

MEI Weekly.

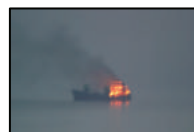


In recent years, Somalia has become a battleground for Gulf rivalries, with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar each providing military support to favoured factions. Al-Qaeda-linked Somali militant group al-Shabaab (pictured above) killed a manager of an Emirati company this February. Qatar has been accused of financing the group, but denies the charges.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

US and Iran: On a Collision Course?

Fears of conflict in the Persian Gulf have arisen as a result of the growing United States-Iran tensions. What are the goals of the American “maximum pressure” campaign? How do the Iranians view this, and what will their response be? To get the answers, join us on August 13, when diplomats, officials and experts debate these issues.



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Gulf States Vie for Power in Somalia

From allegations of bribing local officials, to supporting militant attacks, and competing for economic contracts, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are vying for control over war-torn Somalia's long coastline, which could offer them access to the Horn of Africa's growing markets and vital maritime routes.



United States President Donald Trump and then British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson share a mutual admiration. Mr Johnson won the race to become the British Prime Minister earlier this week.

How Boris Johnson Can Lower the Temperature on Iran

Elected in the midst of a brewing crisis, Britain's newly elected Prime Minister Boris Johnson faces the challenge of de-escalating growing tensions in the Gulf. Mr Johnson has close ties with President Donald Trump, and could use this to shape a common approach to Gulf security, and revive diplomatic efforts in engaging Iran.

US Punishes Chinese Firm Over Iranian Oil

Though United States sanctions waivers on Iranian oil exports ended in May, millions of barrels of Iranian oil have turned up at Chinese ports. For the first time, the US has imposed economic penalties on a Chinese company for not playing by its rules. China has long opposed unilateral US sanctions, and the decision will further cloud ties, which are already strained by a trade war.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Kushner Irons Out Peace Plan Details

As a follow-up move to the Bahrain conference, Senior Adviser to President Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, and other White House officials will be embarking on a Middle East tour next week, where they are expected to make stops in Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. During the tour, the United States hopes to iron out details of the peace plan as well as finalise its economic portion.

Princess Haya's Court Hearing Begins

Following Princess Haya bint al-Hussein of Jordan's escape from Dubai's ruler, questions have arisen regarding the fate of their two children. These questions are set to be answered at a two-day court hearing, which will take place from July 30-31.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: Two years ago, Qatar had to import every drop of milk it consumed. Now it has a state-of-the-art industry complete with its own herd that exports milk. It is just one example of how Doha has adapted well to a Saudi-led blockade.
<https://wapo.st/2JLc13K>

There is a “heightened risk of terrorism against aviation”, warned the British government a day prior to British Airways (right) and Lufthansa's abrupt suspension of flights to Cairo last Saturday.
<https://nyti.ms/2Z71NWj>



TWITTER: While US hawks John Bolton and Mike Pompeo are the public faces of President Donald Trump's “maximum pressure” campaign, it is Treasury official Sigal Mandelker who has been developing inventive ways to launch Washington's financial warfare against Tehran.
<https://bit.ly/32OvjDu>

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