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Gulf Confrontation Threatens to Ignite a Wider Regional War

US strikes on Iran's Qeshm Island on 17 November have triggered a widening Iranian response, with attacks targeting US-linked military installations in Kuwait and Bahrain on 18 November. Kuwait reported drone attacks against Ali Al Salem Air Base, while Bahrain said it intercepted further Iranian strikes. The confrontation is increasingly threatening Gulf states that host American military infrastructure who face the consequences of retaliation. Washington's military campaign is now exposing again its client statelets extending the conflict across a region vital to global energy supplies. Shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, rising oil prices and mounting military risks expose the economic consequences of escalation.

Infrastructure Warfare Intensifies Before Winter

Russian attacks on Kyiv's bridges and infrastructure have intensified, threatening transport networks and civilian services as Ukraine approaches another winter of energy insecurity. Ukraine has retaliated with a major operation against the Kerch Bridge, the strategic link connecting Russia with occupied Crimea. Ukrainian strikes on 16 and 17 November caused severe damage to the road section, collapsing a vital part of the structure and halting traffic. Kyiv describes the operation as retaliation for Russian infrastructure attacks and a carefully prepared effort against Russian military logistics. Both sides are increasingly targeting infrastructure with consequences extending beyond immediate military objectives. Bridges, energy facilities and transport corridors are becoming instruments of attrition, leaving civilian populations exposed to disruption while the prospect of negotiations remains remote. UK and European leaders gloat over the Kerch bridge attack and remain confident that still the only people to pay the price will be their Ukrainian proxies.

Three-Power Diplomacy Challenges the Western-Led Order

Donald Trump, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin are preparing for a trilateral meeting in Shenzhen on 19 November, following their arrival at the Pacific APEC gathering, which marginalizes Europe. Xi and Putin have already criticised Western sanctions and protectionism, while Trump is expected to discuss trade, Ukraine, Iran and strategic security. The meeting is particularly significant because it brings Washington, Moscow and Beijing into direct discussion at a time when Western alliances face growing geopolitical and economic pressures. The gathering illustrates the continuation of a more transactional international order, where influence increasingly depends on strategic bargaining rather than Western claims to exclusive diplomatic leadership.

Rohingya Genocide Case Puts International Justice to the Test

The International Court of Justice will deliver its judgment on 19 November in the Gambia's genocide case against Myanmar, a landmark proceeding over the military's

2017 campaign against the Rohingya minority. More than 700,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh following atrocities involving killings, sexual violence and the destruction of villages. The case tests whether the court can establish Myanmar's responsibility under the Genocide Convention and whether international law can deliver meaningful accountability for victims of mass persecution. Eleven countries have intervened in the proceedings, reflecting the wider significance of the judgment. However, the ICJ has no independent enforcement mechanism, leaving implementation dependent on political pressure and potentially the Security Council, where veto powers can obstruct action. Legal recognition may prove historic, but justice remains constrained by geopolitical realities as the genocide against Gaza continues despite ICJ rulings.

Britain Tries to Reverse the Political Damage of Brexit

Britain and the European Union are preparing a renewed cooperation package ahead of their 20 November summit, covering trade, food standards, energy, defence and youth mobility. Prime Minister Andy Burnham has acknowledged that Brexit failed to deliver its promised economic benefits and is seeking closer practical relations without formally reopening membership. Proposed agreements could reduce trade barriers, link carbon markets and improve access to European opportunities for younger Britons. Yet the negotiations reveal the enduring contradictions of Brexit. Britain wants the economic advantages of European integration while retaining political distance from the institutions and obligations that underpin it. Disputes over migration, student fees, industrial policy and access to EU programmes remain unresolved.

Europe's AI Boom Carries Growing Financial Risks

The European Central Bank warned on 18 November that soaring artificial intelligence valuations, mounting government debt and geopolitical tensions are increasing financial stability risks across the eurozone. The bank cautioned that ambitious earnings expectations surrounding AI companies leave markets vulnerable to a sharp correction, particularly as investment in data centres and computing infrastructure increasingly relies on borrowing. The expansion of interconnected financing arrangements between technology companies, AI developers and chip suppliers could amplify losses if projected revenues fail to materialise. Europe's exposure extends beyond technology markets, with fiscal pressures and rising borrowing costs adding further vulnerabilities, particularly in heavily indebted economies such as France. While the ECB considers banks generally resilient, its warning exposes the contradictions of another capitalist investment boom increasingly driven by speculative expectations rather than guaranteed productivity gains.