



Geopolitical Briefing – Week Ending 13 September 2026

Middle East: Regional Escalation and Pressure on Energy Corridors

Strait of Hormuz: Talks Postponed as Ships Come Under Attack

On 13 September, Oman announced the postponement of the regional meeting on the management of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, which had been scheduled to take place on Monday in Muscat. Oman's Foreign Minister said the decision had been taken "in the common interest", while Iranian officials said the postponement had come "at the request of some countries in the region".

Saudi Arabia also proposed amendments to the agreement between Iran and Oman, amid concerns that the agreement could have long-term implications for navigation through the strait and affect other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

On the same day, an Iranian merchant vessel was struck by an unidentified flying object near Qeshm Island, killing one person and injuring three others. The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) also reported an attack on another vessel in the strait.

These developments increase the risk of a prolonged disruption to one of the world's most important energy routes.

Saudi Arabia: East-West Pipeline Attacked from Iraqi Territory

The Iraqi government confirmed that the drone attack against Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline was launched from Maysan province in Iraq.

The Iraqi Prime Minister ordered an investigation and dismissed the commander of the province's operations headquarters. Iraq also closed two border crossings with Iran.

Saudi Arabia had already shut down the pipeline as a precautionary measure on Friday. The infrastructure has the capacity to transport between 4 and 5 million barrels of oil per day, equivalent to approximately 4–5% of global supply.

The incident reinforces concerns that Iraqi territory is becoming a channel through which the confrontation between Iran, the United States and the Arab Gulf states is spreading.

Yemen: Houthis Consolidate Control of the Red Sea Coast

The Houthi rebels have completed their takeover of Yemen's Red Sea coastline after capturing the port city of Mocha and the strategically important island of Perim. Their positions are now reportedly only around 20 kilometres from the African coast.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said that at least 76,000 people have fled their homes since July, while more than 2,000 Yemenis have arrived in Djibouti.

Houthi forces also claimed to have launched drones and missiles against a military base in Saudi Arabia's Najran region.

Control of Perim is particularly significant because of its strategic position near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, one of the main maritime routes connecting the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean.

Oil Prices: Markets React to Growing Supply Risks

The combination of tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, the situation in the Red Sea and the attack on Saudi oil infrastructure triggered another sharp rise in crude prices.

Brent crude rose 2.8% to \$107.54 per barrel, while WTI increased 2.9% to \$102.93.

The previous week, oil prices had already risen by 8%, breaking above \$100 per barrel for the first time since July.

Three major Middle Eastern energy corridors are therefore under simultaneous pressure: the Strait of Hormuz; the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb corridor; and Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline.

This raises the risk of further disruption to global energy supplies and additional inflationary pressure.

Middle East and Gaza: The Conflict Spreads

Gaza: Casualties Continue Despite the Ceasefire

Although the most intense fighting since the October 2025 ceasefire has subsided, Israeli air strikes continue.

According to figures from Gaza's Ministry of Health, 1,369 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire began. On 12 September, an Israeli military strike targeted a vehicle in Gaza City, killing two people.

The continuation of these attacks means that Gaza remains one of the central flashpoints in the international crisis.

The Conflict Is Increasingly Spreading Towards Iraq and the Gulf

The sequence of events recorded during the week points to a progressive regionalisation of the conflict.

Iraq is emerging as a key link between Iran and the Gulf states, while Yemen and the Houthis are projecting the crisis towards the Red Sea and international shipping routes.

The launch of an attack on Saudi infrastructure from Iraqi territory, followed by Baghdad's decision to close border crossings with Iran, illustrates the growing pressure on Iraq to prevent its territory from being used as a platform for operations against Gulf states.



BRICS: Political Coordination Amid Internal Divisions

The 18th BRICS Summit and the New Delhi Declaration

The 18th BRICS Summit was held in New Delhi from 12 to 13 September under India's rotating presidency and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Participating leaders adopted the "New Delhi Declaration" by consensus, reaffirming their commitment to more inclusive global governance and multilateralism.

The declaration calls for international disputes to be resolved peacefully through dialogue, consultation and diplomacy; expresses "deep concern" over the escalation of tensions in the Middle East; urges all parties to exercise "maximum restraint"; and raises concerns about the proliferation of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures.

The declaration also condemns "deliberate attacks" against civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities subject to IAEA safeguards. This wording has been interpreted as an indirect criticism of US and Israeli attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities.

China to Assume BRICS Presidency in 2027

China will assume the BRICS presidency in 2027 and host the 19th BRICS Summit.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said that the war in the Middle East does not serve the common interests of the international community and called for a solution based on dialogue and diplomacy.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, highlighted the global weight of the bloc, stating that BRICS countries account for approximately one-third of the world's land area, 40% of global GDP and nearly half of the world's population.

Iran Calls for Concrete Measures

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called on BRICS countries to adopt “concrete measures” against unilateral sanctions.

He also argued that regional security should be guaranteed by the countries of the region themselves, stating: “We do not need a policeman.”

Pezeshkian additionally proposed more independent mechanisms for global economic governance, including greater use of local currencies and alternative payment mechanisms.

Coordination Capacity, but Clear Limits

The adoption of a joint declaration in a context of intense tensions between Iran and the Arab Gulf states demonstrates that BRICS retains the ability to reach diplomatic consensus.

However, the relatively cautious language calling for “maximum restraint” also reflects the deep differences among its members over specific conflicts.

The main political signal is therefore twofold: **BRICS retains significant coordination capacity, but still faces difficulties in translating that coordination into a common operational response to specific regional crises.**

United Kingdom: Economic Pressure and Domestic Challenges

Healey Places Fiscal Discipline and Growth at the Centre of Economic Policy

On 7 September, British Chancellor John Healey delivered his first major economic policy speech since taking office at a manufacturing centre in Coventry.

Healey said fiscal discipline would be “the foundation” upon which the government would deliver its commitments and identified boosting economic growth, which he described as “fragile”, as a central priority.

He acknowledged that the UK’s borrowing costs are “too high”, but refused to give advance indications of possible tax rises or spending cuts ahead of the Budget scheduled for 28 October.

Among the main measures announced were a £150 million “Expansion Fund” to support businesses in northern England and the continuation of the roadmap for fiscal devolution. This would allow regions to retain business-rate revenues and partially replace income-tax revenues from 2028.

Jaguar Land Rover Puts Growth Narrative to the Test

The credibility of this economic strategy was immediately challenged when Jaguar Land Rover announced plans to cut up to 4,000 jobs, almost simultaneously with Healey's speech and only a few miles from Coventry.

The retail and hospitality sectors have also lost more than 100,000 jobs over the past year.

The opposition seized on the announcement. Shadow Chancellor Andrew Griffiths accused Healey of increasingly resembling a continuation of Reeves, while Reform UK's Robert Jenrick described the speech as "terrible" and argued that it would change nothing.

The main challenge for the Labour government is therefore to turn its promise of fiscal discipline and devolution into tangible economic growth and job creation.

United Kingdom: Social Tensions, Immigration and Infrastructure

Portsmouth: Clashes Between Protesters

On 12 September, rival demonstrations took place in central Portsmouth between anti-immigration protesters and demonstrators opposing racism.

Hundreds of people took part on both sides. Police kept the groups apart and made three arrests.

The demonstrations followed disturbances on 6 September at the local waterfront, linked to the arrival of migrants through the English Channel and subsequent episodes of violence and damage to police and coastguard vehicles.

Police also enforced new provisions restricting the wearing of face coverings during certain demonstrations. Authorities said the measure applies equally to all groups and is intended to prevent intimidation and violence rather than restrict the right to peaceful assembly.

The events in Portsmouth reflect growing political and social sensitivity around immigration, particularly in southern English coastal towns such as Portsmouth and Dover.

NATS Failure: Another Critical Infrastructure Problem

A major failure in the UK air traffic control system operated by NATS led to the cancellation of approximately 2,000 flights, left hundreds of thousands of passengers stranded and caused millions of pounds in losses for airlines.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander gave NATS chief executive Martin Rolf one week to provide a report on the incident.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will also conduct an independent investigation, with its report expected within six months.

This is the second major NATS disruption in three years. Ryanair chief executive Michael O’Leary compared the episode to the 2023 incident and again called for Rolf’s resignation.

The incident adds further pressure on the government over infrastructure and the resilience of critical services.

United Kingdom: New Diplomatic Frictions

Trump and Irish Unification

During his visit to Ireland, US President Donald Trump said he would “love to see” the unification of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The comments immediately provoked a reaction in the United Kingdom.

Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch criticised Trump for “speaking without thinking” and stressed that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom.

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage also rejected the remarks and defended Northern Ireland’s place within the UK.

The episode introduces another source of tension into London-Washington relations and brings the constitutional question of Northern Ireland back to the centre of British political debate.

UK-China Relations: An Attempt to Stabilise Bilateral Ties

On 8 September, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a telephone conversation with British Prime Minister Burnham at the latter’s request.

Xi said that China and the UK are comprehensive strategic partners whose common interests outweigh their differences, and called for greater mutual trust and expanded cooperation.

Burnham expressed the UK’s willingness to maintain continuity in its China policy, develop a stable long-term strategic partnership and increase high-level exchanges.

At the same time, he reaffirmed that Britain’s position on Taiwan had not changed.

The conversation reflects London’s attempt to maintain channels of dialogue with Beijing despite existing differences over strategic and security issues.

Argentina and the UK: Tensions over the Falklands/Malvinas

According to the Argentine newspaper *La Corneta*, President Javier Milei reportedly cancelled a planned visit to the United Kingdom in October.

The decision came after Prime Minister Burnham said he would firmly defend the British position regarding the Falkland Islands/Malvinas.

The Milei government has repeatedly reiterated its position on sovereignty over the islands, introducing another source of diplomatic friction between Buenos Aires and London.



Key Strategic Signals of the Week

The Middle East Conflict Is Becoming Increasingly Regional

The week's developments demonstrate that the conflict is expanding beyond the territories directly involved.

Iraq is emerging as a connecting point between Iran and the Gulf states, while Yemen and the Houthis are extending the crisis towards the Red Sea and international shipping routes.

Three Energy Corridors Are Under Simultaneous Pressure

The Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea/Bab el-Mandeb corridor and Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline are facing different levels of risk.

The simultaneous pressure on these routes helps explain the strong reaction in oil markets and increases the possibility that further regional escalation could have global economic consequences.

BRICS Demonstrates Coordination Capacity, but Not Conflict-Resolution Capacity

The New Delhi Declaration demonstrates that BRICS can reach diplomatic consensus even amid significant divisions among its members.

However, those internal differences limit the bloc's ability to adopt stronger joint responses to specific conflicts.

Iraq Is Becoming a Strategic Point for the Spread of the Conflict

The use of Iraqi territory to launch attacks against Saudi Arabia and Baghdad's subsequent response demonstrate the increasing difficulty for Iraq to remain outside the regional confrontation.

Pressure on the Iraqi government is likely to increase if cross-border operations continue.

The British Government Faces Three Simultaneous Domestic Pressures

The Labour government is facing pressure on the economic, social and infrastructure fronts.

Weak growth, high borrowing costs and job losses are combining with polarisation over immigration and renewed concerns over the resilience of critical services such as air traffic control.

These challenges are compounded by diplomatic tensions involving Northern Ireland, China and Argentina.

The UK Economic Growth Narrative Faces a Credibility Test

Healey is attempting to build a strategy based on **fiscal discipline, growth and regional devolution**. However, Jaguar Land Rover's job cuts and weakness in the labour market highlight the gap between the government's stated objectives and immediate economic realities.

The 28 October Budget will therefore be a decisive moment in assessing the credibility of this strategy.



Overall Assessment

The week ending 13 September was dominated by the **intensification and regionalisation of the Middle East crisis**, with growing implications for global energy security.

Simultaneous pressure on the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb and Saudi oil infrastructure has pushed crude prices above \$100 per barrel and increased the risk that the crisis could develop into a broader global economic problem.

At the same time, the BRICS summit demonstrated that emerging powers retain the ability to build diplomatic consensus, although internal differences limit the possibility of stronger collective responses.

In the United Kingdom, the Labour government faces a particularly complex combination of **economic weakness, social tensions, infrastructure problems and diplomatic friction**. Its stated priority of economic growth will be tested by concrete signs of employment weakness, while immigration continues to fuel political polarisation.

Overall, the main trend of the week is the **growing interconnection between regional security, energy, trade and domestic politics**: a conflict centred in the Middle East is increasingly generating simultaneous effects on energy markets, maritime routes, international relations and the political stability of third countries.

SolidarioGB: Communication and International Solidarity

Radio Solidario GB: A Call to the Community

SolidarioGB has launched a community appeal to develop **Radio Solidario GB**, a new digital communication initiative designed to strengthen the organisation's presence in the online media environment.

The project is currently in development and is seeking volunteers to contribute to editorial work, translation, audio and video production, and website content management.

The initiative represents a further step in SolidarioGB's communications strategy, combining its work in solidarity with Latin America with independent tools for producing and distributing information.

New Analysis on the ELN

SolidarioGB has also published an analysis of Colombia's National Liberation Army (ELN), examining the organisation's evolution, capacity for survival and the difficulties faced by the Colombian state in eliminating it after decades of conflict.

The publication forms part of SolidarioGB's ongoing editorial focus on Latin American political and social developments, particularly conflicts, political movements and struggles for sovereignty.

Organisational and Communications Development

The latest activities demonstrate two complementary strands of SolidarioGB's work: **strengthening its own communications infrastructure through Radio Solidario GB**, while continuing to produce political analysis and international solidarity content.

The organisation also maintains activities and calls related to Latin American solidarity, the International Antifascist movement and the campaign surrounding the centenary of Ernesto Che Guevara in 2028.