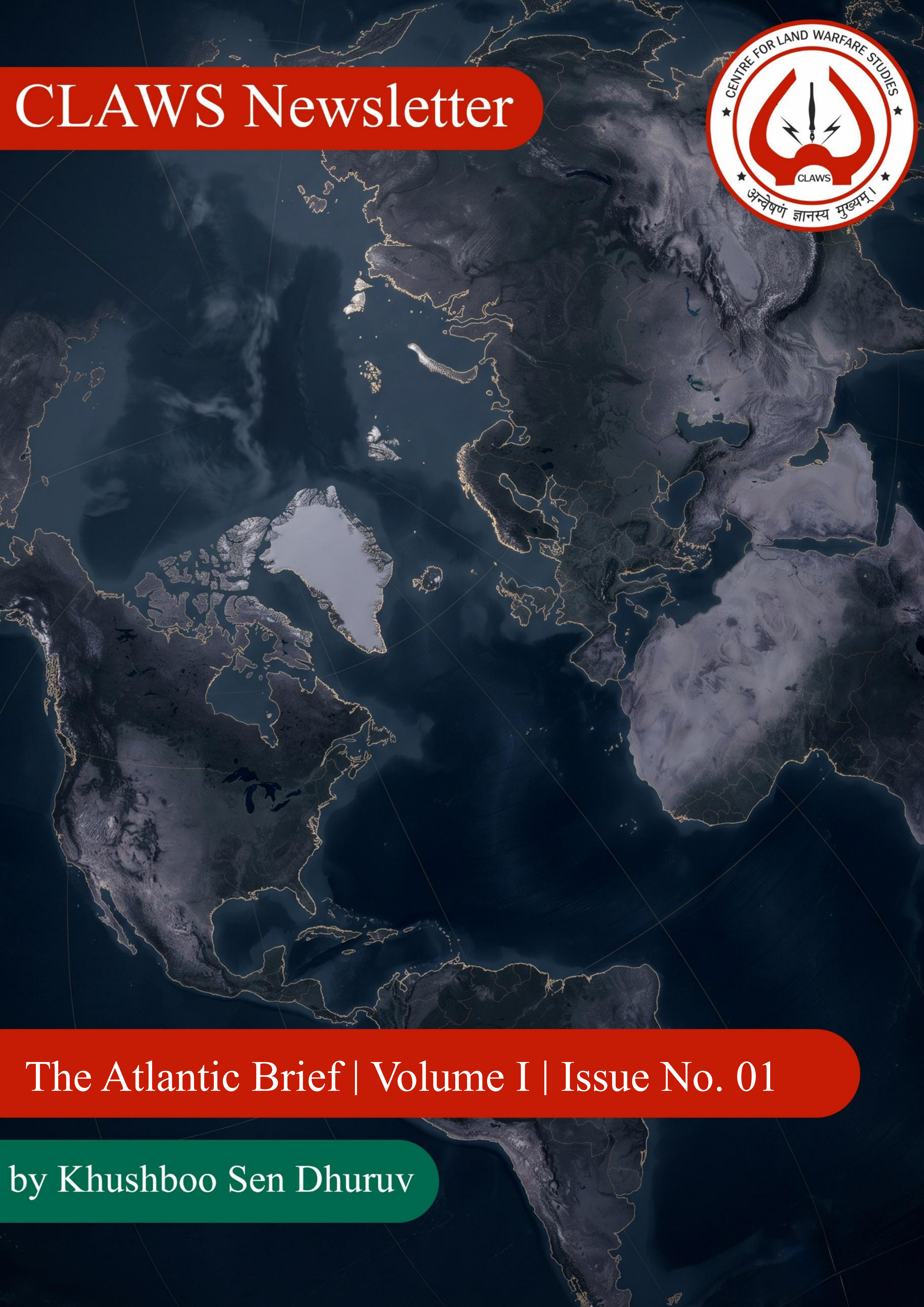

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The Atlantic Brief | Volume I | Issue No. 01

by Khushboo Sen Dhuruv

The Atlantic Brief

August 2026 was marked by intensifying geopolitical competition, military escalation and economic uncertainty across Europe and the Americas. In Europe, Ukraine strengthened defence cooperation with European partners as Russia intensified missile and drone attacks. European states expanded air-defence, missile and eastern-flank capabilities while concerns grew over NATO cohesion and future French policy. Russia deepened strategic ties with North Korea, China and Myanmar, while disruptions to oil production and fuel supplies highlighted growing economic pressures. Across North America, President Donald Trump faced foreign-policy challenges over Iran, Gaza and Ukraine, alongside worsening trade tensions with Canada and Brazil. Washington also expanded defence production and advanced cooperation with Qatar and Colombia. South America experienced sharper diplomatic divisions, particularly between Brazil and the United States, while Argentina and Colombia pursued contrasting economic and security strategies. Meanwhile, AI, autonomous transport, space technology, rare-earth mining and supercomputing emerged as increasingly important components of global strategic competition and economic resilience.

EUROPE

Foreign Policy

3 August (Reuters): Ukraine's Top Peace Negotiator Umerov Appointed Foreign Intelligence Chief. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy appointed Rustem Umerov, the country's chief peace negotiator, to lead Ukraine's foreign intelligence service while retaining his role in Russia peace talks. Former Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko will replace Umerov as Security Council chief. The appointments follow a broader government shakeup that has drawn criticism over transparency and the recycling of senior officials.

21 August (Reuters): French, British and German Leaders to Co-Chair Ukraine Support Meeting in Kyiv. French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz will co-chair a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing on Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy will participate from Kyiv, alongside European Union and NATO officials. The leaders are expected to reaffirm support for Ukraine and discuss strengthening assistance as Russian attacks on Kyiv intensify.

22 Augus (Deutsche Welle): Germany's Foreign Minister Visits Kyiv, Pledges Continued Support Amid Russian Escalation. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul visited Kyiv as Russia intensified missile and drone attacks on Ukraine ahead of its Independence Day. Meeting President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Wadephul condemned attacks on civilians and pledged continued German support, particularly for air defence and winter preparations. The two sides also discussed a planned drone agreement. Wadephul expressed support for Ukraine while maintaining hope for future negotiations.

Military Affairs

4 August (Reuters): Ukraine's Fire Point Integrates European Technology Into New Missile Defence System. Ukrainian defence company Fire Point is integrating European radar, guidance and command systems into its Freyja ballistic missile defence project. Thirteen European defence firms are participating, with the first interception targeted for mid-2027. Fire Point aims to produce interceptors for under €1 million, significantly cheaper than Patriot missiles, while also advancing offensive missile systems for potential battlefield deployment.

5 August (POLITICO): EU Transfers €1.4B Russian Asset Profits to Ukraine. The EU will transfer €1.4 billion in profits generated from frozen Russian central-bank assets to Ukraine. About 95% will support loan repayment through the Ukraine Loan Cooperation Mechanism, while 5% will fund military and defence needs. The latest transfer brings total redirected profits to €8 billion, while more than €210 billion in Russian reserves remain frozen.

19 August (POLITICO): NATO Fears French Presidential Election Could Weaken NATO is increasingly concerned that France's 2027 presidential election could bring a leader seeking to reduce or end French participation in NATO's integrated military command. A withdrawal would weaken European defence coordination, reduce access to France's nuclear and military capabilities, and diminish Paris' influence. Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon have both advocated distancing France from NATO. **Alliance.**

21 August (Deutsche Welle): Poland and Germany Strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank Against Russia: Poland is constructing its 800-kilometre East Shield along the Russian and Belarusian borders to deter potential aggression. Germany is supporting the project with combat engineers installing anti-tank defences. The cooperation reflects growing Polish-German military ties and broader NATO efforts to strengthen its eastern flank. Poland's increased defence spending and military modernization further underline its focus on national security.

21 August (POLITICO): Germany Plans €12 Billion Long-Range Missile Arsenal to Deter Russia. Germany plans to spend nearly €12 billion on a new long-range missile arsenal designed to deter Russia, according to defence ministry documents. The program includes low-cost cruise missiles from European suppliers, U.S. Tomahawks, and future high-end cruise and hypersonic weapons developed with Britain. Initial capabilities could arrive from 2027, significantly expanding Germany's ability to strike targets deep inside enemy territory.

22 August (EURACTIV): Macron Pledges Air Defence Support as Russia-Ukraine Strikes Kill 13. France pledged additional interceptor missiles to Ukraine as intensified Russian and Ukrainian strikes killed at least 13 people across Ukraine, Russia and annexed Crimea. The attacks come amid the deadliest period for Ukrainian civilians since the early stages of Russia's invasion. France and Britain will host Coalition of the Willing allies on Monday to discuss further support for Ukraine.

Economy and Trade

2 August (POLITICO): EU Adopts Strategic Patience as Trump Escalates Trade Threats. The European Union is responding cautiously to renewed US tariff threats, avoiding immediate retaliation and emphasizing dialogue and technical negotiations. Brussels believes patience can limit Donald Trump's leverage while protecting European sovereignty over digital regulation, healthcare and competition policies. Although Washington may launch further trade investigations, EU officials prefer slower legal and technical processes, while maintaining communication and preparing safeguards against additional US tariffs.

3 August (POLITICO): EU Recasts "Made in Europe" Rules. EU governments are reshaping the Industrial Accelerator Act's "Made in Europe" rules around products and reciprocal market access, rather than broad country-based preferences. The Irish presidency's proposal gives member states greater control over which foreign products qualify for EU-equivalent treatment. It maintains European-content requirements for strategic materials while making some implementation timelines and industrial acceleration measures more flexible.

7 August (EURACTIV): Germany Shows Resilience as Industrial Production Recovers Despite Chinese Imports: Germany's industrial production rose 0.2% in June, signalling resilience despite strong Chinese imports, high energy prices and geopolitical tensions. The automotive sector led the recovery, increasing production by 3.6%, while energy-intensive industries and machinery manufacturing declined. Overall, German industrial output grew 0.7% in the second quarter compared with the previous quarter, suggesting Europe's largest economy may be stabilizing.

8 August (EURACTIV): Europe's Migration Politics Clash With Economic Realities. Recent deaths in Ceuta have intensified Europe's migration debate, prompting several EU countries to call for tougher border controls and measures against onward migration. However, the article argues that these responses misunderstand Ceuta's existing border arrangements and are economically counterproductive. It criticizes European leaders for adopting increasingly restrictive migration policies without adequately considering migrants' economic contributions or Europe's demographic and labour needs.

20 August (POLITICO): Europe Faces Growing Fallout as $40 Trillion U.S. Debt Tightens Global Capital. America's $40 trillion debt burden is pushing borrowing costs higher worldwide, intensifying competition for global capital and increasing pressure on European governments. Rising interest rates, defence spending, demographic pressures and AI investment are straining already-heavy European debt loads. France appears especially vulnerable, while Italy and Spain face political risks. Europe remains distant from a debt crisis, but investor unease is growing.

21 August (Reuters): Traders Brace for More Aggressive ECB Rate Hikes as Inflation Risks Persist. Traders increasingly expect the European Central Bank to raise interest rates as geopolitical tensions, elevated energy prices and low gas inventories threaten to keep inflation high. Markets now see a growing probability of the deposit rate reaching 3% by 2027. Stronger economic activity, fiscal spending and tight labour markets are also reducing expectations for sustained disinflation across the euro zone.

Science and Technology

19 August (EURACTIV): ECB Chief Lagarde Urges Europe to Seize AI Revolution. ECB President Christine Lagarde warned that Europe cannot afford to miss the artificial intelligence revolution after falling behind the United States and China in digital technology. She urged European companies to scale up, highlighting fragmented markets, limited access to funding and weak competition across the eurozone. Lagarde also said Europe's traditional growth model is under pressure from changing global trade, energy and security conditions.

19 August (POLITICO): Brussels Shifts Big Tech Enforcement From Heavy Fines to Compliance. The European Commission is increasingly relying on regulatory dialogue and technical compliance orders rather than large fines to police Big Tech under the Digital Markets Act. While Brussels says its goal is changing corporate behaviour, critics fear the softer approach could entrench dominant platforms. As formal enforcement declines, European companies are increasingly turning to national courts and private litigation to challenge Big Tech.

RUSSIA

Foreign Policy

3 August (Deutsche Welle): Russia-North Korea Bridge Raises Concerns Over Expanding Military Cooperation. Russia and North Korea are nearing completion of their first road bridge, officially intended to boost trade and regional connectivity. However, Ukraine and analysts suspect it could facilitate the movement of North Korean troops and weapons to Russia while reducing monitoring compared with rail transport. The project reflects deepening military ties, with concerns that Russia may provide North Korea advanced military technology.

12 August (Kremlin): Putin signals Pacific Fleet expansion amid rising regional tensions. Russian President Vladimir Putin backed plans to strengthen the Pacific Fleet, citing growing tensions, NATO-linked alliances and Japan's military buildup. During Pacific Fleet drills, Putin also warned Russia could retaliate against attempts to seize Russian vessels. The fleet commander highlighted monitoring of maritime traffic near the Kurils and readiness to inspect or detain vessels linked to "unfriendly" states.

17 August (Reuters): Russia-China Test Autonomous Trade Transport. Russia's Far East plans to test **drones and driverless trucks** for cargo transport with China to ease border congestion. A proposed drone bridge would carry electronics and other high-value goods across the Amur River, while autonomous trucks could begin trials in 2027. The projects reflect rapidly growing Russia-China trade and increasing cooperation in advanced logistics technology.

18 August (AP News): Russia and Myanmar Deepen Strategic Ties. Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted Myanmar's military-backed leader Min Aung Hlaing to strengthen political, economic and security cooperation. The countries discussed projects including nuclear power, ports and oil refineries, while Russia offered greater supplies of fuel, fertilizers and equipment. The meeting highlights Moscow's continued support for Myanmar's military government amid Western sanctions and international isolation.

21 August (Reuters): Russia Says It Is Open to New Ukraine Peace Proposals, but Sets Conditions. Russia says it is willing to consider new proposals for ending the Ukraine war, provided they reflect what Moscow calls the "realities on the ground" and align with President Vladimir Putin's objectives. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov also expressed readiness to continue dialogue with Washington on Ukraine and nuclear weapons, following stalled negotiations between Russia and the United States.

21 August (Kremlin): Putin Reviews Arctic Strategy and National Security. Russian President Vladimir Putin chaired a Security Council meeting focused on developing the Arctic Zone and strengthening national security in the region. Senior officials presented reports on Arctic strategy, while participants also discussed broader military and political matters, highlighting the Arctic's growing strategic importance to Russia.

23 August (The Guardian): Russia-UK Ties Deteriorate Further. Russia has withdrawn Ambassador Andrey Kelin from Britain after seven years without naming a replacement, amid worsening tensions over London's support for Ukraine. Moscow recently warned of "consequences" after reports that British-made drones were used by Ukraine against Russian targets. Although Russia denies planning a formal diplomatic downgrade, the ambassadorial vacancy highlights increasingly hostile bilateral relations.

Military Affairs

10 August (POLITICO): Europe Faces Patriot Missile Shortage Ahead of Ukraine's Winter. Europe is struggling to provide Ukraine with enough Patriot interceptors ahead of Russia's expected winter offensive. U.S. stocks are strained by the Iran war, while new production will arrive too late. Germany, Poland, Spain and Greece face difficult choices between supporting Kyiv and maintaining national defences. Ukraine urgently seeks PAC-2 and PAC-3 missiles while developing alternatives.

11 August (POLITICO): Russia Uses North Korean Missiles in Deadly Ukraine Strike. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia used North Korean ballistic missiles alongside other weapons in an overnight attack on Zaporizhzhia, killing six and injuring at least 19. The strikes damaged residential and civilian infrastructure and also hit areas including Kyiv, Kherson and Kharkiv. Zelenskyy warned that growing Russian-North Korean military cooperation signals further escalation.

18 August (Deutsche Welle): Ukraine and Russia Intensify Drone and Missile Strikes Amid Rising Civilian Casualties. Ukraine and Russia exchanged heavy drone and missile strikes, with Ukrainian officials reporting 10 civilians killed in Kharkiv region. Russia claimed hundreds of Ukrainian drones targeted the Moscow area, causing injuries and damage, including at a Wildberries facility. Moscow accused Britain of supplying drones used in attacks. The escalating strikes highlight growing intensity and risks to civilians amid the ongoing war.

22 August (EURACTIV): Russia Uses 'Air Shadow Fleet' to Sustain Forces in Africa. Russia is using military and private aircraft to maintain supply lines for its Africa Corps forces across the Sahel. At least 75 flights travelled to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger between January 2025 and July 2026. The network includes sanctioned and unsanctioned carriers operating through Syria, Libya, Turkey, Algeria and the UAE, with Libya becoming increasingly important to Russian military infrastructure.

Economy and Trade

4 August (Reuters): Russian Oil Product Exports Plunge 33% in July. Russia's seaborne oil product exports fell 33% month-on-month to about 3.9 million metric tons in July, as Ukrainian attacks disrupted refinery output and export restrictions tightened domestic supplies. Diesel and gasoil exports plunged 60% to 750,000 tons, while naphtha shipments fell 35%. Reduced Russian exports could further tighten fuel markets across Asia, the Middle East, Turkey and Brazil.

12 August (Reuters): Russian Inflation Slows to 0.54% in July. Russia's consumer inflation eased in July, with prices rising 0.54% month-on-month, down from 0.87% in June, according to state statistics. Annual inflation also edged lower to 5.98% from 6.02%. Consumer prices declined 0.06% in the week ending August 10, following a 0.02% fall the previous week, indicating further near-term easing in price pressures.

17 August (Reuters): **Russia Faces Second Wave of Fuel Shortages.** Fuel shortages have returned across at least 10 Russian regions after renewed Ukrainian drone attacks disrupted oil refineries. Gasoline supplies have tightened, prompting authorities to restrict sales. Despite earlier export bans, imports and eased restrictions, the crisis has resurfaced. Gasoline sales on the St. Petersburg exchange have also fallen 20% since early August, signalling renewed supply pressures.

19 August (Reuters)**: Russia's Western Oil Exports Fall 15% Below Plan.** Russia's western-port oil exports fell to about 2.3 million barrels per day in the first half of August, 15% below planned levels, traders said. Disruptions at the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk caused delays, with shipments dropping sharply. Russia has rerouted Kazakh crude exports to Novorossiysk, freeing Baltic capacity for additional Russian oil amid rising Black Sea attack risks.

Science and Technology

10 August (Reuters)**: Russia Accelerates Satellite Network and Missile Production.** Russia is rapidly expanding its Rassvet satellite network, with Ukraine estimating 16 satellites now and plans for 292 by 2027 and 924 by 2035. The system aims to rival Starlink for battlefield communications. Ukraine also says Russia has met annual Zircon and Oniks production targets early and increased missile output, intensifying pressure on Ukrainian defences.

17 August (Reuters**): Russia-China Test Autonomous Trade Transport.** Russia's Far East plans to test **drones and driverless trucks** for cargo transport with China to ease border congestion. A proposed drone bridge would carry electronics and other high-value goods across the Amur River, while autonomous trucks could begin trials in 2027. The projects reflect rapidly growing Russia-China trade and increasing cooperation in advanced logistics technology.

THE AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

Foreign Affairs

2 August (POLITICO): Trump Pauses Planned Iran Strikes, Says Deal With Tehran Is Near. US President Donald Trump announced he was cancelling planned strikes on Iran, saying Tehran and other Middle Eastern countries had agreed to the framework of a deal. Trump said the agreement would involve reopening the Strait of Hormuz and ending Iran's nuclear threat, with Israel supporting the pause. However, Iran has not confirmed any agreement, while regional leaders urged diplomacy and de-escalation.

8 August (Reuters): U.S. Partially Restarts Avocado Inspections in Michoacán. The U.S. will partially resume avocado export inspections in Mexico's Michoacán state after suspending activities over security concerns. The restart follows Mexican security commitments and increased deployment of soldiers and National Guard personnel. Michoacán is Mexico's leading avocado producer and a key U.S. supplier. Washington will continue monitoring conditions before deciding on a full resumption.

11 August (POLITICO): Trump's Middle East Influence Questioned After Netanyahu Rejects Gaza Peace Plan. U.S. allies are questioning President Donald Trump's ability to influence Israel after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a 15-point Gaza peace plan. Diplomats fear the setback could weaken the U.S.-led Board of Peace and Washington's broader credibility across the Middle East. Trump has avoided publicly confronting Netanyahu, while officials insist negotiations continue and attribute his rejection partly to domestic Israeli political considerations.

21 August (Reuters): Trump's Washington Makeover Advances as Iran War Stalls. Trump is pressing ahead with his Washington transformation, including a $400 million White House ballroom and Marine One helipad, despite legal challenges. Meanwhile, his Iran war is increasingly stalled, with Strait of Hormuz traffic disrupted, inflation and borrowing costs rising, and talks uncertain. Trump's approval has fallen to its lowest second-term level, underscoring growing political and economic pressure.

21 August (The News International): US Initiates $725 Million UN Payment Amid Mounting Arrears. The United States has begun the process of transferring $725 million to the United Nations, addressing part of its more than $4 billion in unpaid dues. The payment could provide temporary financial relief, helping the U.N. maintain operations and salaries while avoiding immediate budget cuts. However, Washington would remain substantially in arrears, with potential voting-rights consequences if further payments are not made.

22 August (The News International): Trump Calls Strait of Hormuz "American Territory" as Iran War Raises Global Energy Risks. U.S. President Donald Trump described the Strait of Hormuz as "American territory" while defending a U.S. blockade of Iranian shipping. The remarks underscore escalating tensions in the strategically vital waterway, through which about one-fifth of global seaborne oil passes. Prolonged disruption could drive energy prices higher, intensify inflation, pressure central banks, and worsen global economic risks.

22 August (Reuters): Trump Enters Midterms With Foreign Policy Setbacks. Trump heads toward the November midterms with major foreign-policy goals unresolved. The Iran war remains costly and stalled, while peace efforts in Gaza and Ukraine have made little progress. Rising fuel and grocery prices have hurt his approval, now at 33%. Although Trump cites diplomatic and military successes, critics say his coercive strategy has produced limited lasting settlements.

23 August (Reuters): Sinaloa Governor Seeks Leave Again Amid Cartel Charges. Sinaloa Governor Ruben Rocha, indicted by U.S. prosecutors on drug-trafficking, bribery and cartel-protection charges, has again requested leave just days after returning to office. His comeback sparked backlash from President Claudia Sheinbaum and Mexico's ruling Morena party. U.S. prosecutors allege Rocha aided the Sinaloa Cartel in exchange for political support and bribes; Rocha denies wrongdoing.

Military Affairs

3 August (Reuters): US Boosts Patriot and THAAD Missile Production. The U.S. has signed a $3 billion-plus deal with Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman to expand Patriot and THAAD interceptor production amid depleted stocks from conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Patriot production capacity will triple and THAAD quadruple. The agreement also adds a second PAC-3 rocket-motor supplier and increases production of ignition safety components.

17 August (Air Force Times): US Air Force seeks low-cost drones to mimic stealth threats. The U.S. Air Force wants inexpensive, expendable target drones capable of simulating threats ranging from hobby drones to stealth fighters, bombers and large UAVs. Proposed systems could replicate high speeds, radar and infrared signatures, electronic warfare and manoeuvrability. The initiative aims to provide scalable, commercially derived alternatives to costly legacy targets for testing air defences and weapons.

20 August (Air Force Times): **US Approves Potential $4.5 Billion Qatar KC-46A Sale.** The U.S. has approved a possible $4.5 billion sale of up to four KC-46A aerial refuelling aircraft to Qatar, alongside engines, defensive systems, training and logistics support. The deal aims to strengthen Qatar's air capabilities, interoperability with U.S. and allied forces, and its strategic role in Middle Eastern security. Major contractors include Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, RTX and Northrop Grumman.

Economy and Trade

22 August (Euractiv**): US, Canada Fail to Reach Trade Deal as Trump Tariffs Take Effect** US and Canadian negotiators failed to reach a trade agreement, triggering new 50% US tariffs on about $20 billion of Canadian goods, including hockey sticks and cement. Prime Minister Mark Carney vowed matching retaliation, while Washington cited Canada's refusal to accept proposed terms. Talks had made progress on steel, aluminium, autos and lumber, but major disagreements remained over concessions and retaliation.

23 August (The News International**): Trump Escalates US-Canada Trade War After Talks Collapse**. Trade talks between the United States and Canada have collapsed, prompting President Donald Trump to intensify tariff threats against Ottawa. The U.S. has imposed 50% tariffs on $20 billion of Canadian goods, while Prime Minister Mark Carney vowed retaliation. The dispute threatens deeper economic friction, potential job losses, and uncertainty surrounding the USMCA, which governs roughly $2 trillion in annual trade.

24 August (Reuters)**: Dollar Near Multi-Month Lows Amid Debt Concerns.** The U.S. dollar remained near multi-month lows as Treasury debt worries and bond-buyback plans unsettled investors. The dollar's weakness lifted the Australian and New Zealand currencies toward three-month highs, while bitcoin and gold gained sharply. Markets are watching potential Iran sanctions, Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh's speech and Bank of Japan signals for clues on monetary policy and currency direction.

Science and Technology

6 August (POLITICO): Trump Tariffs Polysilicon to Counter China. President Donald Trump announced a 15% tariff on imported polysilicon and related products, alongside minimum import prices, to reduce U.S. dependence on China. The measures target supply chains for solar panels and semiconductors, citing national-security concerns. However, they take effect only in December, after the midterm elections and a planned Trump-Xi summit, reflecting trade and political sensitivities.

21 August (Reuters): Trump Moves to Supercharge US Commercial Space Launches. U.S. President Donald Trump signed a memo targeting at least 1,000 commercial launches and re-entries annually by 2030, up from 178 in 2025. The policy calls for new federal launch sites, faster permits, improved airspace and spectrum access, and greater private-sector involvement. It also supports commercial lunar missions, aiming to return astronauts to the Moon by 2028 and develop Mars capabilities.

SOUTH AMERICA

Foreign Affairs

5 August (Reuters): Brazil Downgrades Diplomatic Ties With Argentina After Milei Attacks Lula. Brazil has downgraded diplomatic relations with Argentina after President Javier Milei again insulted Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, calling him an "ex-convict," "thief" and "corrupt." Brazil's ambassador Julio Bitelli will not return to Buenos Aires, with relations shifting to the chargé d'affaires level. The move marks a sharp deterioration between the neighbouring South American powers**.**

5 August (AP News): U.S.-Brazil Tensions Escalate Over Ambassador and Election. The Trump administration revoked the visa of Brazil's ambassador to the U.S., escalating tensions with President Lula's government ahead of Brazil's October election. Washington cited Brazil's denial of visas to U.S. officials and delays approving Trump's ambassador nominee. Brazil called the move politically motivated, accusing Washington of election interference amid wider disputes over tariffs and foreign policy.

15 August (AP News): US-Brazil Tensions Escalate. U.S.-Brazil relations are worsening as President Trump imposes tariffs of up to 37.5% on Brazilian exports and revokes Brazil's ambassador's visa. President Lula has activated Brazil's reciprocity law while rejecting U.S. election interference. The dispute is closely tied to Brazil's October election, where Lula faces Trump ally Flávio Bolsonaro, raising concerns about escalating diplomatic and economic tensions.

Military Affairs

3 August (AP News): Latin America Divides Over Trump's Expanding Influence. Colombia's new right-wing president is deepening military cooperation with Washington, with possible joint U.S.-Colombian strikes against armed groups. Meanwhile, Brazil's Lula is seeking re-election while warning against foreign interference and defending national sovereignty. Together, the developments highlight a growing regional divide between governments aligning closely with Trump and those seeking greater strategic autonomy.

7 August (Reuters): Colombia's New President Vows Tough Crime Crackdown and Fiscal Austerity. Colombia's new right-wing President Abelardo De La Espriella pledged a tough military campaign against armed groups and drug trafficking while promising fiscal austerity and economic reforms. He plans to freeze spending, simplify taxes, expand oil and gas exploration, and allow responsible fracking. His pro-market agenda has pleased investors, but high debt, a divided Congress and political opposition could limit reforms.

13 August (Reuters): US Considers Joint Strikes With Colombia Against Armed Drug Groups. The United States is considering joint military strikes with Colombia against armed groups and drug-trafficking organizations, Défense Secretary Pete Hegseth said. Colombia's new conservative government has joined a U.S.-led counter-cartel coalition and pledged tougher action against illicit crops and armed groups. Washington is expanding security cooperation, while critics warn U.S. strikes could violate international law and Colombia's sovereignty.

15 August (AP News): US-Brazil Tensions Escalate. U.S.-Brazil relations are worsening as President Trump imposes tariffs of up to 37.5% on Brazilian exports and revokes Brazil's ambassador's visa. President Lula has activated Brazil's reciprocity law while rejecting U.S. election interference. The dispute is closely tied to Brazil's October election, where Lula faces

Trump ally Flávio Bolsonaro, raising concerns about escalating diplomatic and economic tensions.

Economy & Trade

13 August (Reuters): Super El Niño to Reshape Latin America's Food and Energy Markets. A potentially record-strength El Niño could bring mixed effects across Latin America. Increased rainfall may boost soybean, corn and wheat production in Argentina, Paraguay and southern Brazil, while drought threatens northern Brazil and Amazon waterways. Heavy rains could damage infrastructure, while Panama Canal restrictions may disrupt trade. Fisheries, hydropower and Argentina's energy exports could also be significantly affected.

14 August (Reuters): Brazil Opens Retaliation Process Against US Tariffs. Brazil has begun a process that could lead to reciprocal measures against U.S. tariffs on Brazilian goods. The government called the tariffs unjustified and arbitrary and requested diplomatic consultations with U.S. trade officials. President Lula's administration is considering measures beyond tariffs, including restrictions affecting American companies and intellectual property, while seeking to protect Brazil's economy and supply chains.

21 August (The News International): Brazil's Carajás Mine Powers Global Steel Industry Amid Amazon Environmental and Social Costs. Brazil's Carajás Mine, the world's largest open-pit iron ore mine, supplies millions of tonnes of high-grade ore to global steel markets, particularly China. Operated by Vale, the mining complex has strengthened Brazil's position as a mining powerhouse while introducing advanced technologies. However, expansion has damaged ecosystems, disrupted biodiversity, and generated disputes over land, pollution, displacement, and Indigenous communities' traditional livelihoods.

21 August (Reuters): Argentina's Economic Activity Beats Expectations. Argentina's economic activity rose **2.7% year-on-year in June**, exceeding analysts' 1.9% forecast and May's 0.4% growth. Fishing, mining and quarrying led the expansion, with 12 of 15 sectors recording gains. President Javier Milei's government continues cutting public spending to control inflation while promoting recovery in industry, consumer spending and construction.

Science & Technology

21 August (AP News): Brazil's Rare Earth Boom Draws Foreign Investment, Raises Environmental Risks. Brazil, home to the world's second-largest rare earth reserves, is attracting major U.S., Australian and Canadian investment as countries seek alternatives to China. Exploration applications have surged, but at least a quarter overlap protected or Indigenous areas, raising concerns over pollution, deforestation and water supplies. Brazil faces pressure to expand mining while ensuring domestic processing and protecting environmental and national interests.

21 August (Reuters): Brazil Expands AI Supercomputing Push. Brazil announced $444 million in AI investments, dividing projects between Chinese and U.S. companies. Huawei and iFlytek will support a major supercomputing project in Rio de Janeiro, while Nvidia is expected to supply another powerful system. The strategy aims to strengthen Brazil's technological sovereignty, reduce dependence on any single country, and balance its relationships with China and the United States.

About the Author

Khushboo Sen Dhuruv is currently serving as Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. She completed her Ph.D. and M.Phil. from the Centre for European Studies, School of International Studies , Jawaharlal Nehru University. She also holds a Master's degree in Politics (specialization in International Relations), JNU, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, University of Delhi. Her academic and research interests focus on Europe, EU Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, Russia, Transatlantic Partnership, and India-EU relations. Through her work, she engages with contemporary geopolitical and strategic issues shaping European and global affairs.