

MEIWeekly.



MEI-NUS is holding a discussion with General (ret.) David H. Petraeus, the former head of the CIA and US Central Command, on **Tuesday, 19 October 2021**. He will be sharing insights about America's shifting strategic priorities – away from the Middle East and Central Asia and towards the Indo-Pacific. Click [here](#) to register.

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: In our latest Insight piece, MEI Visiting Research Professor Dr Gyorgy Busztin draws on his experience with the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq and highlights the challenges that various UN missions and agencies have been encountering in providing security for their staff and infrastructure in conflict situations. Read his article [here](#).

READ: MEI Senior Research Fellow Asif Shuja told Arab News that the Biden administration delisting the Houthis from US' terror list has worked in favour of Iran, as the militia intensifies its efforts to bring whole of Yemen under its control. Read the article [here](#).

REGISTER: Join the conversation with General (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, ex-CIA head and former commander of the US Central Command, on **Tuesday, 19 October 2021**, and get to hear him discuss how the US' increasing focus on the Indo-Pacific will shape its military and intelligence strategies. Sign up for the event [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

US National Security Advisor Meets KSA Crown Prince

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman (popularly known as MBS). During the visit, both parties discussed Yemen and endorsed the efforts of Hans Grundberg, the new US Special Envoy to Yemen. Earlier this year, the Biden administration announced a recalibration of ties with Riyadh and Mr Sullivan is the most senior Biden administration official to visit MBS in Saudi Arabia ever since. Mr Sullivan also visited the UAE to meet with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and other officials to discuss bilateral ties between their respective countries.

Increasing Fear that Women Will Never Be Allowed Back at Afghan Universities

Women who are instructors and students at Afghanistan's public universities increasingly fear that the Taliban will never let them go back to their classes and professors are quitting or trying to leave the country in droves. According to estimates by lecturers who spoke with The Times, more than half of the country's professors have either left their jobs or say they will. Kabul University, the country's premier public college, has been particularly hard-hit, losing a quarter of its faculty in recent days, one of the university's board members said. The Taliban's return to power immediately sent chills through the country's higher education system, which over the past two decades had emphasised improved educational opportunity for women and had been buoyed by hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid.



Students at a private university in a class with a curtain separating men and women, in September 2021. Photo: Aamir QURESHI / AFP

Young Iranians Doubt Their Future at Home

After years of sanctions, mismanagement and the Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to put numbers to Iran's economic struggles. Since 2018, many prices have more than doubled, living standards have skidded and poverty has spread. Though there are no statistics for middle-class Iranians' uncertainty and increasingly pinched aspirations, their darkening mood can best be measured in missed milestones – eagerness to leave the country after graduation, delayed marriages and declining birthrates. Conversations with Iranians wavered between faith and despair, hope and practicality, wondering how to make the best of a situation beyond their control.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

ME 101 Lecture Series 2021: Session 7

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 6th lecture which aims to examine the politics of economic reform in the Middle East. This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Wednesday, 6 October 2021, at 5.00pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Iraq to Hold General Election

Iraq will hold its general election on 10 October 2021, its fifth parliamentary vote since the American invasion of the country in 2003 which established a multi-party system contested by groups defined largely by sect or ethnicity. The election was originally set for next year but was brought forward after protests in 2019 over corruption and mismanagement by the country's political elite. Groups drawn from the Shi'i majority are expected to remain in the driving seat and the nationalist Sadrist movement — the political organisation of Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr — is expected to emerge as parliament's largest faction.

Israel's National Security Council Head to Meet US Counterpart

Eyal Hulata, Israel's National Security Council head, will visit Washington to meet his counterpart, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Tuesday, 5 October to discuss issues related to Iran. Earlier this week, Mr Sullivan toured the Middle East and made stops at various places – Cairo was one of them and it was to discuss Egypt's role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas, as well as Libyan and regional security. During Mr Hulata's and Mr Sullivan's meeting next week, more discussions on these and "a meeting of the US-Israel Strategic Consultative group" will also take place, The White House stated.



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