure.
W5-I6	Government evaluations reporting dangerous-capability thresholds crossed by a released open-weight model.
W5-D1	Statute, ruling, or policy affirming open release; rules adopted with explicit open-weight exemptions.
W6-I1	JMIC/UKMTO or equivalent reporting Hormuz commercial transits remaining below 25% of the ~138/day pre-war baseline, or the threat level at SEVERE with attacks on commercial shipping assessed as likely.
W6-I2	Projectile, mine, or uncrewed-vessel attacks on commercial ships in the Strait, the Persian Gulf, or the Gulf of Oman.
W6-I3	Attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea or Bab el-Mandeb, or a change of control at Perim, Mocha, or other points that dominate the strait. (Also shapes W6b.)

W6-I4	East–West pipeline (Petroline) or Yanbu terminal damaged, shut, or under attack; official or satellite confirmation that throughput is below 2 million b/d.
W6-I5	A second Gulf producer (UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar) loses its remaining export route or declares force majeure on crude or LNG.
W6-I6	War-risk or P&I cover withdrawn for Gulf or Red Sea transits; third-party naval escorts withdrawn.
W6-I7	IEA or a major consumer announces a strategic-reserve release, allocation, or rationing tied to Gulf supply. Iran–Saudi (W6b)
W6-I8	Iranian regular forces strike Saudi territory, or Saudi regular forces strike Iran; government acknowledgment.
W6-I9	Saudi request for, or receipt of, direct third-party combat intervention against Iran (not against Houthis only).
W6-I10	Closure of Iraq–Iran or Iraq–Saudi crossings after strikes launched from Iraqi territory; Baghdad attributing those strikes to Iranian direction. Nuclear (W6c)
W6-I11	Majlis bill on NPT withdrawal; Article X notice; official statement that withdrawal has been decided.
W6-I12	IAEA Board finding or UNSC action on non-compliance; Iranian statement that safeguards obligations have ended.
W6-I13	Collapse or revival of a written US–Iran instrument (the Islamabad MoU of 17 Jun 2026 is the precedent); named concessions or named breaches.
W6-I14	Pretext narratives aimed at a specific Saudi, US, or Iranian act (assess coordination, attribution, and purpose separately).
W6-D1	Hormuz transits recover toward the pre-war baseline; JMIC threat level reduced.
W6-D2	Petroline or Yanbu restarted at or above 2 million b/d and held.
W6-D3	A new US–Iran ceasefire or memorandum taking effect, with blockade lift and mine-clearance underway.
W6-D4	IAEA inspectors returned to declared sites.
W6-D5	Houthi–Saudi ceasefire that restores Red Sea energy traffic.
W7-I1	The president or a cabinet secretary publicly urges or supports a diesel or gasoline export restriction.
W7-I2	A named official says the administration is examining the feasibility of a full or partial ban.
W7-I3	A congressional majority-party call for an embargo, or a floor vote scheduled.
W7-I4	Proclamation, IEEPA / DOE / Commerce order, or completed floor vote imposing a restriction. (The outcome.)
W7-I5	Refiner run-cuts, allocation notices, or SPR / Northeast-heating-oil actions tied to an export restriction.
W7-D1	An explicit White House decision against a ban, or a dated “no” from the president.
W7-D2	The national diesel retail average falls materially without a restriction.
W7-D3	Wright/Burgum opposition prevails and no order issues past the 30-day window.
W8-I1	CT-led explosives or terrorism-statute arrest, or Army/EOD examination of vehicles, next to a FOL used in the Iran war.
W8-I2	A government charging or official product naming a terrorist organisation, an Iran-aligned network, or a state sponsor for a plot against such a FOL or a Five Eyes mass-casualty target.
W8-I3	UK national threat level raised to CRITICAL, or a US official product stating FPCON Delta at a named FOL used in the Iran war.
W8-I4	Successful attack on such a FOL with acknowledged casualties or more than 24 hours’ combat-sortie suspension. (W8a outcome.) Mass casualty (W8b)
W8-I5	An Islamist or Iran-aligned attack in Five Eyes civilian space that kills three or more people in a single incident. (W8b outcome.)
W8-I6	IRGC or Iranian official claiming a specific FOL as a target, paired with a matching plot or attack in the same window. The 23 Jul Fairford “legitimate target” line alone is baseline, not this fire.
W8-D1	Charging that names a non-terror motive and no FOL or mass-casualty targeting.
W8-D2	All Whelford arrested released without an explosives or terrorism charge, and no viable device found.
W8-D3	Window passes with no I4 or I5.