

Xi's Washington Visit

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Washington on September 23 for a three-day state visit, meeting President Donald Trump at the White House on September 24 as both governments seek to stabilise an increasingly volatile US-China relationship. Trump described Xi as a “truly great friend”, while Xi called for the two countries to manage their differences and maintain what he described as healthy competition. The talks cover trade, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, Taiwan and the war in Iran. The meeting comes after years of escalating tariffs, technology restrictions and competition over strategic supply chains. Washington wants to constrain China's strategic rise while simultaneously needing Chinese cooperation on trade and global economic stability. Beijing, meanwhile, continues to strengthen its economic relationships across Asia, the Global South and Europe, giving it alternatives to exclusive dependence on the American market. The summit demonstrates that even amid intensifying strategic rivalry, neither side can easily separate its interests from the other.

The ICC Dispute at the UN General Assembly

Donald Trump used his UNGA address to urge every ICC member to withdraw immediately, calling the court an “out-of-control” and illegitimate institution. The administration argues that the ICC lacks authority over citizens of non-members such as the US and the Jewish entity and is preparing sanctions against the institution that could restrict access to banking, software, insurance and other services. The dispute centres on ICC investigations into alleged war crimes committed by American forces in Afghanistan and warrants for genocidal leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu, over crimes in Gaza. The Jewish entity rejects the allegations and the court’s jurisdiction. Washington has already sanctioned more than a dozen ICC personnel, including the court’s President Tomoko Akane and roughly half its sitting judges. Most countries continue to express support for the ICC, but accept to be impotent in the face of US bullying, but when Netanyahu stood up to spoke dozens of delegates walked out of the UN assembly in protest. France and Canada delivered harsh condemnations about US attacks on the ICC and the genocide campaign of the Jewish entity in Gaza, although they hypocritically permitted Netanyahu to fly over their territories on route to the UNGA.

Trump's Diesel Price Policy

US President Trump said in desperation on September 22 that he supported restricting US diesel exports in an attempt to bring down rapidly rising domestic fuel prices. US diesel had reached about \$6.53 a gallon by September 21, compared with roughly \$3.50 in January, putting substantial pressure on trucking, agriculture and other fuel-intensive sectors. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the administration was examining the proposal, but Energy Secretary Chris Wright subsequently warned that a straightforward export ban would not work and could increase prices for other fuels by disrupting refinery economics. The White House has since denied that it was preparing a blanket 90-day export ban, saying officials were instead examining measures to increase domestic diesel availability.

Canada’s Diplomatic Pivot Away From Total Dependence Upon the US Accelerates

Canada’s diplomatic shift away from overwhelming dependence on the US has accelerated sharply over the past week. On September 16, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed making Canada the European Union’s first “associate member”, an unprecedented arrangement intended to deepen cooperation in defence, energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence and other strategic sectors. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney embraced the proposal during his September 17 address to the European Parliament, arguing that Canada and Europe should strengthen their ability to protect their markets, democratic institutions and sovereignty. The initiative followed Carney's earlier call for a “unique alliance” with Europe, although Ottawa initially stressed that it was not seeking conventional EU membership. Donald Trump dismissed the proposed relationship as “laughable” and threatened potentially heavy tariffs against Europe if closer EU-Canadian integration was regarded as hostile to US interests. The proposed EU arrangement remains highly uncertain. “Associate membership” has no established EU legal precedent, and any formal agreement would require negotiations and the consent of all 27 member states.