

MEI Weekly



President Ebrahim Raisi speaks before parliament in Tehran on 25 August 2021. Iran's steady progress in its nuclear programme, which has hit another atomic milestone, is expected to be used by Mr Raisi as leverage in the country's ongoing nuclear discussions with other world powers. Photo: ATTA KENARE / AFP

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: Our latest Insight article highlights the commercial, psychological and strategic factors behind Israel's willingness to co-operate with the GCC states in the cyber domain, one year since the signing of the Abraham Accords. Read it [here](#).

LISTEN: In the 18th episode of our Boots Off the Ground: Security in Transition in the Middle East and Beyond podcast series, hear how private sector companies are changing their approach to security and human rights, particularly when operating in complex or conflict-affected environments. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Iran's Nuclear Programme Reaches Milestone

Iran is currently able to produce enough atomic fuel for a single nuclear warhead within a month. The estimate was made in a new report released by the Institute for Science and International Security, a private group that studies data provided by the United Nation's atomic inspection group. The report's lead author, David Albright, said that the new government of President Ebrahim Raisi is likely to use Iran's progress in its nuclear programme as leverage to secure more favourable terms in ongoing negotiations between Tehran and other world powers to restore the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Ex-US Intelligence Officers Admit to Hacking Work for the UAE

Three former US intelligence personnel admitted to being part of a conspiracy to provide the UAE with advanced technology and aid Emirati intelligence operatives in cyber operations against their enemies, according to court documents released to the public. The men, whom prosecutors said aided the UAE in gaining unauthorised access to data from electronic devices and servers across the world, were employed by DarkMatter – a company associated with the Emirati government. They are also seen as part of an emerging trend of ex-US intelligence officers accepting lucrative job offers from other states looking to enhance their cybercapabilities.



Shot with a long exposure and taken on 30 January 2018, this photo shows employees walking into offices of the UAE government-linked cybersecurity firm DarkMatter, in Abu Dhabi. Three ex-US intelligence personnel admitted to hacking activities while being employed by DarkMatter. Photo: AP Photo / Jon Gambrell

Blood Donation in KSA Made Easier with Mobile App

A smartphone app which provides the people with quick and easy access to information about their nearest blood bank has helped to improve blood donation awareness in Saudi Arabia. The app, called Wateen, was launched in 2019 by a group of young Saudi tech entrepreneurs and to date, has clocked up 520,000 users, 962,000 donations and 440,000 appointments. The service is now used by the kingdom's Ministry of Health under Sehhaty, the national platform for blood donation.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

In Conversation with Ambassador Robert Hunter: Making Sense of the Carter Doctrine

The Carter Doctrine, proclaimed in 1980, promised the use of all means necessary, including force, to defend US interests in the Persian Gulf. Once a clarion call enunciating America's stance against Soviet expansion, is the doctrine still relevant today? What lies at the core of America's Persian Gulf interests? Most importantly, is the US rethinking its role there?

MEI(NUS) will host Ambassador Robert Hunter, a top official in the Carter Administration who had a hand in crafting the doctrine itself, to tackle these and other questions on America's evolving role in the Middle East.

Join us for this public talk conducted via Zoom on **Wednesday, 22 September 2021, from 10.00am to 11.00am (SGT)**. For more details and to register, [click here](#).

ME 101 Lecture Series 2021: Session 5

Throughout history, the Middle East has been locked in engagements with the West through crusades, wars, colonialism and terrorism. However, there are many lesser-known facets too. This series of lectures will give you a more comprehensive overview of the region and its inevitable impacts locally and worldwide.



Join us for the 4th lecture which analyses the role of the US in the Middle East. This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Thursday, 23 September 2021, at 5.00pm (SGT)**.

For more details and to register, [click here](#).

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Demise of Top Iraqi Cleric Prompts Questions about Successor

The passing of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Saeed Al-Hakim – one of Iraq's highest-ranking Shi'i clerics – has laid open the question of who should succeed him in the Marja'iya, Iraq's top Shiite religious body. The late Al-Hakim was regarded as a major candidate to succeed Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, Iraq's top spiritual leader. Sources say that one of Al-Hakim's sons, Riadh Muhammad Saeed Al-Hakim, is a possible choice to replace his father. Importantly, any successor to Al-Hakim would be seen as a potential candidate to succeed Al-Sistani.



Saudi Foreign Minister to Visit India

KSA Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud is set to visit India on Sunday, 19 September, to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. Prince Faisal is expected to meet with External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, as well as call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both countries are concerned about the security ramifications of an emergent theocratic Afghanistan and the active role of Pakistan, Qatar and Turkey in engaging the Taliban regime.

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