

# MEIWeekly.



Next year, Saudi Arabia will issue a tender for two nuclear power reactors (such as those pictured above). Photo: mzter, shared on Pixabay

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## CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

### From the Grassroots to the Monarchs

Kuwait's openness can be traced to its *diwaniyyas*, or places of social gathering for Kuwaiti men to discuss issues relevant to them. Join us on 17 September as Dr Clemens Chay explains how the *diwaniyya* not only facilitates citizens' accessibility to the ruling family, but also sustains the country's familial style of governance and particular brand of diplomacy.



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## WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

### Saudi Arabia Plans to Go Nuclear

Saudi Arabia's new energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman announced on Monday that the kingdom expects to issue a tender for two nuclear power reactors next year, and plans to ultimately produce and enrich uranium for fuel. The move opens up the possibility of military use of the material, and may encourage nuclear proliferation in the region.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced plans to annex the Jordan Valley (pictured above), which borders the Hashemite Kingdom and is regarded by Israel as strategic for security reasons. Photo: Habner Lemuel Da Mata Silver, shared on Pexels

### Netanyahu Pledges West Bank Annexation

On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to annex nearly a third of the occupied West Bank if he gets re-elected next week, capitalising on a “unique, one-off opportunity” afforded by a sympathetic Trump administration. This was a daring bid to bring the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, seen by many voters to be intractable, back to centre stage in the election campaign. A poll found that nearly half of Jewish Israelis would favour annexation if supported by the Trump administration and fewer than three in ten would oppose.

### Bolton Leaves the Trump Administration

United States President Donald Trump removed Mr John Bolton as his national security adviser on Tuesday. Mr Bolton had provided an ultra-hawkish and experienced view tempering Mr Trump's boisterous, but anti-militaristic approach to foreign policy. Iran's government spokesman welcomed his departure, citing “fewer obstacles to (the United States) understanding the realities of Iran”.

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## LOOKAHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

### Tunisia to Hold Presidential Elections

Tunisia is set to elect a new president on 15 September, two months earlier than planned, following the death of President Beji Caïd Essebsi in late July. The 26 candidates competing for presidency include a number of political heavyweights, such as current Prime Minister Youssef Chahed and Defence Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi. Some presidential candidates, preferring a stronger presidency, have expressed their frustration with the current constitutional configuration, which allows for neither a presidential nor parliamentary system.

### Israelis to Vote in a Second Election

Israelis will vote in a second election on 17 September, after attempts by elected representatives to form a coalition government fell through following the April ballot. Despite winning the first poll, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has failed to resolve disagreements between his Jewish ultra-Orthodox parties and secular allies. Major changes in the current election include the rise in popularity of Mr Netanyahu's former ally Mr Avigdor Lieberman, seen as a potential kingmaker for the next government.

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## #MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

**FACEBOOK:** By strengthening regional integration and building multilateral institutions, small states can reinforce their global positions without totally relying on the economic giants, said MEI Chairman Bilahari Kausikan in a talk in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.  
<https://bit.ly/2kFQw1a>

The seven students, split across two start-ups and a research lab, were the first batch of SUTD students to experience first-hand work in Israel. They spent the past four months learning what it takes to be entrepreneurs and exploring research in cyber security.  
[https://bit.ly/2lJ\\_hxk6](https://bit.ly/2lJ_hxk6)

**TWITTER:** “\$450bn to be invested in the desert for what?” says one senior Kuwaiti businessman. “They could put 10 per cent of that into our economy and we would become like Singapore.”  
<https://on.ft.com/2kwjW20>



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