

US-Iran Conflict Briefing

2020-09-17 · Evening edition · Issued 20:00 CDT

Trump: 'Do I want to go in and annihilate them?' — big decision ahead of Gulf-leaders meeting

- In a phone interview Thursday with Axios's Barak Ravid, Trump said: 'I have a big decision coming up. Do I want to go in and annihilate them [the Iranian regime] or do I not? It's a big decision. Anything could happen with me.' Attributed to Axios's reporting; no outlet on our vetted list has independently confirmed the interview's contents. — [Axios \(via The Times\)](#)
- Trump said he wants to use Tuesday's expected meeting with Gulf Cooperation Council leaders at the UN General Assembly to gauge their positions before deciding next steps: 'I want to find out where they are and how they are doing. We have been very protective of them.' US officials have warned the current military posture is difficult to sustain indefinitely. — [Axios \(via The Times\)](#)
- Context: the war is in its seventh month after the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28. Trump said Wednesday evening he hoped the war was nearing its end and that Iran 'wants to make a deal' — a sharp rhetorical swing from Thursday's annihilation framing. — [Reuters](#)

UN diplomacy: White House slams war-crimes report; Russia and China kill sanctions monitor

- White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly called the UN fact-finding mission's report 'unserious nonsense,' said the UN Human Rights Council has 'accomplished nothing for human rights,' and added: 'Iran is the only party in this conflict that has committed war crimes.' The Pentagon declined to comment, saying its investigation 'remains ongoing.' The mission is expected to present its findings to the 47-member Human Rights Council on Monday. — [AP](#)
- Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution Thursday that would have extended the mandate for independent monitoring of international sanctions on Iran. Eleven council members voted in favor; Pakistan and Somalia abstained. Deputy US Ambassador Jennifer Locetta told the council: 'Without an independent panel of experts, this council loses its principal source of impartial, evidence-based reporting on sanctions violations.' — [Reuters](#)
- Context: UN sanctions on Iran were reimposed a year ago after France, Britain and Germany accused Tehran of violating the 2015 nuclear deal; Russia and China revived the argument Thursday that all UN measures on Tehran had been removed under that deal. — [Reuters](#)

UNGA: Iran's leaders granted US visas for New York

- The State Department approved visas Thursday for Iran's 'core delegation' to UNGA High-Level Week, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. The delegation faces travel restrictions and bans on luxury-goods purchases, and it is smaller than last year's. — [AP](#)
- Pezeshkian is expected to address the General Assembly on Wednesday — his first visit to the United States since the war began on February 28. The move came a day after the US denied visas to Palestinian Authority and PLO delegations for the second year running. — [AP](#)

State Department approves \$24.3 billion F-35 sale to Saudi Arabia

- The State Department approved a potential sale of 48 F-35A Lightning II fighters and 49 Pratt & Whitney engines to Saudi Arabia, estimated at \$24.3 billion. A 30-day congressional review period is now open; Congress can block the sale. — [Reuters](#)
- Trump had pledged the sale last year as part of a 'Strategic Defense Agreement.' The State Department notice claims the sale 'will not alter the military balance in the region.' Breaking Defense notes an NYT report this week said US intelligence warned the sale could give Beijing access to the jet's sensitive tech, and some lawmakers raised concerns. — [New York Times \(via Breaking Defense\)](#)

Saudi-Houthi front: first death announced this month; Mecca drone intercepted

- A Yemeni living in Saudi Arabia was killed Thursday in the southwestern governorate of Taif when Saudi air defenses intercepted a drone the kingdom's civil defense said was launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis. A Saudi woman and a Pakistani resident were also injured. This is the first death Riyadh has announced this month; officials say 86 people have been injured in Houthi attacks this month. — [Reuters](#)
- The Houthis did not claim any attacks on Thursday. They said Wednesday that 40 Saudi airstrikes hit the Yemeni provinces of Taiz, Marib, and Hajjah in the previous 24 hours — unverified. — [Reuters](#)
- The Saudi-led coalition said it destroyed a Houthi drone south of Mecca on Tuesday before it entered prohibited airspace over the holy city; spokesman Turki al-Malki called the holy sites a 'red line' and described it as the second such attempt since July 2017. Houthi officials denied targeting Mecca via the Houthi-run SABA agency — the two accounts are incompatible; treat as contested. — [Reuters](#)
- Saudi Arabia blamed an Iraq-based pro-Iranian movement for the Friday attack that knocked out the East-West Pipeline across the Arabian desert, per Reuters. — [Reuters](#)

Hormuz traffic collapses to 3 transits; Saudis work around the choke

- Only 3 commodity vessels transited the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, down from 12 on Tuesday and far below the ~17-a-day average, per Kpler data published Thursday. — [Reuters](#)
- Saudi Arabia is boosting crude exports THROUGH the strait itself — extra cargoes to Asian refiners via ship-to-ship transfers off Oman's Sohar port. Gulf of Oman STS volumes hit 2.7 million barrels per day versus 1.5 million in August. — [Reuters](#)
- MUFG (via WSJ) says Saudi Arabia seeks to restore about half of East-West pipeline capacity within days and a full return within six weeks; ICIS estimates 2 to 2.5 million barrels per day could come back quickly. Brent fell for a second day, settling near \$104.82 on Thursday. — [Wall Street Journal](#)

Claims without verification

- Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree claims the Houthis shot down a Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 over Marib with a 'home-made missile.' Saudi Arabia has not commented. Unverified — no vetted outlet or primary-eight OSINT confirmation. — [TBS News \(carrying Houthi claim\)](#)

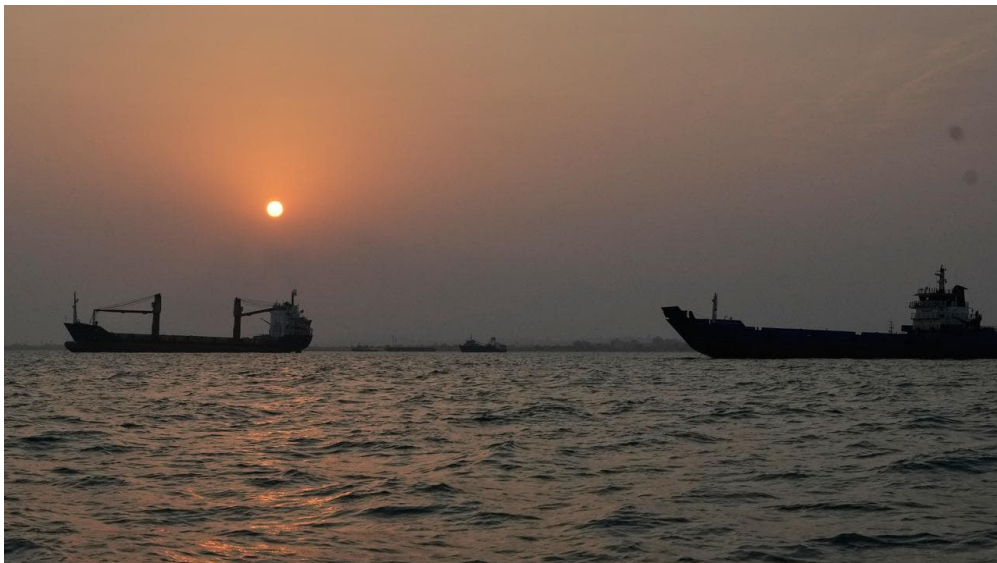
What to watch next

- UNGA High-Level Week in New York: Trump's expected meeting with GCC leaders on Tuesday, Pezeshkian's General Assembly address on Wednesday, and Netanyahu expected Thursday — whether any of it produces a negotiating track or just theater. — [Agile Factor](#)
- Monday: the UN fact-finding mission presents its war-crimes report to the 47-member Human Rights Council in Geneva — whether Washington engages, dismisses, or finally publishes the Pentagon's Minab probe. — [Agile Factor](#)
- Verification: is the Axios 'annihilate' quote confirmed by a vetted outlet; do independent sources confirm the Houthi F-15 and Yanbu claims; does the Saudi workaround keep Brent from retesting 110? — [Agile Factor](#)

Related media



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi — granted a US visa for UNGA next week (EPA photo via AP) — [view original](#)



The Strait of Hormuz — only 3 commodity vessels transited Wednesday, per Kpler (AP photo) — [view original](#)



US Air Force F-35A on the ramp at sunrise (USAF photo) — the State Department cleared a \$24.3B sale of 48 F-35As to Saudi Arabia — [view original](#)

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