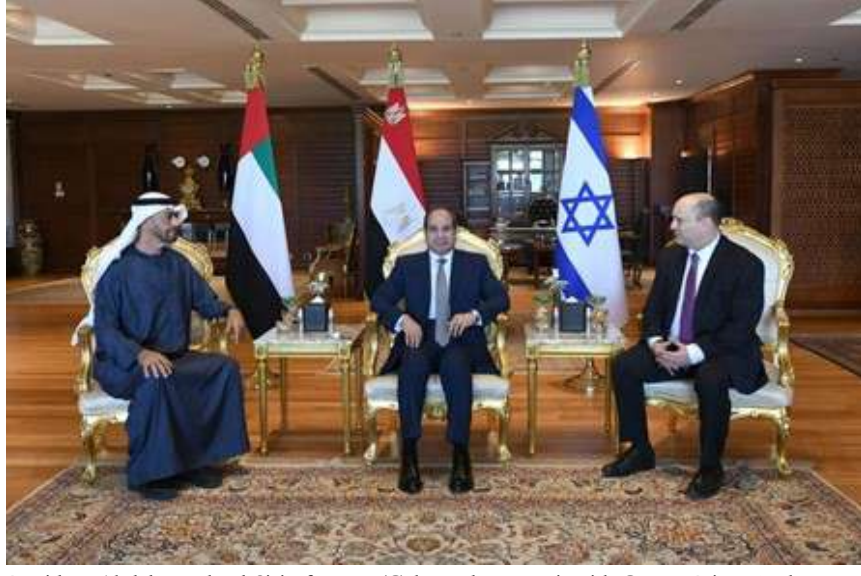


MEI Weekly



President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt (C) hosted a summit with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE (L) and Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (R) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on Tuesday. Photo: Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: The second edition of the Unmanned Systems Forum: Smart Approach, Fast Development conference discussed why the Black Sea matters and assessed the security impact on neighbouring regions and the plans and trends for the development of the unmanned systems of Russia and China. MEI Principal Research Fellow, who was one of the panel members, spoke about China and Turkey's competition for combat UAS market share. Read about the event [here](#).

LISTEN & READ: In the latest episode of our *Boots Off the Ground: Security in Transition in the Middle East and Beyond* podcast series, hear about Russian private military companies from Ukraine to Syria – the emergence of a new tool of clandestine warfare. Listen to the episode or read the transcript [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Egypt Hosts Israel, UAE for First Summit

Egypt hosted the first summit meeting with leaders of Israel and the UAE earlier this week, the latest sign of a swift realignment of Middle Eastern political alliances since Israel established diplomatic relations in 2020 with several Arab countries. Governments of the three countries were circumspect on what their leaders discussed at their meeting. The deliberately vague statements obscured an important development in the region as the Middle Eastern powers appeared to band together to navigate their fraught relationships with the Biden administration, amid the quickly changing geopolitical landscape resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Israel Blocked Spyware for Ukraine, Estonia

The Israeli government rejected requests from Ukraine and Estonia in recent years to purchase and use Pegasus – the powerful spyware tool – to hack Russian mobile phone numbers, according to people with knowledge of the discussions. Israel feared that selling the cyberweapon to adversaries of Russia would damage Israel's relationship with the Kremlin, they said. Both Ukraine and Estonia had hoped to buy Pegasus to gain access to Russian phones, presumably as part of intelligence operations targeting their increasingly menacing neighbour in the years before the current crisis but Israel's Ministry of Defence refused to grant licenses to NSO Group, the company that makes Pegasus, to sell to Estonia and Ukraine.



Members of Japan's lower house of parliament applaud at the end of a speech by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky via a video link at the House of Representatives office building in Tokyo on Wednesday, 23 March 2022. Last Sunday, during a similar speech to the Israeli Knesset, President Zelensky had criticised the Israeli government for not providing his country with the Iron Dome anti-missile system and other defensive weapons for the war against Russia. Photo: Behrouz Mehri / POOL / AFP.

Houthi Attack Saudi Arabia's Energy Facilities

Saudi Arabia said it will not bear responsibility for any shortages in the global oil supply after Yemen's Houthi rebels struck Saudi energy facilities in at least three cities over the weekend. The official Saudi Press Agency carried a statement that said the attacks by the Iran-aligned Houthis pose a danger to the global oil supply and will have "dire effects on the production, processing and refining sectors." The statement asked the international community to stand "firmly" against the Houthis and prevent their "destructive attacks that pose a direct threat to the security of petroleum supplies in these highly sensitive circumstances that global energy markets are witnessing."

CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

Climate Commitments: Less Reason for the Arab Region to Cop Out?

Can the next two Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings – COP 27 and COP 28 – serve as outlets for the Arab region to highlight their unique climate challenges? Will there be an increase in regional climate co-operation?



In collaboration with the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW), MEI (NUS) will be hosting a panel to tackle these questions and more.

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Tuesday, 29 March 2022, at 8.00pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

Can Gulf States End the Yemen War?

The war in Yemen has now turned into the epicenter of regional rivalries, as reflected by Iran's support for the Houthi rebels, the proliferation of ballistic missiles launched from Yemen to Saudi Arabia and the redeployment of terrorist organisations into Yemen's ungoverned areas.



Join us for a webinar that will discuss the latest developments in the Yemen war and their broader implications for the region.

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Wednesday, 6 April 2022, at 3.00pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Israel's PM to Visit India

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is scheduled to visit India next week for talks covering a jump in energy prices, investment opportunities and efforts to prevent a potential food crisis. A statement by Mr Bennett's office said the visit will mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Tel Aviv and New Delhi. In 1992, Israel and India established diplomatic ties. Since then, their fields of co-operation expanded, with Israel becoming one of the major importers of arms to India.



Mexico's FM Tours Middle East, India

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard began a ten-day tour of the Middle East and India for talks covering a jump in energy prices, investment opportunities and efforts to prevent a potential food crisis. Mr Ebrard made his first stop in Riyadh where he held meetings with his Saudi counterpart and investment funds. He will be in Qatar this weekend where he is scheduled to take part in the Doha Forum and also engage in bilateral talks with senior officials from other governments. Next week, Mr Ebrard will be in the UAE to meet political leaders and investment funds to explore projects benefitting Mexico, before traveling to India for the final leg of his tour.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



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

