

# MEI Weekly.



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett made history this week when he met the crown prince of Abu Dhabi on the first official visit by an Israeli leader to the UAE. Photo: Tsafir Abayov / POOL / AFP.

## WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

**READ:** MEI Chairman Bilahari Kausikan explains that the Middle East is undergoing certain transformations and they do have an impact on Singapore, economically and beyond. To know more, download the e-copy of our Annual Report 2020-2021 [here](#).

**LISTEN:** In the 21st episode of our *Boots Off the Ground: Security in Transition in the Middle East and Beyond* podcast series, find out about weapons used in the conflict in Syria as well as open-source investigation tools and techniques. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

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

### Bennett Makes Historic UAE Visit

The Israeli prime minister met the crown prince of Abu Dhabi on Monday on the first official visit by an Israeli leader to the UAE – a historic moment that would have been unimaginable a few years ago, showcasing the rapid realignment of the Middle East driven by shared fears of a nuclear Iran. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett spent four hours with the de facto Emirati leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. Their meeting comes amid renewed tensions between the US and Israel, which opposes efforts by Washington to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

### Iran to Replace Cameras at Nuclear Site

Faced with a potential vote of censure by the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has agreed to replace surveillance cameras at a key site that manufactures centrifuges. However, it continues to block UN inspectors from viewing the videos those cameras produce and replacing the full memory cards in cameras at other sites. This has further complicated talks in Vienna as negotiators are left without a clear and complete assessment of Iran's nuclear programme.



Chief of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, delivers a speech during the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference in September 2021. Fearing a potential vote of censure by IAEA, Iran recently agreed to replace surveillance cameras at a key site that manufactures centrifuges but continues to block UN inspectors from viewing the footages. Photo: Joe Klamar / AFP.

### UAE Threatens to Drop US Arms Deal

The UAE is threatening to pull out of a \$23 billion deal to buy American-made F-35 aircraft, Reaper drones and other advanced munitions, US officials said, in what would be a significant shake-up between two long-time partners increasingly at odds over China's role in the Gulf. The Emirati government told US officials that it intended to halt the deal because Abu Dhabi felt that the security requirements by the US to safeguard the weaponry from Chinese infiltration were too onerous and UAE's national sovereignty was in jeopardy.

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### #ICYMI [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*, elaborates how irregular warfare campaigns by these three key figures are eroding American power and increasingly re-shaping international politics. Click [here](#) to catch up on the informative book talk.



## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

### Libya's Election Raises Fears of Violence

Libya's presidential election, meant to help unify the nation after a decade of civil war, is supposed to take place in a week but calls are mounting for a delay. The vote, scheduled for 24 December 2021, is to choose Libya's first president since the ouster and killing of Muammar Gaddafi more than a decade ago. For nearly a year, the election has been the lynchpin of international efforts to bring peace to the country but critics warn that going ahead with the vote could throw the country into new violence.



### Salvaging the Turkish Lira

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has vowed to take on the currency markets after a fresh cut in his country's interest rates sent the lira plunging to its lowest ever level against the US dollar. He said Turkey's destiny would not be determined by the level of borrowing costs or by foreign exchange speculators despite signs his unorthodox approach to running the economy was leading to rapidly rising inflation. The Turkish president announced that the minimum wage would be increased by 50 per cent to maintain its US dollar value and promised unspecified measures to ensure stability in the coming days.

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