

MEI Weekly



Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman waits to speak in a session during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference held earlier this month. Saudi Arabia and Russia are considering a pause in OPEC+ plans to increase crude output. Photo: ANDY BUCHANAN / AFP

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: In our latest Insight piece, MEI Visiting Research Professor Gyorgy Buszti examines Central Asian states' cross-border security concerns stemming from having the Taliban in power next door. Read his article [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

KSA, Russia Plan to Pause Crude Output

Russia and Saudi Arabia are reportedly deliberating whether to pause their recent efforts to provide the world with more crude, after the US and a few other countries announced releasing some of their crude reserves to lower global prices. Crude output has been carefully co-ordinated by Russia and the OPEC+ countries since Covid-19 caused a decline in demand last year. The recent announcement has led to KSA and Russia considering a pause of the group's monthly collective increase but other OPEC countries like the UAE and Kuwait are against that idea. The OPEC+ states will meet next week to review a deal that includes plans to boost output by 400,000 barrels a day each month through next year.

UAE, Turkey Agree to Economic Co-operation

In the latest indication of warming relations, the UAE and Turkey signed accords on technology and energy investments on Wednesday after talks in Ankara between Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan. The Turkish and Emirati central banks also signed a co-operation agreement then. The accords signal a shift towards economic co-operation after years of regional rivalry between the two states and amid a currency crisis in Turkey.



UAE officials attend a ceremony held by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Kulliyeh, Turkey, on 24 November 2021. The UAE and Ankara signed economic co-operation accords on Wednesday – a sign of warming ties after years of regional rivalry. Photo: ADEM ALTAN / AFP

Israel warns US of Partial Nuclear Deal with Iran

Israeli officials are warning the US to avoid striking any “less-for-less” deal with Iran that will offer the latter partial relief from sanctions in exchange for winding back parts of its nuclear programme. This is the latest sign of a growing public rift between Israel and the Biden administration and it comes just as nuclear discussions about revival of the nuclear deal are set to resume on Monday. US officials maintain that their goal is to fully restore the original 2015 nuclear deal, which lifted most of the sanctions in exchange for strict but temporary constraints on Tehran's nuclear programme.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

Lebanon: On the Brink of a New Civil War?

Since 2019, Lebanon has faced a financial crisis that the World Bank ranks among the three worst in the last two centuries. This economic collapse was enabled and aggravated by the inability of the political elite to satisfy the demands of international organisations and governments involved in the recovery plan. The Beirut Port blast last August added on to the country's existing problems. Join us for an online discussion as our panel explores the drivers of the ongoing crisis and the consequences not just for Lebanon but for the wider Middle East too.



This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Thursday, 2 December 2021, from 5pm to 6pm (SGT)**. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

[Book Discussion] Three Dangerous Men: Russia, China, Iran and the Rise of Irregular Warfare

Seth G. Jones, author of the book *Three Dangerous Men: Russia, China, Iran and the Rise of Irregular Warfare*, will discuss how irregular warfare campaigns by these three key figures are eroding American power. Ranging from cyberattacks, covert action and proxy conflicts to information and disinformation campaigns, espionage and economic coercion, the tools of irregular warfare are increasingly re-shaping international politics.

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Wednesday, 8 December 2021, from 8.00 pm to 9.30 pm (SGT)**. For more details, click [here](#).

Bridging the Gulf: Session 12

MEI (NUS) will host the co-editors of the volume, *Urban Modernity in the Contemporary Gulf*, to examine the Gulf's engagement with architectural modernism over the decades. Many built relics in the Gulf, including the coral stone homes of Dubai's rulers along its famous saltwater creek, have been razed to make way for more modern structures. Constituents of urbanisation, Arab/Muslim identity and the oil political economy all form a dynamic interplay in city planning. How then can we describe Gulf architecture? Consumerist? Modernist? Where does the notion of heritage fit in?

Join us for this public talk conducted online via Zoom on **Thursday, 9 December 2021, 4pm to 5.30pm (SGT)**, that will explore these and more. For more details, click [here](#).

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Iran Nuclear Talks to Restart

Iran and the US are set to relaunch indirect negotiations aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, on Monday, 29 November in Vienna. The previous six rounds of nuclear discussions earlier this year between April and June have borne little fruit and the talks were paused due to Iran's presidential election.

Expectations of a breakthrough in the talks are low, since President Raisi has since upped Iranian demands before a return to the deal, while the Biden administration seemingly remains unwilling to unilaterally ease sanctions.



US, Taliban to Resume Talks

The US is set to resume talks with the Taliban in Qatar next week to address issues including counter-terrorism operations and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The discussions, led by the US special representative for Afghanistan, Tom West, are expected to last two weeks. Last month, both sides had met in Doha. Mr West said that US conditions for the Taliban to receive US financial and diplomatic aid included tangible counter-terrorism efforts, formation of an inclusive government, guarantee of rights to women and minorities and equal access to education and employment.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



CAN'T MAKE IT TO OUR EVENTS? LISTEN AT YOUR OWN TIME!

