

MEIWeekly.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (above) faces Likud leadership challenge from former interior and education minister, Mr Gideon Saar. Photo: US Department of State, shared on Flickr.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

Iran's Factional Politics

Iran will hold legislative and presidential elections in 2020 and 2021, amid heavy unilateral sanctions by the United States following American withdrawal from the JCPOA. Join us on 6 December as Professor Luciano Zaccara examines the current factional scheme, the future prospects of Iran in face of the upcoming elections, and the possible implications for Iranian foreign policy.



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

New Political Threat Looms for Netanyahu

Mr Gideon Saar, a former interior and education minister who is considered a standout among rising Israeli politicians, has challenged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for leadership of Likud by calling for an immediate Likud leadership primary last Saturday (23 November). This comes amid an impasse with opposition leader Benny Gantz in forming a governing coalition and Mr Netanyahu indicted on charges of corruption and fraud last Thursday (21 November).



Turkey's Bayraktar TB2 drone (above) is increasingly used by the Turkish military in extraterritorial strikes, imitating methods employed by the United States in its "war on terror". Photo: Bayhaluk, as shared on Wikimedia Commons.

UK Tech Critical to Turkish Drone Surge

UK-based manufacturer EDO MDM Technology provided Turkey with the Hornet missile rack during the crucial initial development stage around 2015. This allowed Turkey to circumvent a US export ban on killer drones to develop its Bayraktar TB2 drones. These drones were heavily used in Ankara's three operations against Kurdish-led forces in Syria and were responsible for the killing of 449 individuals.

Singapore Reaffirms Relationship with Bahrain

Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Mohamed Maliki Osman reaffirmed the strong bilateral and defence relationship between Singapore and Bahrain, at the 15th Manama Dialogue from 22 to 24 November 2019. Singapore expressed appreciation for Bahrain's support for the Singapore Armed Force's deployments as part of the multinational coalition to defeat Islamic State and counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Abu Dhabi to Host Formula 1 Race

The 11th edition of the Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix is slated to be held on 1 December (Sunday) at the Yas Marina Circuit. Traditionally known as the final race in the 21-round race calendar, the Abu Dhabi race is Formula 1's only dusk-to-night race.

UAE Celebrates its National Day on Monday

The UAE celebrates 48 years of independence on 2 December (Monday). Termed as the Year of Tolerance, the highlights of this year's national day celebrations will include multiple firework displays and a special LED light show at the Burj Khalifa and The Dubai Fountain.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: Arab thinkers across the Middle East are pushing for engagement with Israel, claiming that "Arabs are the boycott's first — and only — victims." <https://bit.ly/2OsN5Hk>

With China projected to surpass the United States as Israel's top source of foreign direct investment in view of US restrictions on access to sensitive technologies, Israel faces high stakes and hard choices, said Dr Mercy Kuo at a lecture at MEI. Missed it? You can still watch the video or tune in to the podcast. <https://bit.ly/2pTH4Ke>

TWITTER: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) appears determined to step up crackdown on dissent, as Saudi Arabia prepares for the IPO of state-owned oil company Aramco next month. <https://bit.ly/2KZlCen>



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