



July 8, 2025

Headlining This Week's Brief

Top Stories

Climate and Natural Hazards
Worldwide
Cyber and Regulatory
Infrastructure and Supply Chain
Health
Demonstrations and Industrial Action
Upcoming Events

Top Stories

Catastrophic Flooding in Central Texas Leaves Dozens Dead

At least 90 people, including 28 children, have died due to catastrophic flooding that began early on July 4 in Central Texas. Officials have indicated that the death toll is expected to rise as search and rescue efforts continue. As of Monday morning, Kerr County reported the highest number of fatalities, with [75 deaths](#), including 27 children. Camp Mystic, an all-girls summer camp located near the Guadalupe River in Hunt, Texas, was completely devastated and has become the emotional and symbolic center of the disaster. In a [statement](#), Camp Mystic has confirmed the deaths of at least 27 campers and counselors, while 10 campers and one counselor remain missing.

Travis County, which includes most of Austin, reported [seven deaths](#). Other counties that reported fatalities include Burnet County (3), Kendall County (2), Williamson County (2), and Tom Green County (1).

[Flash flooding](#) was still ongoing in parts of Central Texas as of Monday morning, mainly between Killeen, Brownwood, and Junction. Rain and thunderstorms on Monday are forecast to be nearly stationary and produce extremely high rainfall rates of up to [three inches per hour](#). Flooding could quickly become life-threatening as heavy rain over the last few days has left the area even more susceptible to dangerous flooding of rivers and low-lying areas. The Weather Prediction Center has placed portions of the region under a [Level 3 of 4 risk of excessive rainfall](#) as scattered torrential downpours are expected through Monday evening. A [flood watch](#) is scheduled to remain in effect through at least Monday evening for the entire threat region.

For a more detailed report on this weekend's flood events across Texas and a timeline of events, see AlertMedia's [Situation Report](#).

U.S.-Vietnam Trade Deal Offers Insight Into Trump Tariff Agenda

A new trade agreement between the United States and Vietnam will likely result in a lower-than-expected cost increase for American buyers of Vietnamese goods after U.S. President Donald Trump [announced](#) new tariffs of 20% for goods produced in Vietnam and 40% for those shipped through Vietnam. While these rates are lower than the 46% first floated by Trump in April, they will still likely raise consumer prices, with some experts especially [concerned](#) about the potential abuse of the transshipment carveout to target a wider range of goods.

Vietnam had previously faced one of the highest rates threatened by Trump due to its [large trade deficit](#) with the United States, and the deal offers two important insights into the direction future U.S. trade talks may take. First, it demonstrates the Trump administration's willingness to accept lower tariff rates than initially threatened. Second, it offers insight into how the U.S. trade war with China could expand into new areas, like [targeting third countries](#) that transship Chinese goods to avoid hefty U.S. import duties.

Trump also [announced](#) tariffs of 25% on key trade partners Japan and South Korea, and stated that the U.S. expects to notify ["dozens"](#) of other yet-unspecified countries of new rates effective from August 1 by the end of the week. He also [threatened](#) to target "any country aligning itself with the anti-American policies of BRICS" with an additional 10% tariff. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent also [warned](#) that other countries that had not negotiated new trade terms by August 1 would see the threatened April rates come into effect, in what could be an unofficial extension of the previous negotiation deadline of [July 9](#).

Trump Signs Major Tax and Spending Bill Into Law

On July 4, U.S. President Donald Trump signed his signature [One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#) into law. The [sprawling](#) piece of legislation includes an extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act from Trump's first term, as well as significant increases in funding for several of the president's priorities, allocating around \$150 billion for the military and [around](#) \$170 billion for [immigration-related efforts](#), including significant increases in funding for the border wall, detention facilities, and the hiring and retention of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel.

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



The expanded funding for the president's immigration efforts, coupled with a continued emphasis on reaching the administration's goal of 3,000 daily apprehensions, will likely lead to an increase in workplace immigration raids and [demonstration activity](#), some of which may become violent. Net immigration rates have fallen, and pockets of the economy that rely on immigrant labor have [reported](#) slowdowns, which may become more pronounced as enforcement efforts increase.

New spending and tax cuts in the bill are being partially offset by cuts to a variety of other programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and several green energy incentives. The Commonwealth Fund [estimated](#) that the cuts to Medicaid and SNAP could result in as many as 1.22 million job losses by 2029, with the healthcare industry particularly hard hit. Cutbacks on incentives for renewable energy projects have also led to [warnings](#) that the law could lead to increases in electricity costs.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Deadly Floods Strike North Carolina:** [Tropical Storm Chantal](#) made landfall along the coastal Carolinas with sustained winds of 50mph Sunday morning. Impacts along the immediate coast were limited, but torrential rainfall intensified farther inland during the afternoon and evening. Localized areas near and west of Durham received over [10-12 inches of rain](#), values approaching 50–100-year return intervals. At least one river gauge recorded its [second-highest crest on record](#), surpassed only by the historic flooding from Hurricane Fran in 1996. Significant flooding has occurred, with [search and rescue teams](#) deployed and [one death reported](#) in Chatham County. Weather conditions in the Carolinas are improving, but the threat of more localized flood events is lifting northward into the [Mid-Atlantic and Northeast U.S.](#)
- **Typhoon Landfall in Taiwan, Storm Headed Towards China:** Typhoon Danas intensified quickly as it approached Taiwan from the southwest on Sunday. When the storm made landfall late Sunday in southwest Taiwan, it was the equivalent of a Category 2 hurricane, stronger than what was previously forecast. According to [international media](#) as of late Monday, local time, two people have been killed and over 600 have been injured. Over 500,000 households lost power during the storm, and some schools and businesses are expected to remain closed on Tuesday. Danas, now a tropical storm, is expected to slowly continue northwards before turning towards eastern China Tuesday night. Landfall as a tropical storm is possible near Wenzhou, where severe flooding, damaging winds, and dangerous coastal hazards are expected.

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



Worldwide

- **Hong Kong Property Slump Deepens Amid Vacancies, Developer Struggles, Retail Exodus:** Hong Kong's grade-A office vacancies are [projected](#) to reach 19% by the end of 2025. This glut has led to declining rents, with historically booming areas like the Central district [experiencing](#) a 3.1% quarter-on-quarter drop. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's developer kingpins are under financial strain. Emperor International Holdings [reported](#) overdue loans in the billions amid staggering losses. Meanwhile, New World Development [secured](#) a critical HK\$88.2 billion (\$11.24 billion) refinancing package to avert default. Hong Kong's property market decline is occurring amid the backdrop of Hong Kongers [flocking](#) to Shenzhen for [housing](#) and [leisure activities](#), leading to a [wave](#) of store closures in Hong Kong, with May retail sales still only 77% of 2018 levels.
- **Extremist Group's Gains Highlight Mali's Security Crisis:** The ongoing terror threat facing Africa's Sahel region — which suffered [more than half](#) of global terrorism deaths reported in 2024 — has had an especially pronounced impact in Mali. Members of the al-Qaida-linked JNIM recently launched a [series of attacks](#) on military targets in Mali, one of which was [near the border](#) with Senegal in an important region for bilateral trade. JNIM is also potentially involved in the [kidnapping](#) of three Indian nationals earlier this month and [attacked](#) a regional airport in June, highlighting the persistent threat the group's attacks pose to local communities and infrastructure. The ongoing attacks highlight [continued security challenges](#) in Mali and the broader region since the [country's coup in 2020](#).
- **Iranian President Orders Suspension of Cooperation with Nuclear Watchdog:** Following the Iranian legislature's approval of a bill suspending cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in response to attacks that left key Iranian nuclear facilities ["seriously and heavily damaged."](#) President Masoud Pezeshkian ordered an end to Iran's work with the nuclear watchdog. With IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi [warning](#) that the country's nuclear program could return to operation "in a matter of months," concerns are rising that Pezeshkian's order could impede important IAEA inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities and stockpiles. However, Iran's [supposed willingness](#) to re-enter talks with the U.S. and the decision to suspend, rather than end, IAEA cooperation could indicate the country's willingness to cooperate with international demands regarding its nuclear program in the future.
- **Poland Becomes Latest Schengen Member to Launch Border Checks:** New Polish [border checks](#) will likely impact trade and travel entering the country from Germany and Lithuania from July 7, amid rising tensions over purported irregular border crossings from those countries. The

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



policy change, sparked by concerns that members of the 29-country Schengen free travel zone might be encouraging their migrant populations to move elsewhere by abusing open borders, makes Poland the twelfth Schengen Area member to re-introduce border checks of some kind, with Belgium expected to become the thirteenth. Meanwhile, Poland's Belarusian border is [expected](#) to remain closed indefinitely amid concerns that the Belarusian government is weaponizing migration in disputes with European neighbors by sending migrants to attempt illegal crossings.

- **Taiwan's Annual Military Exercises to Focus on "Grey Zone Tactics":** Taiwan will [launch](#) its annual Han Kuang military exercises on July 9, lasting for ten days and emphasizing the threat posed by "grey zone" decentralized [tactics](#) that threaten important military and civilian services in the island country. This year's drills, which will call up a record [22,000 reservists](#) and include various civil defense exercises, come amid an [increase](#) in China's use of equipment like drones and weather balloons and tactics such as cyberattacks, in addition to more traditional means of psychological warfare, such as media manipulation. Chinese efforts to disrupt Taiwanese daily life and influence public discourse typically increase surrounding important Taiwanese diplomatic events or military exercises.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Scattered Spider Targets Aviation Industry in Qantas Breach:** Qantas confirmed a data breach [affecting](#) a third-party platform used by Qantas' contact center, exposing the personal information of up to six million customers. Detected on June 30, the breach involved names, contact details, birth dates, and frequent flyer numbers. The airline contained the incident immediately, stating that there was no impact on operations or safety, with no financial data or passport details compromised. The breach follows an FBI warning that the group is [targeting](#) the aviation industry in the U.S. and Canada by using social engineering tactics to bypass security measures. Similar cyberattacks targeting other airlines have been attributed to the Scattered Spider group, including U.S.-based Hawaiian Airlines and Canada's WestJet.
- **Hacktivist Breach Targets Columbia University Amid Potential Political Motivations:** On June 24, Columbia University experienced a cyberattack believed to be politically motivated. The [hacktivist](#) stole up to [460 GB](#) of data, including 2.5 million student applications, social security numbers, and financial records. The attack temporarily shut down campus IT systems and displayed an image of President Trump on monitors, with the attackers allegedly [aiming](#) to assess

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



Columbia's compliance with the 2023 Supreme Court ban on affirmative action. Columbia University is still investigating the scope of the breach. A similar attack targeted New York University in March and is also believed to have been politically motivated.

- **Mexico Rules AI-Generated Content Is Public Domain:** Mexico's Supreme Court of Justice (SCJN) [ruled](#) last week that content created solely by artificial intelligence is considered public domain. The court stated that only human authorship qualifies for legal protection under Mexico's Federal Copyright Law. This verdict emerged from a case where an individual sought to claim property rights from Mexico's National Copyright Institute for an AI-generated avatar, which the institute rejected, leading the SCJN to take up the case. The SCJN unanimously denied the request, affirming that AI cannot produce original works. Consequently, AI-generated works are not protected by copyright in Mexico.
- **Cloudflare Implements Significant Change to Policy Blocking AI Scrapers:** Cloudflare has [implemented](#) a significant policy change to protect online content from unauthorized use by AI companies. Effective July 1, AI crawlers are [blocked](#) by default from scraping content on websites powered by Cloudflare — which services about 20% of the web — unless explicit permission is granted by site owners. This makes Cloudflare the first major internet infrastructure company to enforce a permission-based model for AI data access. Additionally, Cloudflare [announced](#) its new Pay Per Crawl system, which allows content creators to charge AI companies for access to their data.
- **Major Ransomware Group Announces Shutdown, May Rebrand:** Hunters International, a prominent ransomware gang, announced its shutdown last Thursday, without giving a reason. Cybersecurity experts suspect that the group is [rebranding](#) to an organization called "World Leaks," shifting from ransomware to data theft and extortion-only attacks. In its statement, the group offered free decryption keys to victims, though many experts speculate that the move was largely symbolic and had little impact on the gang's victims, which include healthcare organizations, governments, and [technology companies](#) around the world.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.S. Reconsiders Mexican Beef Imports Amid Industry Challenges:** [Faced with](#) rising U.S. beef costs and sustained demand, regulators are [re-opening](#) the U.S. market to cattle imports from Mexico after suspending them earlier in May over concerns about the potential spread of screwworm, a parasite capable of causing "serious and life-threatening damage and lesions" in animals and humans. The infection, caused by the larvae of a fly, is of additional concern to the

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



cattle industry due to its impact on leather production. However, [historically low](#) U.S. cattle inventories, driven by production challenges during an exceptional drought, have left agricultural regulators with few means to address the rising cost of beef in the country. The issue has driven the establishment of [programs](#) to disperse "more than 100 million sterile flies" per week to disrupt the population, and to closely monitor imported cattle for screwworm infections.

- **EU Returns to Pre-War Limitations on Agricultural Trade With Ukraine:** European Union negotiators and their Ukrainian counterparts established a new [trade agreement](#) that "will fully open the EU market to less sensitive products," but reinstates tariffs and [limits quotas](#) of products such as meats and sugar, which could pose stiff competition to locally made goods. In 2022, the European Union removed tariffs on Ukrainian agricultural imports in an attempt to prop up the country's economy following Russia's invasion. However, the move grew increasingly politically sensitive as the war persisted and cheaper Ukrainian alternatives continued to flood into the EU market, prompting the bloc [not to renew](#) the tariff suspension earlier in June.
- **Electronics Maker Withdraws Hundreds of Chinese Staff From India:** Over 300 Chinese employees of electronics manufacturer Foxconn Technology Group have been [sent back](#) to China from the company's facilities in southern India. While no reason for the move has yet been announced, it comes at a time when Chinese authorities are working to "make it harder for technology, skilled labor and specialized equipment to leave China for manufacturing upstarts such as India." While the pullback of Foxconn's Chinese employees from India is not expected to impact the quality of the company's locally made products, it could impact the efficiency of those operations, and the effort required to reorient equipment designed for Chinese speakers could be costly and time-consuming.
- **Over 240 Brazilian Dams Non-Compliant With Safety Requirements:** A new [report](#) by Brazil's National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA) [warns](#) that at least 241 dams across 24 Brazilian states could pose "a risk to people or important equipment that could compromise the supply of essential services." Nearly 100 of those dams belong to private companies, and more than 50 are "associated with the disposal of mining waste," suggesting that a failure could also lead to "a massive environmental catastrophe," amplifying the risks already posed to local communities and infrastructure. Worsening matters, difficulties in tracking down the parties responsible for a dam after a private owner becomes insolvent, in addition to financial strains in the bureaucracy, impact regulators' ability to police these safety violations.
- **New Malaysian Electricity Tariffs Raise Operating Costs for Data Centers:** Power utility [cost increases](#) of 14% or more could negatively impact Malaysia's appeal as a destination for data center investment. Industry expert Gary Goh warned that the increase in tariff rates impacting

the biggest cost driver for most data centers could amount to \$20 million in additional costs before surcharges, with a new fee structure shouldering larger data center operators with “a higher share of grid management costs than smaller peers.” The cost increase threatens a significant enough impact to existing data centers’ finances that Cheam Tat Inn, managing director of data center provider Equinix’s local operations, announced that the company began investigating alternative energy options even before the increase came into effect.

Health

- **Mpox Spread Slows in Africa, but Still Straining Healthcare Systems:** Several recent mpox hotspots have shown a decline in cases, including Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda, according to the [Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#). However, Togo reported a rise over the second half of June, and while 700,000 have received vaccinations, the region as a whole is far short of the 6.4 million doses that the region will likely need over the next six months. Despite the recent encouraging trends, health systems in affected countries are struggling to control the current outbreaks, with the difficulties [compounded](#) by cuts to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).
- **WHO Pushes for Increased Taxes on Sugary Drinks, Alcohol, Tobacco:** The World Health Organization (WHO) is [calling](#) for countries to raise prices on sugary drinks, alcohol, and tobacco by at least 50% over the next 10 years to combat chronic health issues and to help countries shore up their public health budgets. In addition to the aforementioned products, WHO health economist Guillermo Sandoval said that the organization is also looking at broader taxation requirements, including on ultra-processed foods, although the agency has yet to finalize a definition for such items. Depending on how the category is defined, the list of impacted goods could be extensive. Recently drafted rules in [Kenya](#) could potentially require health warning labels on nearly 90% of packaged goods sold by local and international companies.
- **China Placing Import Restrictions on EU-Made Medical Devices:** China will [restrict](#) government purchases of medical devices from the European Union (EU) that exceed \$6.3 million in value. The move is in retaliation for Brussels’ [barring](#) Chinese medical device manufacturers from public procurement contracts worth more than \$5.7 million per year. Beijing is also restricting imports of medical devices from other countries if they contain EU-made components totaling more than 50% of the contract value. China’s restrictions are only the latest, and likely not the last, in a series of tit-for-tat trade measures with the EU that have also included tariffs on Chinese-built electric vehicles and European brandy.

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



- **ECDC Launching Weekly Reports, Guidance on Mosquito-Borne Illnesses:** As the number of cases of mosquito-borne illnesses in Europe continues to grow, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) is [launching](#) a new series of weekly surveillance updates and guidance on Aedes- borne diseases. Viruses that will be covered in the report include chikungunya, dengue, Zika, and West Nile. The ECDC said that it was launching the service as the continent faced longer and more intense mosquito seasons due to climate change. A recent study published in The Lancet found that more cases of dengue were reported in the EU in 2024 (just over 300) than in the previous 15 years combined (275), leading researchers to warn that it and chikungunya could soon become endemic on the continent.
- **Salmonella, Campylobacter Cases Increasing in U.K.:** A [report](#) from the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) found that infections of Salmonella and Campylobacter bacteria rose by around 17% between 2023 and 2024 to reach the highest levels in a decade. Infections from the bacteria are usually caught from contaminated food, although the UKHSA and the Food Standards Agency are still investigating the specific reason for the increase in the UK. The increase in both Salmonella and Campylobacter infections [suggests](#) a possible common cause, potentially driven by supply chain issues or a change in consumer behavior.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **U.K. Criminalizes Support for Palestine Action Group:** The U.K. government has [proscribed](#) the protest group Palestine Action under anti-terrorism laws. The ban, which places the group in the same category as the Islamic State and al-Qaida, has sparked protests and may catalyze other groups to pursue direct action. London police [arrested](#) more than 20 demonstrators as the ban went into effect on Saturday. In a statement widely circulated on social media, the newly banned group expressed support for those “resisting the ban through a campaign of civil disobedience” and noted that the government “can not [*sic*] stop direct action happening across the country in different forms.”
- **U.S.-Wide “Good Trouble Lives On” Demonstrations Set for July 17:** Anti-Trump demonstrations under the banner “[Good Trouble Lives On](#)” are planned for Thursday, July 17, in cities across the U.S., including major hubs such as New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. Marking five years since the passing of Congressman John Lewis, the events honor his civil rights legacy and call for peaceful, lawful action in response to recent federal policy changes. Building on the momentum of the June 14 “[No Kings](#)” protests, which reportedly drew four to six million participants. The demonstration aims to oppose policies implemented by the Trump administration that are viewed as restricting civil rights and reducing funding for essential programs such as Medicaid and Social Security.

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



- **Colombian Education Workers Announce National Strike Starting July 14:** The Union of Education Employees and Workers (Sintrenal) has [announced](#) an indefinite strike beginning Monday, July 14, saying that the Ministry of Education has failed to honor critical commitments outlined in a 2024 labor agreement. Signed in May, the agreement aimed to address over a decade of unpaid wage adjustments. Despite a supportive ruling from the Council of State on June 11, the Ministry has not yet acted. Sintrenal plans to hold demonstrations and may restrict access to the Ministry if demands remain unmet. The strike is likely to disrupt public education services nationwide, potentially [affecting](#) over 7,000 public schools.
- **Hundreds of Bands Take to the Streets for Twelfth Parades in Northern Ireland:** All six of Northern Ireland's counties will see Twelfth of July parades this coming weekend. The parades, hosted by the Orange Order, celebrate the 1690 Battle of the Boyne and have been a source of sectarian violence in the past. Thousands of police officers were [deployed](#) last year to help with security measures. The town of [Keady](#) in County Armagh hosts one of the largest Twelfth gatherings, attracting around 40,000 spectators annually. A group named Keady Against Sectarian Marches is [organizing](#) a counterdemonstration against the Orange parade, though a specific location and time have not been specified. Local media have [compiled](#) a list with details on Orange Order parades.
- **Other Demonstrations the Global Intelligence Team Is Watching:** Tomorrow, in **Dublin**, demonstrators will gather outside the General Post Office to oppose [government plans](#) to redevelop it into a mixed-use building. The demonstration, supported by the Aontú political party, will begin at 7 pm on Tuesday. In **Vienna**, a wide range of environmental and human rights activists will protest the OPEC summit on Wednesday. Later this week, **Yerevan** will see a demonstration at Freedom Square on Saturday, July 12, by the Council for the Protection of the Rights of Artsakh Citizens. Over 10,000 people [attended](#) a related rally organized by the council this past March, and this Saturday's demonstration comes amid heightened political tensions due to the arrests of several politicians, including [Davit Galstyan](#), a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh.

Upcoming Events

- July 3-August 9: Amarnath Yatra (India)
- July 7: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Hosted at the White House (United States)
- July 8-11: ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Malaysia)
- July 8, 17: Public Sector Workers' Strike (Türkiye)
- July 9: Independence Day (Argentina)

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

July 8, 2025



- July 9-18: Han Kuang Military Exercise (Taiwan)
- July 9: Nationwide trade union strike and demonstrations (India)
- July 11-13: Subway Worker Strike (Glasgow, Scotland)
- July 12: The Twelfth/Orangemen's Day (Northern Ireland)
- July 14: Bastille Day (France)\July 16: July Martyrs' Day (Bangladesh)
- July 17: Nationwide "Good Trouble Lives On" Demonstrations (United States)
- July 20: House of Councillors Election (Japan)
- July 26: Recall Vote (Taiwan)
- August 5: July Mass Uprising Day (Bangladesh)