

Iran Update, March 9, 2024

Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, Alexandra Braverman, and Nicholas Carl

Information Cutoff: 2:00 pm ET

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime. The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) provides these updates regularly based on regional events. For more on developments in Iran and the region, see our [interactive map of Iran and the Middle East](#).

Note: CTP and ISW have refocused the update to cover the Israel-Hamas war. The new sections address developments in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as noteworthy activity from Iran's Axis of Resistance. We do not report in detail on war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We utterly condemn violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

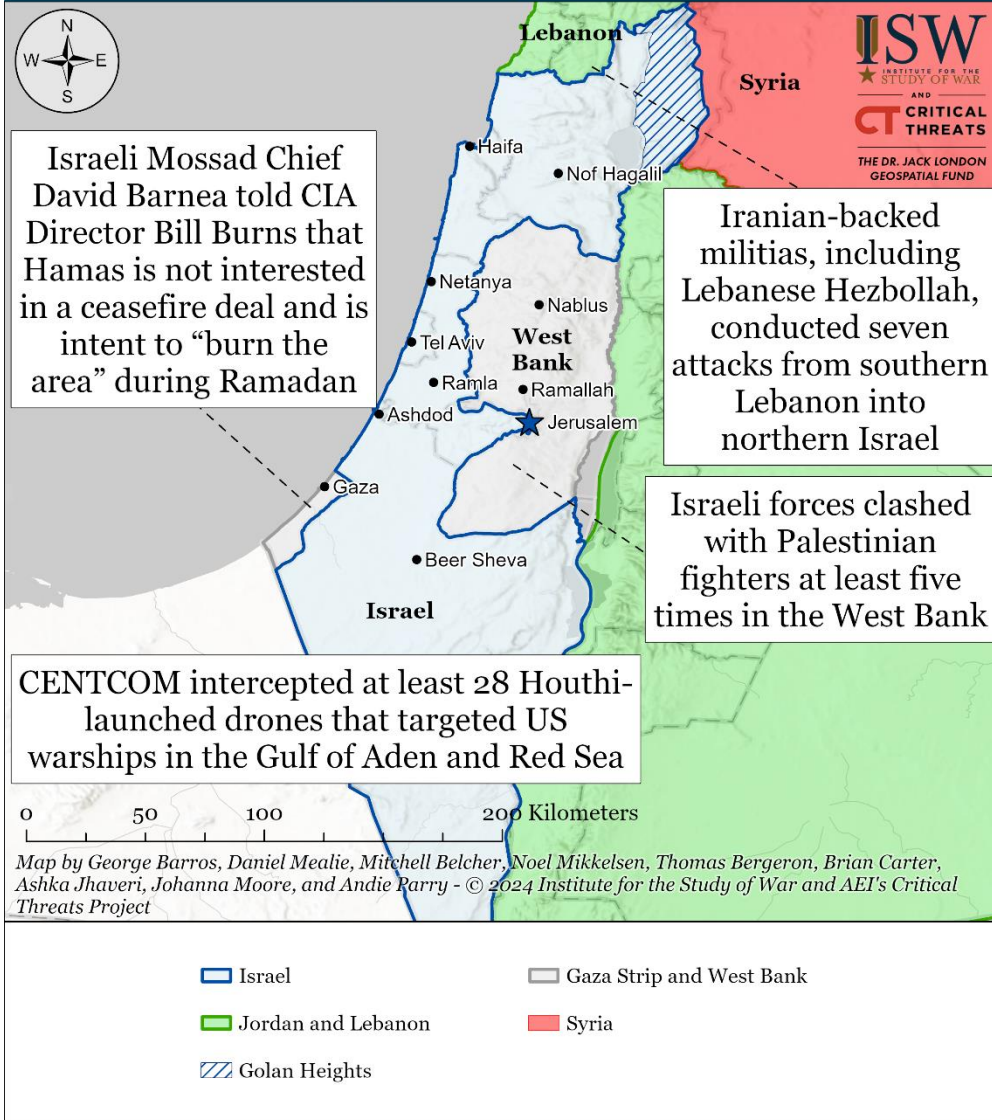
Click [here](#) to see CTP and ISW's interactive map of Israeli ground operations. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report. Click [here](#) to subscribe to the Iran Update.

CTP-ISW will publish abbreviated updates on March 9 and 10, 2024. Detailed coverage will resume Monday, March 11, 2024

Key Takeaways:

- **Northern Gaza Strip:** Palestinian fighters defended against Israeli raids in several sectors of the northern Gaza Strip.
- **Central Gaza Strip:** The IDF Nahal Brigade (162nd Division) continued to conduct clearing operations in the central Gaza Strip.
- **Southern Gaza Strip:** Israeli forces continued to conduct clearing operations in northern Khan Younis.
- **Political Negotiations:** Israeli Mossad Chief Dadi Barnea told CIA Director Bill Burns that Hamas is not interested in a ceasefire deal and is intent to “burn the area” during Ramadan.
- **West Bank:** Israeli forces clashed with Palestinian fighters at least five times in the West Bank.
- **Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights:** Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, conducted seven attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel.
- **Israel:** The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed that it conducted two drone attacks targeting Israeli military and civilian infrastructure in Haifa and in the Golan Heights.
- **Yemen:** The Houthis fired naval missiles at Singapore-flagged, owned, and operated vessel *M/V Propel Fortune* in the Gulf of Aden.

Israel-Hamas War as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Gaza Strip

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Erode the will of the Israeli political establishment and public to launch and sustain a major ground operation into the Gaza Strip
- Degrade IDF material and morale around the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian fighters defended against Israeli raids in several sectors of the northern Gaza Strip on March 9. An Israel Defense Forces (IDF) unit in the Combat Intelligence Collection Corps identified several Palestinian fighters operating near Israeli forces in Beit Hanoun and directed an airstrike targeting them.[1] Israeli forces have been conducting an operation in Beit Hanoun to reclear the area of Palestinian fighters and locate military infrastructure for the past week.[2] Palestinian militias reported that their fighters fired mortars and rockets targeting Israeli forces in eastern Jabalia and Zaytoun neighborhood, southeastern Gaza City.[3] Palestinian fighters also clashed with Israeli forces in Zaytoun neighborhood.[4]

The IDF Nahal Brigade (162nd Division) continued to conduct clearing operations in the central Gaza Strip on March 9. Israeli forces killed approximately 10 Palestinian fighters.[5] The IDF Air Force conducted airstrikes targeting areas in the central strip from where Palestinian fighters have launched rockets targeting Sderot in southern Israel.[6] Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) published footage of its fighters mortaring Israeli forces east of the central Gaza Strip.[7]

Israeli forces continued to conduct clearing operations in northern Khan Younis on March 9. The IDF Givati Brigade (162nd Division) raided military infrastructure in Hamad neighborhood, northwestern Khan Younis, detained Palestinian militia fighters, and located improvised explosive devices (IED) in the area.[8] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which is a leftist Palestinian militia aligned with Hamas in the war, claimed that its fighters detonated a bomb in Hamad.[9] The al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which is the self-proclaimed military wing of Fatah and aligned with Hamas in the war, reported that its fighters fired rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) targeting Israeli forces in Hamad.[10] The IDF Bislamach Brigade clashed with Palestinian fighters in Qarara.[11] Israeli armor, dismounted infantry, and engineering elements destroyed military infrastructure in Qarara, where Hamas' Qarara Battalion (Khan Younis Brigade) remains combat effective.[12]

Reported Israeli Ground Operations in the Gaza Strip as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

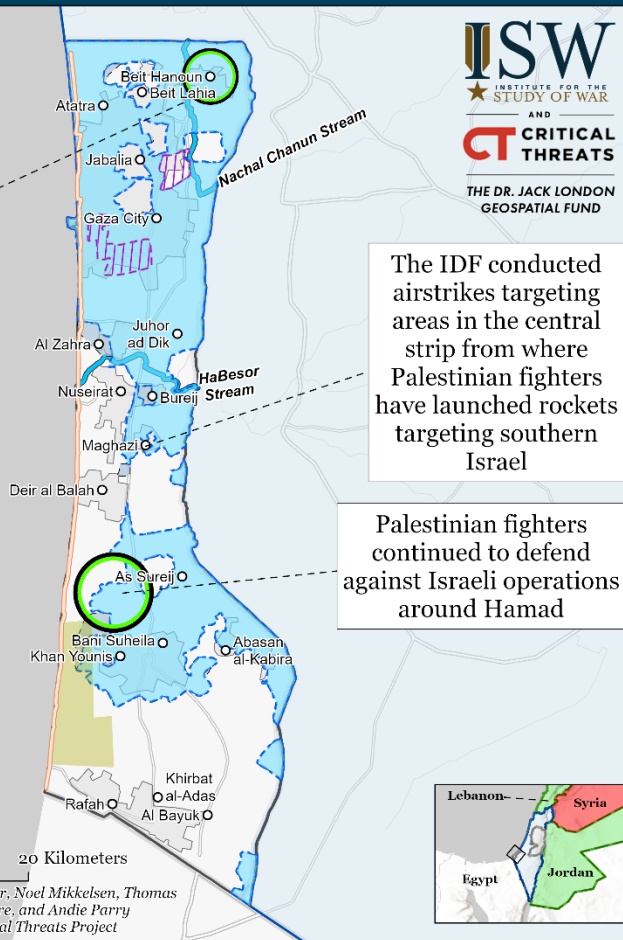


Israeli forces directed an airstrike targeting Palestinian fighters in Beit Hanoun



The IDF conducted airstrikes targeting areas in the central strip from where Palestinian fighters have launched rockets targeting southern Israel

Palestinian fighters continued to defend against Israeli operations around Hamad



0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry
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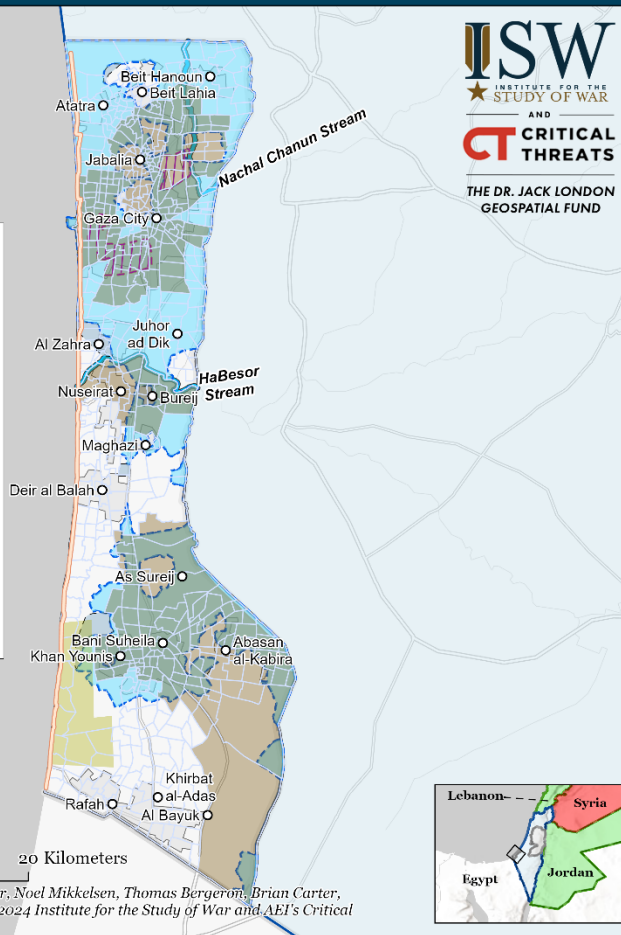
- Israel
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
- Jordan and Lebanon
- Syria
- Gaza Strip
- Claimed Furthest Israeli Advances
- Al-Mawasi Humanitarian Zone
- IDF-Declared Humanitarian Corridor on Road 230
- Significant Water Obstacles
- Densely Urban Areas
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- zz Areas Reportedly Infiltrated by Palestinian Militias

* ISW-CTP's "Reported Israeli Clearing Operations" layer uses the US military's doctrinal definition of clearing which is an operation that "requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area." Clearing operations frequently take weeks and sometimes months to complete

Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones in the Gaza Strip as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



CTP-ISW's "Israeli Announced Evacuation Zones" layer shows Israeli evacuation zones announced by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). CTP-ISW used IDF maps and statements to create this layer. Where IDF maps cover part of a zone this layer covers the whole zone to avoid understating the evacuation order. The IDF began announcing these evacuation zones on December 2, 2023, at 0222 ET on X (Twitter)



0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Noel Mikkelsen, Thomas Bergeron, Brian Carter, Ashka Jhaveri, Johanna Moore, and Andie Parry - © 2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Israel
- Gaza Strip
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- Syria
- Reported Israeli Clearing Operations*
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Israeli Mossad Chief David Barnea told CIA Director Bill Burns that Hamas is not interested in a ceasefire deal and is intent to “burn the area” during Ramadan.^[13] Barnea and Burns met in Jordan to discuss the state of ceasefire negotiations on March 8.^[14] Barnea said that Hamas is “entrenched in its position,” possibly referencing Hamas’ repeated demands for a permanent ceasefire, return of displaced people, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces, and sufficient humanitarian aid.^[15] The spokesperson for Hamas’ military wing called for the month of Ramadan to be an escalation of the “flood of Al Aqsa,” referring to the October 7 attack.^[16] Ramadan is expected to begin around March 10.

Three US and Israeli officials told Axios on March 9 that United States and international mediators are intensifying their efforts to reach a hostage deal and temporary ceasefire.[17]

Palestinian militias did not conduct any indirect fire attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel on March 9.

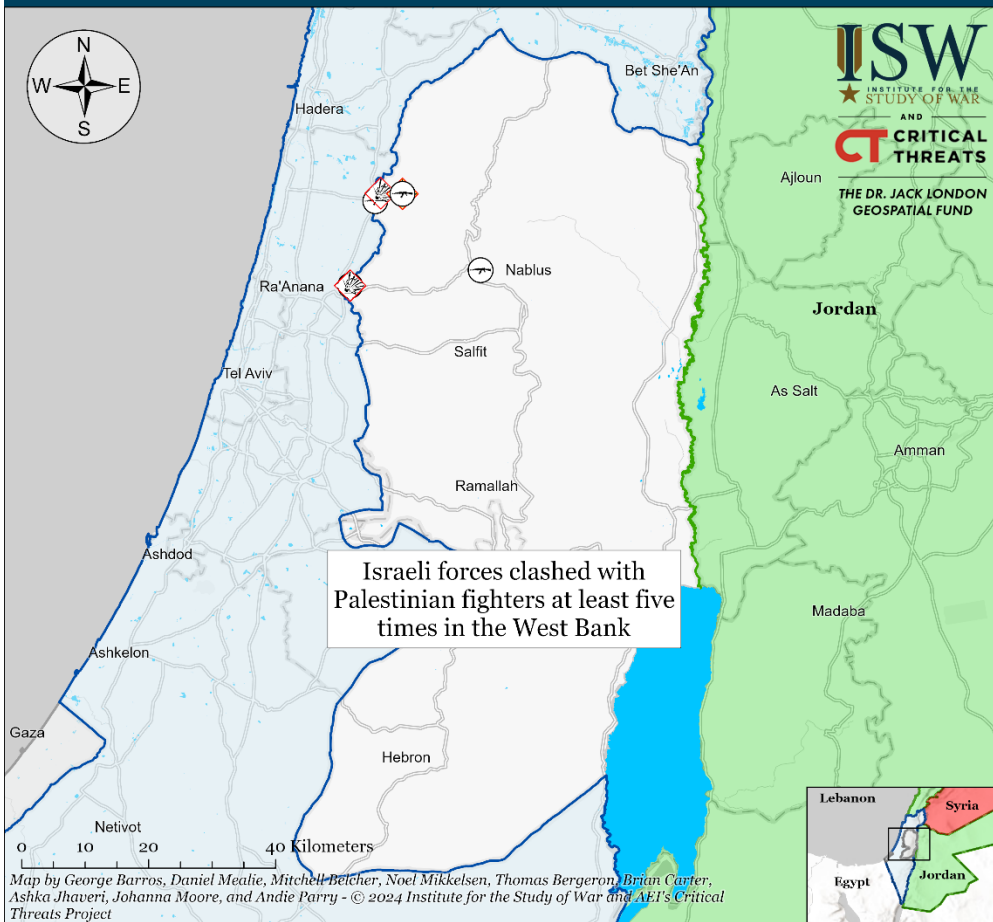
West Bank

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward the West Bank and fix them there

Israeli forces have clashed with Palestinian fighters at least five times in the West Bank since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on March 8.[18]

Clashes in the West Bank as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Israel | Clash (Small Arms Combat) | Gaza Strip and West Bank |
| Jordan and Lebanon | IED Detonated | Syria |
| | IED Planted | |

This map is not an exhaustive depiction of clashes and demonstrations in the West Bank.

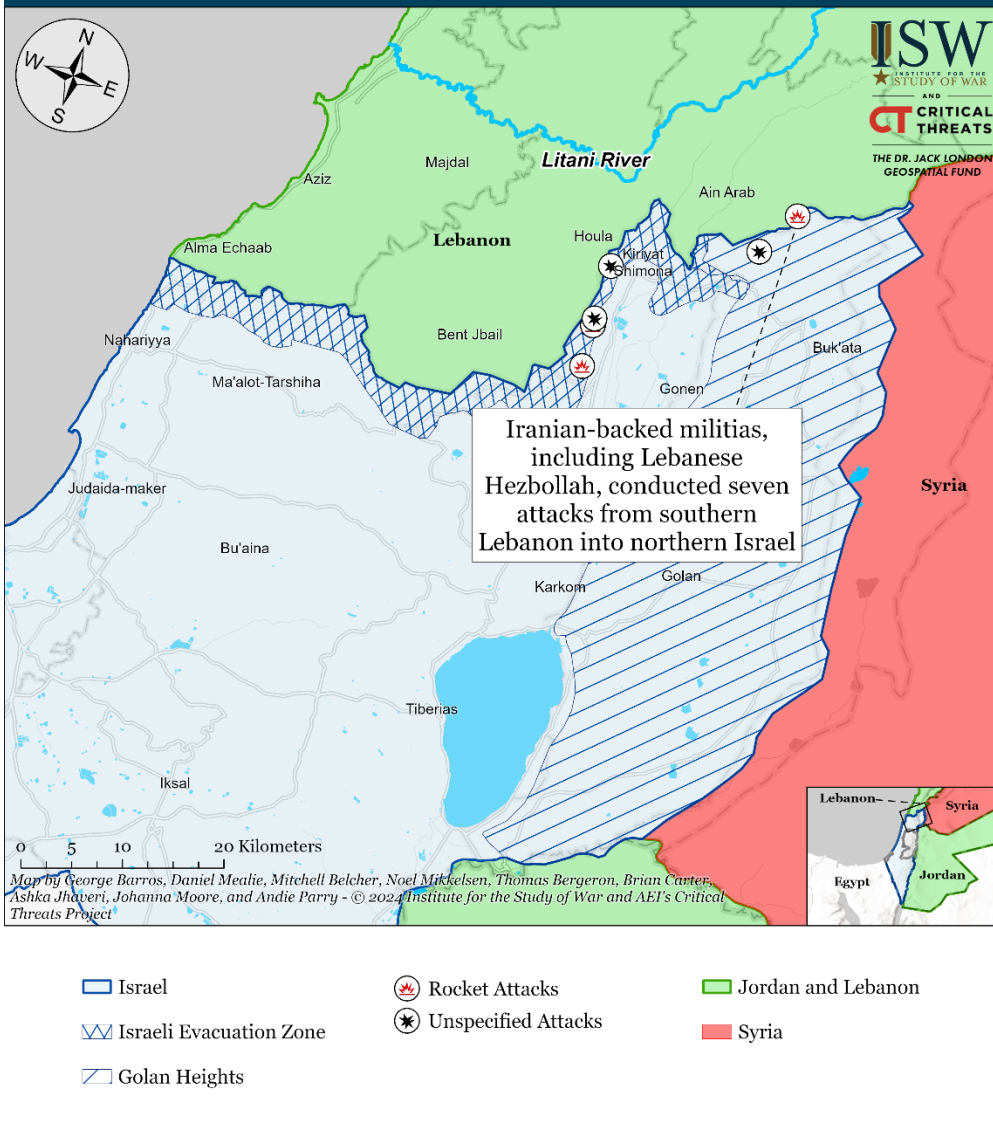
Southern Lebanon and Golan Heights

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Draw IDF assets and resources toward northern Israel and fix them there
- Set conditions for successive campaigns into northern Israel

Iranian-backed militias, including Lebanese Hezbollah, have conducted seven attacks from southern Lebanon into northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on March 8.[19]

Attacks into Northern Israel from Lebanon as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET



Recorded reports of attacks; CTP-ISW cannot independently verify impact.

Iran and Axis of Resistance

Axis of Resistance campaign objectives:

- Demonstrate the capability and willingness of Iran and the Axis of Resistance to escalate against the United States and Israel on multiple fronts
- Set conditions to fight a regional war on multiple fronts

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq—a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias—claimed that it conducted two drone attacks targeting Israeli military and civilian infrastructure in Haifa and in the Golan Heights on March 8.[20] The group fired drones targeting an oil

refinery in Haifa and an IDF base in the Golan Heights. Israeli officials have not commented on the attack at the time of writing.

Iranian-sponsored Attacks in the Middle East as of March 9, 2024, 2:00 PM ET

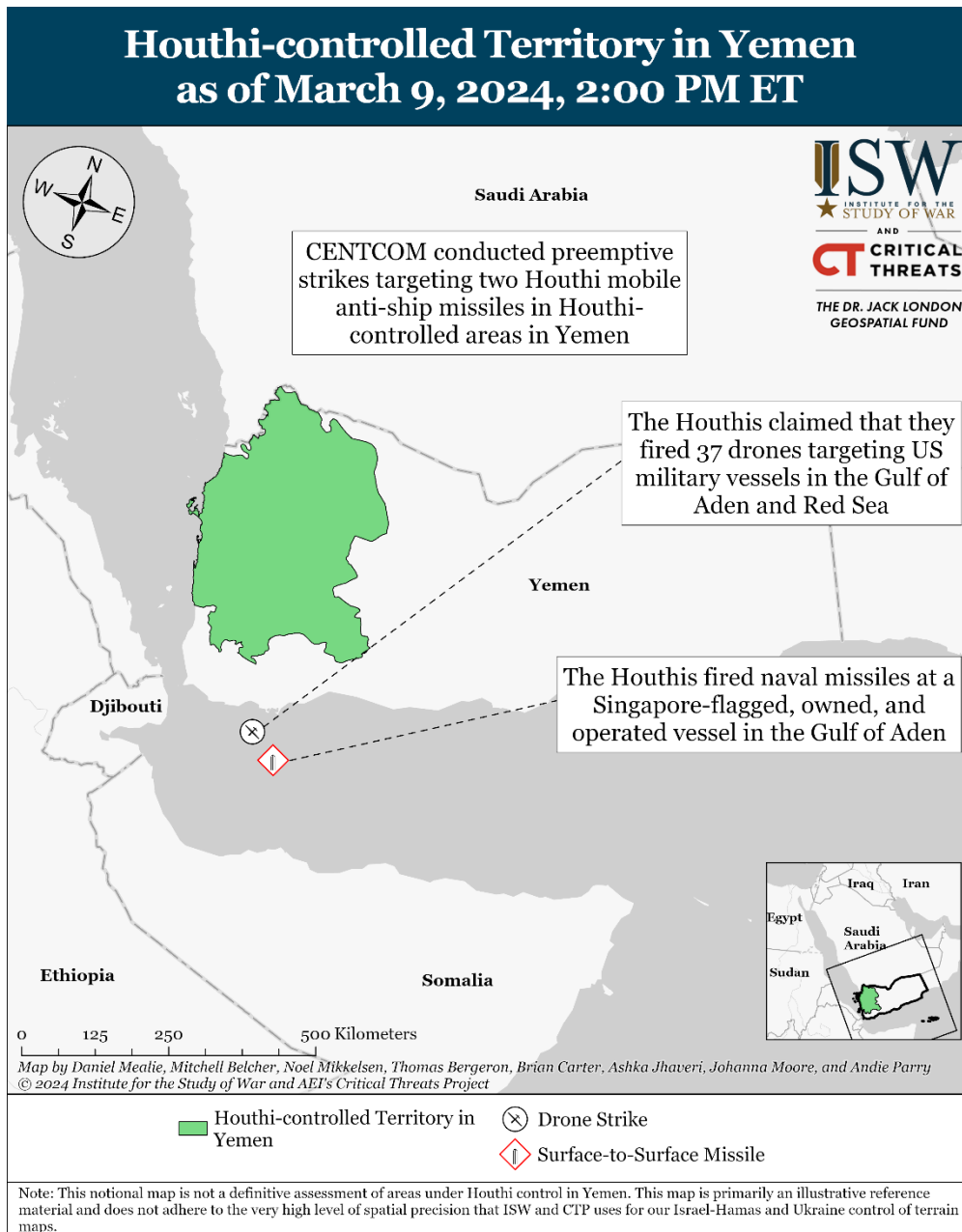


US CENTCOM conducted preemptive strikes targeting two Houthi mobile anti-ship missiles in Houthi-controlled Yemen on March 8.[21]

The Houthis separately fired naval missiles at Singapore-flagged, owned, and operated vessel *M/V Propel Fortune* in the Gulf of Aden on March 8.[22] CENTCOM and UK Maritime Trade Operations confirmed that the missiles did not impact the ship.[23]

The Houthis claimed that they launched 37 one-way attack drones targeting US warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden from Houthi-controlled Yemeni territory

on **March 9.[24]** CENTCOM reported that US Navy and coalition aircraft and ships intercepted at least 28 drones.[25] CENTCOM reported that the Houthi drones did not damage any US coalition or commercial vessels.



[1] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1766373677333975445>

[2] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1766041419955753171>

[3] <https://t.me/mojahdeenpal/4294>; <https://t.me/pflpgaza1/13899>; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5967; <https://t.me/sarayaps/17549>
[4] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5968
[5] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1766373675702329585>
[6] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1766373679359733827>
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[13] <https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1766503151891366394>
[14] <https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1766485214828642588>
[15] <https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1766503151891366394>; <https://www.alqassam dot ps/arabic/news/details/19851>
[16] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/09/ramadan-israel-gaza-ceasefire>;
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[17] <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/09/ramadan-israel-gaza-ceasefire>
[18] https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5959 ; https://t.me/elaqsa_1965/5960 ;
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[19] <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1766379126904979812> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/2503> ;
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[20] <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/982> ; <https://t.me/ElamAlmoqawama/985>
[21] <https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1766304008506130435>
[22] <https://twitter.com/army21ye/status/1766366053938905395>
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