

MEIWeekly.



Chief Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman stated that an Iranian drone had “closed within a threatening range” of the USS Boxer, prompting defensive measures to be taken by the US.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

Social Media as a Weapon

Automated Twitter accounts have manipulated political discourse in the Arabic Twitterverse in recent years, yet this phenomenon remains largely undiscovered. Here's your last chance to join us at MEI on July 25 as our speaker discusses how Twitter bots have been weaponised to spread disinformation and fake news.



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

US Battleship Downes Iranian Drone

After ignoring “multiple calls to stand down”, the USS Boxer employed electronic jamming to down an Iranian drone, which was purportedly within a threatening distance of the United States ship. This incident comes almost exactly a month after an American drone was shot down by Iran, exacerbating the worsening tensions between the two nations.



At an event held on the third anniversary of the failed 2016 coup, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that the Russian S-400 missile system would be operational by April 2020, stressing that it was integral to maintaining Turkey's security. PHOTO: Government of Turkey

Turkey Marks 3rd Anniversary of Failed Coup

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan commemorated the third anniversary of the failed coup against him this Monday, by playing up nationalistic sentiments. Mr Erdogan's deep-rooted suspicions that Washington was behind the attempted putsch has caused him to assert the nation's status as an independent actor, pivoting closer to Russia to avoid overdependence on the United States.

EU Clammers to Salvage Iran Nuclear Deal

While European Union Ministers declared that the current Iranian breaches of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action were "not serious enough", and that the JCPOA could be saved, they have not found an effective way to negate the additional sanctions imposed by the United States. Iran had previously warned that it would exceed the uranium stockpile cap if the Europeans fail to help it financially.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

US Energy Secretary Visits the Middle East

United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry will travel to Israel and Egypt next week for meetings on regional energy and security issues. Mr Perry will meet government officials, energy stakeholders, and attend the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. His visit comes amidst rising tensions between Iran and the US.

Iran to Offer Chinese Tourists Visa-Free Entry

As part of Iran's continued pivot to the East in response to building Western pressure, The Islamic Republic is developing a Visa Waiver programme for visitors from China, which may be implemented as early as the end of this month. While the move will shore up Iran's failing economy, it also serves to further the Islamic Republic's Look East strategy which seeks to strengthen understanding and cooperation with Asian states such as China.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: Writing for the South China Morning Post, MEI Research Fellow Nisha Mathew looks at the potential fallout for Dubai's ruler after one of his wives, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, fled the palace. <https://bit.ly/2Y91e20>

Israel has the most technologically advanced military on Earth. Why? A willingness to take risks, and big government spending on research and development are some reasons. <https://nyp.st/2M1i8cF>

TWITTER: Planning a trip to Egypt? Don't miss the 4,600-year-old “bent” pyramid (right), which was a key step in the evolution of pyramid construction. <https://bit.ly/32wpNFq>



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