

Week commencing 19 October 2026

COVERAGE

5 – 18 October
2026

AUDIENCE

Executive leadership · Technology, defence and security decision-makers

HANDLING

Internal use — not for onward distribution

IF YOU JUST REMEMBER ONE THING FROM THIS BRIEFING...

The energy ceasefire President Trump announced on 11 October broke within hours — three days later Russia fired 39 missiles and 120-plus drones at Ukraine's grid, and the Kremlin still won't confirm a truce exists.

Zelensky says Kyiv learned of the deal from the media and had already halted strikes on Russian sites; Moscow hit a Kharkiv power plant regardless. Trump has declined to blame Russia. Treat any announced truce as rhetoric, not fact, until both sides confirm it and strikes stop.

FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW

Geopolitics, defence and security

PRIORITY

11–14 OCT

Trump's Russia-Ukraine energy ceasefire collapses within days

Trump announced an immediate "energy ceasefire" on 11 October; Zelensky said he learned of it from the media, and Russia struck a Kharkiv power plant hours later. On 14 October Russia fired 39 ballistic missiles and 120-plus drones at Ukraine's grid, cutting power to 600,000 people.

So what: a US-announced truce is not a verified ceasefire — plan on strikes against Ukraine's grid continuing through winter.

PRIORITY

1–14 OCT

China-Taiwan coast guard standoffs escalate at the Pratas Islands

Taiwan's coast guard used a water cannon on a Chinese vessel that ignored radio warnings near Dongsha on 1 October; a second standoff followed within the fortnight. On 14 October Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office said Taiwan must "bear the consequences" and asserted "indisputable sovereignty" over the islands.

So what: Pratas is shifting from occasional friction to regularised confrontation — watch for any move from coast guard to naval assets.

WATCH

12 OCT

EU adopts 22nd Russia sanctions package — listings only, no new trade curbs

The EU adopted its 22nd sanctions package on 12 October after ambassadors failed to agree on 7 October, adding 1,569 individuals and entities (826 companies, 743 people) to its lists. Unlike earlier rounds, it adds no material new trade, shipping or energy restrictions.

So what: screen counterparties against the expanded list — a 23rd package with substantive measures is reportedly being discussed for November.

WATCH

1 OCT,
ONGOING

Nvidia compliance scrutiny deepens as new smuggling case lands

US authorities arrested a California resident on 1 October over an alleged \$300 million scheme moving Nvidia-equipped servers to China; a Bloomberg investigation detailed oversight gaps, including footage of labels being stripped from servers. Nvidia says it follows export rules. The case remains open.

So what: enforcement is intensifying, not easing — reassess compliance exposure on any China-facing compute supply chain ahead of further indictments.

WATCH LIST

Developments to track this fortnight

DEVELOPMENT	REGION	SECTOR AFFECTED	WHAT TO WATCH NEXT
Energy ceasefire broken within days	Russia / Ukraine	Defence, security	Whether further large-scale strikes follow, or either side confirms truce terms.
Pratas Islands coast guard standoffs	Taiwan / South China Sea	Defence, security	Whether Beijing escalates patrols further or shifts from coast guard to naval vessels.
EU 22nd sanctions package adopted	EU / Russia	Technology, supply chain	Whether a 23rd package due in November adds substantive trade measures.
Nvidia chip-smuggling prosecution	US / China	Technology, supply chain	Outcome of the DOJ case and whether Nvidia changes its export-compliance process.
Rare-earth export pause nears expiry	China / global	Supply chain, technology	Whether Beijing extends the suspension past its 10 November deadline.

This is a watch list, not a task list — track these for consequence, not remediation, and confirm before acting.

REGULATORY AND SECTOR WATCH

What changed, and what is coming

In force now

- EU's 22nd sanctions package in force since 12 October, adding 1,569 entities and individuals; no new trade or energy measures.
- US case-by-case licensing for Nvidia H200 and AMD MI325X exports to China stands, covering China-headquartered entities anywhere.

Approaching

- China's rare-earth export-control pause, in place since October 2025, is due to lapse on 10 November 2026.
- A 23rd EU sanctions package with reportedly more substantive measures is under discussion for November.

Standing watch — grey-zone escalation. Pratas Islands confrontations and strikes on Ukraine's grid both show state actors testing limits short of open conflict. Treat further incidents on either front as expected, not exceptional, through the winter.

RECOMMENDED

Three things to do before the next edition

- Confirm energy-resilience plans still assume Russian strikes on Ukraine's grid continue despite truce claims.
- Screen counterparties against the 1,569 entities and individuals newly listed under the EU's 22nd package.
- Reassess compliance exposure on any China-facing AI compute supply chain given the active Nvidia-related prosecution.

OUTLOOK — NEXT FORTNIGHT

We assess it is highly likely that Russia continues striking Ukraine's energy infrastructure through winter despite ceasefire claims, and a realistic possibility of a further Pratas Islands confrontation. A lapsed rare-earth pause on 10 November would likely tighten supply for defence manufacturers.

NEXT EDITION

Monday 2 November 2026. Send additions, corrections or sector intelligence to your ClearPath engagement lead.

