

MEIWeekly.

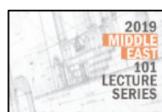


The Honourable Richard Armitage, former US deputy secretary of state (above), sharing the American perspective of the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran at MEI's US-Iran conference at Orchard Hotel on 13 August.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

ME 101: Developments in the Middle East

Why should Singapore care about the Middle East? Join us on 21 August as MEI Chairman Mr Bilahari Kausikan kickstarts the ME 101 lecture series with an introduction to developments in the Middle East and what they mean for Singapore. The lectures give an overview of the circumstances and impact of the encounters between the Middle East and the rest of the world in terms of politics, economics, and cultural norms.



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

The US and Iran: On a Collision Course?

"We are talking about [how] there may be a second Cold War", said Mr Hitoshi Tanaka, Japan's former deputy minister for foreign affairs, at MEI's conference on US-Iran tensions held on Tuesday at Orchard Hotel. The day-long event featured keynote speakers such as former US Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Iranian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour and four panels offering a myriad of perspectives on the issue.



A children's playground in Aden in 2013, prior to the outbreak of the Yemeni civil war in 2015.

Yemeni Separatists Seize Parts of Aden

Clashes in Yemen's key port city of Aden pitted United Arab Emirates-backed separatists against Saudi Arabia-backed government forces, threatening what thinktank Crisis Group has called a "new civil war within a civil war". "Scores" of people have been killed, and electricity and water disrupted. Experts worry that tensions will spread to other parts of southern Yemen.

Gibraltar Defies US to Release Iranian Tanker

Hours after the United States requested to seize Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 on Thursday, Gibraltar authorities released the ship and its crew. Grace 1 had been impounded for six weeks in Gibraltar for allegedly violating a European Union oil embargo. The US' move is the latest in a series of tit-for-tat actions that risks escalating US-Iran confrontation in the Gulf. Gibraltar's response indicates that it is taking a step back from the tensions.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Netanyahu to Visit Ukraine

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has planned a visit to Ukraine from 18-20 August, less than a month before elections to the 22nd Knesset. Mr Netanyahu will be the first foreign leader to visit Kiev since Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky took office. Political analysts say Netanyahu is hoping to gain favour with Russian-speaking Israelis with Ukrainian roots.

G7 Summit to Focus on Instex

The upcoming G7 summit, which will be held from 24-26 August, is set to focus on tackling United States-Iran tensions, where the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (Instex) special purpose vehicle will be the main topic of discussion. The Instex is a barter-based trade conduit with Iran initiated by France, Germany and Britain that could alleviate US sanctions.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: The reaction of Middle Eastern countries to India's downgrading of Kashmir from a state to a union territory was muted, despite the outrage expressed by Pakistan, a fellow Muslim nation. There are three key reasons for this. <https://bit.ly/2Z6ln9o>

The loss of Aden to Yemeni separatists means the Yemeni government does not control the country's two most important cities. <https://nyti.ms/2YRonHi>

TWITTER: Newly declassified transcripts underscore the sensitive role Mr Henry Kissinger (right), previously US secretary of state, played in managing the 1973 war: balancing the US' commitment to Israel's security and Arab states' need to make gains in the war. <https://bit.ly/2z4hZNY>



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