GOP infighting begins; Civil-society groups propose delaying fight over Iran war until 2027; Saudi-Syria defense deal

Drop Site Daily: November 5, 2026

Iran

· **Vance blames Republican election losses on Iran war; Iran's Ghalibaf accuses U.S. of putting Israel first:** The Iran war was the main reason Republicans lost the 2026 midterm elections, U.S. Vice President JD Vance wrote on Thursday, arguing that voters who backed President Donald Trump in 2024 switched to supporting Democrats despite strong Republican turnout.

  · Citing private polling that he said accurately anticipated the results, Vance identified four leading reasons former Trump voters abandoned Republicans: "End the war," "Focus on cost of living/inflation," "Put America First," and "Change our relationship to Israel."

  · He said the findings vindicated calls for a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, and he warned against attributing the losses to the Trump administration's far-right immigration policies. "The reason we lost is the war. The president himself said so last night," Vance wrote. "If you'd like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next 6 years was worth it, then do so."

  · Responding to Vance, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf accused the Trump administration of preparing another phase of the conflict while prioritizing Israel over American interests. "Boss is prepping the next war phase while America teeters on an Israel-First cliff," Ghalibaf wrote, adding: "Why not say this to your boss?"

· **Iran's Khamenei says U.S. midterm results will not change Washington's hostility toward Tehran:** Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Wednesday that anyone expecting a change in U.S. policy following Republican losses in the midterm elections is "seriously mistaken."

- "Those who still harbor even the slightest hope that the behavior of the hegemonic system might change through partisan or factional shifts . . . are seriously mistaken," Khamenei said in a written statement published on his website.

· **Iran says two tankers, tugboat catch fire in Strait of Hormuz; UK reports tanker attacked near Qatar:** Two oil tankers caught fire in separate incidents in the Strait of Hormuz after attempting to use "unauthorized" shipping routes, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy said on Thursday. A tugboat attempting to extinguish the fire also caught fire.

- A tanker was struck by two unidentified projectiles approximately 50 nautical miles north of Madinat Al-Shamal, Qatar, the UK Maritime Trade Operations reported on Thursday. The condition of the crew and the extent of damage remain unconfirmed.

· **South Korea plans to expand naval mission near Strait of Hormuz:** South Korea plans to expand its anti-piracy naval mission in the Gulf of Aden toward waters south of Oman, near the Strait of Hormuz, and deploy additional military assets, Yonhap reported on Thursday.

- It would be Seoul's first military contribution to maritime security efforts in the region since the U.S.-Iran war began in February. In September, South Korea declined U.S. requests for direct military support against Tehran.
- South Korean defense officials stressed that the mission would not involve combat forces and would remain independent of allied military operations. They said that aircraft will be prohibited from monitoring Iranian territory or entering the Strait of Hormuz.

· **U.S. sanctions Indian, Turkish firms over alleged ties to Iranian oil, aviation:** On Wednesday, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on individuals and companies in India and Turkey over their alleged support for Iran's oil and aviation sectors, as part of the Trump administration's Operation Economic Outcast campaign to restrict Iranian oil revenues during the war.

- The Treasury Department accused Indian entities of falsifying vessel registrations for ships transporting Iranian oil. It also sanctioned Turkey-based Fugo Ground Services Inc. for supporting Iran's aviation sector.
- The Treasury Department said last week that its sanctions campaign had contributed to the collapse of Iran's currency and increased inflation almost 90%.

· **UAE airline profits plunge 66% amid Iran war:** The Dubai-based Emirates Group airline sustained a 66% decline in its after-tax profits, it said on Thursday. Year-on-year, the airline's profit fell to $1 billion in the first half of its 2026–27 financial year, as the Iran war disrupted air travel and pushed up fuel costs. The Emirates airline carried 21.8 million passengers between April and September, down 22% from a year earlier. The company said that it remained profitable despite the disruptions, with cash reserves declining to $14.7 billion by the end of September.

Palestine

· **Israeli attacks kill three Palestinians, including child, in Gaza:** Israeli forces shot and killed a woman in Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, and a child in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza on Thursday, WAFA reported. Another Palestinian was killed in an Israeli airstrike west of Al-Zawayda in central Gaza.

· **Israeli settlers seize homes near Jericho, expelling Palestinians; settlers say they are "dismantling the Oslo Accords":** Around 30 Israeli settlers, some of whom were armed, took over eight homes in Ein Al-Duyuk Al-Tahta on the outskirts of Jericho in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday. Activists warned that settlers could be reproducing the situation in Hebron, where armed Israeli settlers live in enclaves inside the Palestinian city, contributing to displacement and severe restrictions on Palestinian freedom of mobility. The operation near Jericho was organized by the Nachala settlement movement, which claims to have secretly purchased the properties.

- Sixty-five Palestinian residents fled after settlers attacked them with stones, an activist told the Times of Israel. Residents said that Israeli forces subsequently blocked access to the area, leaving homeowners afraid to return.
- The new outpost is reportedly located in Area C, under full Israeli control under the Oslo Accords, just meters from parts of Jericho classified as Area A, where the Palestinian Authority is supposed to exercise civilian and security control.
- Yisrael Gantz, head of the West Bank settler council, framed the move as an effort to dismantle the Oslo Accords, declaring: "Today we begin reversing the trend, dismantling the Oslo Accords through actions, house by house, family by family."
- Palestinian National Council Speaker Rawhi Fattouh condemned the takeover as "organized terrorism" carried out under Israeli government protection, charging Israel of encouraging settlement expansion and forced displacement.

· **Israel demolishes five buildings, displacing 105 Palestinians, and shuts down club in occupied East Jerusalem:** Israeli forces demolished five residential buildings containing 12 apartments in the town of Biddu, northwest of occupied East Jerusalem, on Thursday, displacing 105 Palestinians without prior warning, citing construction without permits. Soldiers fired stun grenades and tear gas at residents and prevented families from removing their belongings before demolishing their homes, according to the Jerusalem Governorate.

  · Separately, Israeli authorities shut down the Abna Al-Quds Club in Jerusalem's Old City under an order issued by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. The governorate condemned both measures as part of an escalating Israeli campaign targeting Palestinian homes, institutions, and community life in Jerusalem.

· **Israeli settlers burn olive trees, assault Palestinians as soldiers demolish homes across the West Bank:**

  · **Ramallah:** Israeli settlers set fire to dozens of centuries-old olive trees in the village of Burqa, east of Ramallah, on Thursday, according to WAFA.

  · **Jericho:** Three Palestinians were injured after settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, raided Palestinian homes in the Bedouin communities of Ard Satih, west of Jericho, beating residents and spraying them with pepper spray.

  · **Nablus:** Settlers attacked farmers in Beita, south of Nablus, injuring one Palestinian. Israeli forces also demolished a home in Furush Beit Dajan, east of Nablus.

  · **Salfit:** Israeli forces demolished a home in Qarawat Bani Hassan and issued a stop-work order for another home. Three Palestinians were also injured in assaults by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the town.

Yemen

· **Saudi-led strikes kill around 20 across Yemen; Ansarallah shelling kills woman, wounds five in Taiz:** Saudi-led coalition bombardment killed around 20 people across the Yemeni governorates of Al-Jawf, Al-Bayda, Saada, and Taiz over the past 24 hours, according to Ansarallah-affiliated media. Ansarallah military spokesman Yahya Saree said that the coalition carried out 104 attacks across areas controlled by the group, including the capital, Sana'a.

  · Meanwhile, Yemen's Saudi-backed government reported that Ansarallah shelling in Taiz killed a woman and wounded five people.

· **WSJ: Ansarallah demands recognition of sovereignty over Yemen, $51 billion in compensation in exchange for halting attacks on Saudi Arabia:** Yemen's Ansarallah demanded $51 billion in compensation for years of Saudi airstrikes and blockade and formal recognition as Yemen's sovereign power in exchange for halting attacks on Saudi Arabia, the Wall Street Journal reported. Riyadh reportedly approached the group after Ansarallah attacks on Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea and territorial advances near the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait.

    · Saudi officials told the WSJ that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is reluctant to negotiate without military leverage but fears that deploying additional ground troops could result in heavy casualties. The UAE's withdrawal from the anti-Ansarallah campaign, Washington's refusal to provide direct military support, and Saudi's reliance on regional allies further complicated Riyadh's options, the report said.

Lebanon

· **Israeli strike kills one in southern Lebanon, again violating ceasefire:** An Israeli drone strike killed one person and wounded another in Qabrikha, in the Marjeyoun district of southern Lebanon, on Wednesday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported. The Israeli military said that it targeted two people who were "observing" its forces in the area, without providing any evidence that the individuals were military targets.

    · Separately, Israeli warplanes carried out two airstrikes on Tallousa and its outskirts in the Marjeyoun district, and struck the outskirts of Aita al-Jabal in the Bint Jbeil district.

· **Lebanon issues arrest warrants for two Hezbollah members over seized explosives:** Lebanon's Military Court issued arrest warrants for two Hezbollah members in connection with the seizure of 780 kilograms (1,720 pounds) of explosives at the Dahr Al-Baydar checkpoint linking Beirut to the Bekaa Valley, the National News Agency reported.

    · The explosives were seized last month. Lebanese authorities indicted 13 people in the case, on charges involving state security, illegal possession of weapons and explosives, and forming unlawful organizations. Beyond the two Hezbollah members, the remaining 11 defendants are still at large. The government's attempt to question six defendants was postponed following an objection filed by their lawyer.

U.S. News

· **Democrats extend power in House, state races in latest midterm election results:** Additional races were called on Wednesday, extending Democrats' commanding lead in the House of Representatives and in state-level posts. Senate elections in Mississippi and Alaska remain uncalled as of Thursday morning, while an unexpectedly tight Senate race in Louisiana was called in favor of the Republican, **Julia Letlow.**

- **Sam Forstag,** a labor union leader and smokejumper endorsed by Rep. **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**, won his election to represent Montana's first congressional district, a seat previously held by Trump's former Interior Secretary, **Ryan Zinke**. Forstag is the first Democratic candidate to win a congressional race in the state since former Sen. **Jon Tester** won in 2018. He is also the youngest congressional representative from the state since the 1930s.
- Progressive activist **William Lawrence** officially ousted Republican incumbent **Tom Barrett** in Michigan's seventh congressional district. Lawrence, a co-founder of the Sunrise Movement, won one of the most competitive elections this cycle by emphasizing the rising cost of living in Michigan, opposing data centers, calling for restrictions on Flock cameras, and pushing for tighter regulation of artificial intelligence.
- Republican incumbent Rep. **Max Miller**, who was accused of physical and verbal abuse by his ex-wife, conceded defeat to Democrat **Brian Poindexter** in Ohio's seventh congressional district, which covers much of the Cleveland suburbs.
- Progressive **Angela Gonzales-Torres** defeated incumbent Democrat Rep. **Jimmy Gomez** in California's 34th congressional district. The 31-year-old was backed by Justice Democrats and the Los Angeles chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America in her May primary against the AIPAC-backed Gomez.
- Two other races featuring progressives in California have yet to be called. **Mai Vang**, a progressive from the Sacramento area, trails incumbent **Doris Matsui** by 15 points with less than half of the vote counted. **Aisha Wahab**, a progressive who won a special election to fill the northern California seat vacated by **Eric Swalwell**, leads her opponent, **Melissa Hernandez,** by 13 points, with just over half of the votes counted.
- **Nithya Raman**, whose Los Angeles City Council campaigns were boosted by the local D.S.A. chapter, defeated incumbent Mayor **Karen Bass** in a contentious race. Los Angeles's D.S.A. chapter endorsed her candidacy for mayor, despite Raman's acceptance of an endorsement from a pro-Israel group and lack of clarity on whether

she supports the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. Raman maintains that she was an early advocate for a ceasefire in Gaza, and has characterized Israel's conduct in Gaza as a genocide. The national D.S.A. narrowly voted against rescinding the Los Angeles chapter's endorsement.

· **Civil-society groups propose delaying fight over Iran war until 2027:** A draft letter circulating among civil-society organizations, a copy of which was obtained by Drop Site Daily, initially proposed punting on the critical fight over war funding until 2027. After Drop Site approached the groups who had signed, the letter was adjusted to be more forceful. The background: Funding for the government expires on December 11, 2026. Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** and Rep. **Ro Khanna** have proposed using that date as leverage to force an end to the war, not through a war powers resolution—which Trump has already ignored—but by legally barring the government from spending money on the war. Instead, the groups signing the letter proposed focusing on measures that have no bearing on the administration's ability to prosecute the war. The letter read:

· "In Tuesday's elections, people across the United States made their will resoundingly clear: they want to end President Trump's war on Iran, its resulting violence, and its downstream economic hardship, immediately. Ending this war cannot wait."

· "We, the XX undersigned civil society organizations, urge you to respond to this mandate *by voting down any defense authorization or defense appropriations bills that would continue funding this disastrous war or increase Pentagon funding beyond the already outrageous $1 trillion* that the White House pushed through Congress last year" (emphasis added).

· appropriations bill. The plan is to pass a continuing resolution on or before December 11. So far, signatories to the draft letter include the Center for International Policy Advocacy, Indivisible, J Street, MoveOn, National Iranian American Council Action, and Win Without War. The letter went on: "*If Trump continues the war into the new year, we further urge returning members to prioritize and pass legislation expressly defunding this war early in the new Congress.*" Such an approach would let Trump have November and December to wage war before *"expressly defunding this war early in the new Congress."* That line is being stripped out, sources said.*But:* Congress has no plans to fund the war through a defense

· **Matt Duss**, executive director of CIPA, one of the signatories, emphasized his support for the more aggressive approach proposed by Van Hollen. "Congress needs to

use every tool it has right now to stop this war," he said. "We want everyone to be going all the way."

- At issue is the question of just how hard Democrats should fight Trump's war. Not every group involved, sources said, was yet convinced to take the approach called for by Duss and Van Hollen, despite the resounding mandate.

· **CBS: Trump asks advisers if he should remove War Secretary Pete Hegseth:** Trump is asking his advisers if he should remove War Secretary **Pete Hegseth** from his post, CBS News reported on Wednesday, suggesting that the president is searching for a scapegoat after the Republican Party suffered historic election losses driven by voter anger over the Iran war. Some aides predict that blame will fall on U.S. military Commander Adm. **Brad Cooper**, the head of Central Command, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. **Dan Caine**. Florida Gov. **Ron DeSantis** is being floated as a replacement for Hegseth. If Hegseth is replaced, he may try to take up the Tennessee Senate seat that **Marsha Blackburn** is vacating to become governor. Trump has told reporters that Hegseth would be "very popular" as a senator.

· **NYT: SCOTUS justice Samuel Alito privately says he won't retire immediately, despite Democrats' Senate win**: The Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito privately says he intends to remain on the bench after Democrats swept the Senate, two people close to Alito told the New York Times. His announcement follows speculation that he or Justice Clarence Thomas might retire during the lame-duck session. Some experts speculate that outgoing Republican senators—such as John Cornyn, Bill Cassidy, or Susan Collins—might try to help Trump push a new SCOTUS nominee through the confirmation process.

· **House Speaker Mike Johnson will not seek leadership role:** Following the Democratic takeover of the House of Representatives, Speaker **Mike Johnson** told staff on Wednesday he will not seek the minority leader post in the new Congress.

- After the news broke, House Majority Leader **Steve Scalise** proposed a "consensus-driven" bid for the Minority Leader position, saying that the election "was far worse than any of us expected." He will face Judiciary Chairman **Jim Jordan**, who also announced a bid to become House Minority Leader on Wednesday, touting his "battle-testing" in oversight hearings and his readiness to counter Democratic investigations. Republicans will vote for new leadership on November 10.

- Rep. **Tom Emmer** (R-Minn.)**,** the current Majority Whip and the presumptive Minority Whip, faces a challenge from Rep. **August Pfluger** (R-Texas)**,** ABC News reported on Wednesday. Emmer told colleagues in a letter that he took Tuesday's

failures “personally” and could not “sugarcoat” Republican defeats. Pfluger, for his part, promoted his ability to make “the changes” the caucus would need to win in 2028.

· **Billionaire Leon Black sues Rep. Robert Garcia for defamation over remarks about Epstein ties:** Private equity magnate **Leon Black** filed a lawsuit in New York federal court on Wednesday, claiming that California congressman **Robert Garcia** defamed him for saying that Black was among the last people to interact with **Jeffrey Epstein** before his death, and that victims credibly named Black as involved in abuse. Black acknowledges knowing Epstein and paying him $158 million for tax and estate planning, but he denies knowledge of Epstein’s crimes and says that he cut ties with Epstein in 2018. Black said that Garcia’s statements cost him investment opportunities and $775,000 in private security, and accuses Garcia of seeking political benefit from public anger over Epstein. In September, the House of Representatives held Black in contempt for ignoring subpoenas from the Oversight Committee about possible nondisclosure agreements with women tied to Epstein. Black has sued the committee, arguing that the subpoenas were invalid. Garcia has vowed to pursue the Epstein investigation. He is expected to head the House Oversight Committee in the new Congress.

Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email DC Correspondent Julian Andreone at Julian@dropsitenews.com

Other International News

· **WHO approves Ebola vaccine trials for dangerous Bundibugyo strain:** On Monday, the World Health Organization recommended two trials for Ebola vaccines that target the Bundibugyo strain. The strain has killed more than 5,300 people since May, with a fatality rate of about 50%. Currently, there is no strain-specific vaccine or treatment available. The new vaccines are being jointly developed by the University of Oxford, the Serum Institute of India, and Moderna, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. They will be tested in a trial led by the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s National Institute for Biomedical Research. Trial results are expected by early 2027.

· **Sudanese Army strike in North Kordofan kills two women, destroys water station:** The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) struck a neighborhood in the Um Badr area of North Kordofan, killing two women and injuring 10 other people, the Sudan Tribune reported. The same wave of airstrikes hit the Al-Kabjark water station at Khor Dardaq, destroying tanks, pumps, and solar panels at a vital water facility for residents.

· **Ethiopia, Sudan close each other’s consulates:** On Wednesday, Ethiopia shut the Sudanese consulate in Assosa and ordered Sudanese diplomats to leave, Reuters reported.

Sudan then closed the Ethiopian consulate in Gedaref and expelled Ethiopian diplomats. Sudan accuses Ethiopia of supporting the Rapid Support Forces and allowing the RSF to launch drone strikes from Ethiopian territory. Ethiopia accuses Sudan of backing the Tigrayan rebels who launched an offensive against Ethiopian forces in September.

· **Workers strike and march across France:** Labor unions in France called a strike on Thursday to demand a higher minimum wage, higher salaries for all workers, tax reforms, and better school conditions. Protests are planned in 260 cities and towns, and the Education Ministry expects 16% of the country's public-school teachers to strike. President Emmanuel Macron convened a meeting with his defense and security advisers on Wednesday to "ensure public order." Security forces have already begun brutalizing protesters: In Lyon, riot police fired tear gas at a demonstration, Reuters reported.

· **Russian and Ukraine exchange attacks; Russia kills four civilians in Donetsk:** Russian attacks killed four civilians and injured five others in Donetsk on Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported, and drones caused large fires at a logistics center in Bucha outside Kyiv district. Russian forces also attacked a postal terminal near Kharkiv, a power substation in Dnipropetrovsk, and a dry cargo ship carrying military equipment near Odesa, its Defense Ministry said on Thursday. More than 80 Russian drones hit Odesa, injuring six people, including a child, according to Ukrainian officials. Ukraine launched over 200 drone attacks on Russia's Ryazan region overnight, Russian officials said. The strikes injured one person, caused fires at sites including an oil refinery, and left areas without power.

· **Syria secures $400+ million Saudi loan in new defense agreement:** On Wednesday, the defense ministries of Saudi Arabia and Syria signed a new agreement that will give Syria more than $403 million in Saudi loans for energy, housing, and infrastructure projects. The terms of the agreement have not been disclosed. The Saudi Fund for Development agreed to six concessional loans: $100 million for healthcare facilities; $60 million for housing; $105 million for civil defense; $90 million for the Aleppo thermal power plant; and $30 million for drinking water in Damascus and Idlib. The deal comes just days after the Syrian foreign minister, Asaad al-Shaibani, said that Syria may join the Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan "Mecca alliance."

· **Stabbing attack outside Sri Lanka embassy in Jordan kills security officer:** An assailant stabbed and killed an officer outside the Sri Lankan embassy in Amman on Thursday. The attacker reportedly tried to seize a guard's weapon before he was subdued. He sustained injuries and is in critical condition. The attack injured a second officer, who is being hospitalized. In its preliminary investigation, Jordan's Public Security Directorate said that the attacker had planned "to commit the terrorist act against the officers of the General

Security Directorate." The attacker was previously convicted of joining "terrorist groups," according to court filings, and of conspiring to carry out attacks in Jordan.

· **Colombia expected to pass law toughening terms of surrender for armed group, breaking with "total peace" policy:** Colombia's Congress passed a bill that increases the scope of punishments for militants who lay down their arms. The right-wing President Abelardo De La Espriella, who shepherded its passage, is expected to sign the bill into law. The legislation bars surrendering militants from holding elected office or entering peace negotiations. It would put conditions on the length of their prison sentences. In exchange for reducing their sentences by up to 50%, they must disarm, identify fellow militants, hand over recruited and kidnapped minors, help search for the missing, surrender their assets, and disclose their political and corruption networks. If it becomes law, the measures would represent a radical divergence the "total peace policy" put in place by the left-wing former president, Gustavo Petro. That policy, which began in 2024, allowed for Colombia's government to negotiate directly with the country's armed and criminal groups.

· **UN elects five judges to International Court of Justice:** On Tuesday, the UN elected five new judges to the International Court of Justice: Dapo Akande of the United Kingdom; Francois Alabrune of France; Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud of Jordan; Rena Lee of Singapore; and Phoebe Okowa of Kenya. They will join the bench in February 2027. The UN General Assembly and the Security Council initially agreed on all but one of the candidates: Okowa of Kenya, who faced a challenge from the Ecuadoran diplomat and jurist Marcelo Vazquez-Bermudez. ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa said that 24 legal cases are pending at the court, including South Africa's genocide case against Israel for its war in Gaza. Iwasawa said that the court will deliver its judgment in The Gambia's genocide case against Myanmar on November 19.

· **Bomb threats disrupt European air travel:** Bomb threats disrupted commercial flights throughout Europe Thursday, resulting in emergency landings and some military escorts for airplanes. A threat targeting flights to Rome was sent via email from a group describing itself as "anti-feminist," the AP reported, saying that at least one other airport received a similar message. The disruptions follow a series of other bomb threats in Europe earlier this week.