

SHENZHEN WEEK: TRUMP THREATENS MEXICO AND CUBA, SHEINBAUM TRAVELS TO BEIJING AND IRAN REMAINS IN THE STRAIT

Geopolitical and Current Affairs Bulletin | Monday, 16 November 2026

Coverage: 9 to 15 November. Press time: Monday 16, around midday (GMT). Events may develop over the course of the day.

Between 500 and 600 people are walking through Arriaga, Chiapas, according to Claudia Sheinbaum's estimate, and another caravan is approaching from Honduras. On Thursday 12, Donald Trump threatened to "immediately" double tariffs on all of Mexico if it does not stop them. Sheinbaum responded that no caravan has returned or reached the northern border during Trump's second term (*Mexico News Daily*, *Expansión*). That is the mechanism of the week: a decision on migrants is turned into a tariff on an entire economy.

Two calendars shape these days: the aftermath of the US midterm elections on 3 November and the APEC summit in Shenzhen (18 and 19), where Trump, Xi Jinping and, according to US officials, Vladimir Putin are set to hold their first trilateral meeting.

LATIN AMERICA: TARIFFS, THREATS AND A ROADMAP

- **Mexico: between Washington and Beijing.** Trade negotiations with the US remain open, with steel, aluminium and automobiles still unresolved, despite both governments describing them as "very close" at the end of October. On Thursday 12, Sheinbaum left the door open to meeting Trump in December, without a finalised agreement, and said she would "probably" see him at the G20 summit in Florida. This Monday she landed in Shenzhen for APEC: she will meet Xi and present Plan Mexico to business leaders. She maintains the meeting will not complicate negotiations with Washington. She arrives with Mexican tariffs of up to 50% on Chinese imports, which Beijing criticises and Mexico defends as protection for its domestic industry (*Anadolu*). One figure matters to both sides: according to Banxico, Mexico's trade deficit with China continued to grow in 2026



(*Estrella Digital*). Economic sovereignty is not measured solely against Washington; it is also measured against the dependencies one chooses.

- **Cuba: a deadline pronounced on the radio.** On Monday 9, Trump said Cuba "will fall pretty soon" and that the US would help "in humanitarian terms". On Thursday 12, in an interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt, he said he would "certainly" consider the use of military force and wants to "have Cuba resolved" before leaving office in 2029; *Politico* notes this is the first time he has set a deadline (*Al Jazeera*). Washington announced another round of sanctions this month against ten individuals and entities linked to the government, the military and the oil sector, and maintains an arrest warrant against Raúl Castro. The oil blockade reaches its tenth month, accompanied by repeated nationwide blackouts and a food crisis. On the Cuban side, Díaz-Canel states that the island is preparing to repel aggression, with weekly drills and the Moncada-2026 military exercises, and demands an end to the blockade (*Granma*, cited by *RBC-Ukraine*; aligned and secondary source). Previously, Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío stated that contacts with the US are making no progress while Washington imposes new measures every few weeks (*Prensa Latina*, aligned source). A real-world detail: a sugar producer told Díaz-Canel that reviving the sector will take at least five years (*CiberCuba*, exile outlet). We continue without defending any government: we demand that a threat of force against a sovereign state be treated as such.

- **Venezuela: the calendar is written in Washington.** On 9 November, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that there will be new Supreme Court justices in mid-December and, shortly thereafter, a new National Electoral Council. Following that, acting president Delcy Rodríguez should declare the presidency vacant, which, according to a US official, would trigger a six-month window to call elections (*EFE*, *Infobae*). *La Silla Vacía* estimates this would push any vote to July 2027 at the earliest. On Friday 13, talks resumed with a section of the opposition under US auspices, ongoing since August; María Corina Machado, who returned to Venezuela on 25 October after ten months in exile, is not invited, though she backs the roadmap (*AFP*, *France 24*). On 29 October, Rodríguez promised elections under a "renovated" electoral authority without giving a



date. On 10 November, the National Assembly passed a reform to the electricity supply law (*AFP*), a key step towards stabilising a grid crippled by years of blackouts and opening space for private and foreign investment in critical infrastructure as part of the economic de-escalation with Washington. The question of the week: who decides when Venezuela votes?

- **Ecuador: a curfew ends; the state of emergency continues.** The curfew running from 1 to 10 November expired, and on the 11th President Daniel Noboa signed Decree 532, renewing the state of emergency for 30 days across eight provinces: El Oro, Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí, Pichincha, Santa Elena, Esmeraldas and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas. It maintains the suspension of the inviolability of the home and correspondence. Since January 2024, his government has issued 26 states of emergency against organised crime (*Teleamazonas*). The official report annexed to the decree records 328 violent incidents between 14 October and 4 November, including at least 88 armed attacks in public spaces and 32 police officers killed (*Primicias*). Noboa claims homicides dropped by 48% during the November curfew (*El Universo*); this is a government figure, not independently verified.

UN AND CLIMATE: COP31, A DIVIDED WEEK

The UN climate conference (COP31) is taking place in Antalya, Turkey, from 9 to 20 November, co-hosted by Türkiye and Australia. At the close of the first week, António Guterres called for an "immediate and drastic" cut in emissions, while major fossil fuel producers and consumers resist setting new targets (*Reuters*). The Trump administration has not sent officials, though a US congressional delegation is attending (*AFP*). From Latin America, the AILAC alliance warned of "Super El Niño" and the resulting droughts and floods across Andean water systems (*Earth Negotiations Bulletin*). Brazil is pushing roadmaps to phase out fossil fuels (*Rio Times*).



US: AFTER THE POLLS

According to AP's count at 11:08 GMT on 16 November, in the House of Representatives the Democrats have won 256 seats and the Republicans 169; 10 seats remain uncalled in that tally. In the Senate, at 11:07 GMT, AP shows the Democrats with 55 seats (21 won in this election and 34 not up for re-election, including 2 independents who caucus with them) and the Republicans with 44, with 1 seat still undecided. The labels "Majority reached" and "Control reached" next to the Democrats are not formal AP race calls, though the numerical advantage already gives them control of both chambers. These figures may have shifted since.

In practice, this legislative reversal leaves Trump without a blank cheque for the second half of his term: a Democratic Congress will be able to block appointments, scrutinise his tariff policy and condition defence appropriations sustaining the escalation against Iran. *Reuters* attributes the Republican defeat, in part, to the unpopularity of the Iran war, and notes that Trump downplays the need for a diplomatic breakthrough. *Al Jazeera* reported on 6 November the appointment of Stephen Miller as the new White House Chief of Staff.

MIDDLE EAST: BAHRAIN, BAB EL-MANDEB AND GAZA

- **Iran and the Gulf: more fronts, same encirclement.** The open conflict this year between Washington and Tehran—which led the US to impose a naval blockade on Iranian ports in the spring and deploy a massive naval and air force to the region—has gained new flashpoints. On 14 and 15 November, the Revolutionary Guard claimed to have attacked a US radar at the al-Riffa airbase in Bahrain with drones in response to "hostile actions" by the US. Bahrain stated it intercepted the drones, issued its first alerts since September and held Iran responsible (*Reuters*, *CNBC*; CTP-ISW analysis). The Guard also claims two or three oil tankers struck mines in Hormuz; *Reuters* could not verify this, and CTP-ISW has seen no indication that Iran has re-mined the southern route. UKMTO reported a tanker attacked near the strait, with the crew safe. In Yemen, Saudi-backed forces retreated before the Houthis, who seized control of Bab el-Mandeb. Trump said he might refrain from attacking Iran if there are no further provocations, but would



maintain the naval blockade (*Reuters*). A third US aircraft carrier has arrived in the region. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will visit Oman on Tuesday. According to *Reuters*, crude oil is leaving the Gulf at near pre-war levels. Iran refuses to halt enrichment (*Times of Israel*).

- **Gaza: a "ceasefire" with daily fatalities.** On Saturday 14, a drone strike killed two people in Jabaliya; that afternoon a vigil was held for 70 people whose remains were recently recovered from the rubble (*AP*). Gaza's Ministry of Health counts at least 1,600 deaths since the ceasefire (*AP*), and 1,643 dead and 5,964 injured up to Saturday (*Anadolu*, aligned source); the total death toll of the war exceeds 74,600. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, and states that women and children account for roughly half of the dead (*AP*). Türkiye and 17 other countries condemned an attack on a hospital in Gaza (*Anadolu*).

- **Israel: Netanyahu loses the initiative.** On 8 November, President Isaac Herzog tasked Gadi Eisenkot with forming a government: he secured the backing of 67 of the 120 Knesset members, including all 19 from the Arab alliances, compared to 46 for Netanyahu. He has 28 days, extendable by 14, and said he is open to including Netanyahu in his coalition. The Knesset convened on 10 November, with the opposition moving to replace the parliamentary speaker (*Anadolu*, *Saudi Gazette*). Herzog warned of uncertainty following the US midterms, which according to *Al Jazeera* brought victories for figures critical of Israel and US military support.

CHINA–US–RUSSIA: SHENZHEN, NEXT WEEK

The White House confirmed on 13 November that Trump will attend APEC. On Wednesday 18 he will join the leaders' dinner; on Thursday 19 he will hold a bilateral meeting with Xi over a working lunch, followed—according to US officials cited by *ABC News*—by the first trilateral meeting of the three leaders with Putin. Trump says he wants to discuss denuclearisation. We have found no confirmation of the trilateral meeting from Beijing or Moscow in the sources consulted. For Europe and the United



Kingdom, the mere prospect of a three-way photo-op in Shenzhen sets off alarm bells over the future of the war in Ukraine should Washington and Moscow negotiate over the heads of Kyiv and European capitals; meanwhile, Keir Starmer's government in London faces pressure to maintain its pledge not to join the US naval blockade in Hormuz while the Houthi capture of Bab el-Mandeb once again threatens British shipping lanes.

The trade truce expires on 10 January 2027. For Beijing, APEC is a showcase: *Xinhua* notes it is the third time China has hosted the summit and the first in 12 years (aligned source). For Latin America, Shenzhen is a dual stage: Sheinbaum seeks to safeguard Plan Mexico with Xi without breaking with Washington; meanwhile, other regional partners in the forum—such as José Antonio Kast's Chile, attempting to balance its political alignment with Trump against its commercial reliance on China for copper and lithium, and Peru, consolidating its role as a Pacific logistics hub following the launch of the Chancay port—arrive with their own balancing acts between the two powers.

BOX: WHAT IS VERIFIABLE AND WHAT IS NARRATIVE

- **Corroborated by independent sources:** the mandate given to Eisenkot (67 against 46); Ecuador's Decree 532; the APEC schedule and Trump's attendance confirmed by the White House; AP's vote tallies as of 16 November; Sheinbaum's arrival in Shenzhen; COP31 dates and agenda; Trump's statements on Cuba, which are his own and on the public record.

- **Single-party claims, not independently verified:** that two or three tankers hit mines (Revolutionary Guard; *Reuters* couldn't verify); that the strike on al-Riffa was the "second phase" of an Iranian response (Revolutionary Guard; Bahrain confirms interception); that homicides fell by 48% during the curfew (Noboa); that no caravan has reached the northern border (Sheinbaum); that Cuba is preparing to repel an invasion (Díaz-Canel); that Venezuela will hold elections under a "renovated" authority (Venezuelan government, no date given); the Trump–Xi–Putin trilateral, cited by US officials and unconfirmed by Beijing or Moscow in the sources reviewed; Gaza death tolls from the Ministry of Health, which do not separate civilians from combatants.



CIVIC AND LEGAL NOTE

- **Threat of force against Cuba.** Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Anyone invoking this rule must apply it equally to all: Cuba, Iran, Venezuela. The only exceptions are self-defence and Security Council authorisation.

- **Tariffs and migration.** Conditioning tariffs on another state's migration policy merges trade and migration into a single instrument of coercion. It remains to be seen how this squares with the USMCA (T-MEC), whose review, according to *Estrella Digital*, has been postponed to 2027.

- **Venezuela: vacancy and deadlines.** The six-month timeline is cited by a US official; its constitutional fit falls to be interpreted by the Supreme Court which, according to Rubio, is due to be overhauled in December—the very body the roadmap seeks to replace.

- **Ecuador.** Decree 532 suspends the inviolability of the home and correspondence. States of emergency are subject to review by the Constitutional Court; citizens can consult the decree and its exemptions via official channels.

- **Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb.** The law of the sea recognises transit passage through international straits (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982). The US naval blockade of Iranian ports and Iranian claims of controlling shipping lanes remain matters of legal dispute; the control of Bab el-Mandeb by a militia poses the same legal problem.

- **Chile.** The Communist Party of Chile Proletarian Action celebrated its 47th founding anniversary on 8 November, with celebrations culminating around 28 November.

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Argentina. The Liberation Party publishes its monthly bulletin, which can be downloaded here: Telegram Link. (to open CRTL + clic).

WHAT YOU CAN DO THIS WEEK

- If you are in the United Kingdom, write to your Member of Parliament (MP) and ask what position the British government takes on threats of force against Cuba, and whether Keir Starmer's April commitment—that the UK would not join the US blockade of Hormuz—still holds.

- Ask your MP what climate finance commitments the UK brought to COP31 and how they are allocated among countries in the Global South.

- Donate to humanitarian organisations with a verifiable on-the-ground presence in Gaza and Yemen.

- Connect with Latin American diaspora groups in the UK and share this bulletin with them.

- Subscribe to our organisation Solidariogb and donate your time or financial resources.

- Whenever you read a war casualty figure, ask who issued it and who verified it.

CLOSING THESES

1. Pressure on Latin America is enforced with deadlines: a caravan translates into a tariff, Cuba into a "before I leave office" ultimatum, Venezuela into a roadmap tied to a Supreme Court reshuffle.



2. Latin America is negotiating at two tables at once—Washington and Beijing—and Shenzhen week puts this on full display.

3. Useful solidarity means demanding verifiable facts and respect for the UN Charter for all, without acting as a spokesperson for any state.

SolidarioGB Editorial Team