# MEIWeekly.



by the United Arab Emirate's Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (R) in December 2021. In recent weeks, Saudi and Emirati leaders have declined to speak to President Joe Biden as the US is working to build international support for Ukraine and contain a surge in oil prices. Photo: AFP.

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

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possessing significant assets to assert their power over maritime spaces — in the western Indian Ocean region due to distributions of power in the international system and the meteoric rise of Arab Gulf states. Read it here.

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economy but the bigger question revolves around the country's ability to break free from the vicious cycle of dependence on its hydrocarbons. Read his piece here.

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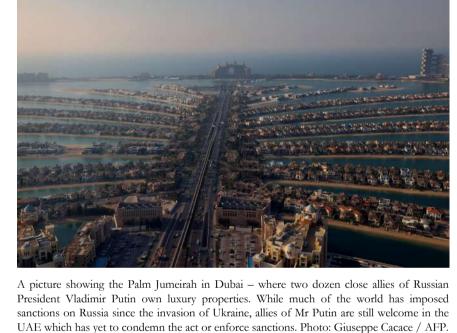
### WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

## Saudi, Emirati Leaders Decline Calls with Biden

The White House unsuccessfully tried to arrange calls between President Biden and the de facto leaders of Saudi Arabia and the UAE as the US was working to build international support for Ukraine and contain a surge in oil prices. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the UAE's Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan both declined US requests to speak to Mr Biden of late, as they have become more vocal in their criticism of American policy in the Gulf. The two countries share concerns about the restrained US response to recent missile strikes by Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen against the UAE and Saudi Arabia as well as the revival of the Iran nuclear deal.

#### UAE Could Undermine Sanctions on Russia Since the invasion of Ukraine, much of the world has imposed sweeping sanctions on Russian

financial institutions and the circle around Russian President Vladimir Putin - except for the UAE. At least 38 businessmen or officials linked to Mr Putin own dozens of properties in Dubai - collectively valued at more than \$314 million. Although a close partner to the US in Middle Eastern security matters, the UAE has in recent years also become a popular playground for the Russian rich, partly because of its reputation for asking few questions about the sources of foreign money. Now, the Emirates may undercut some of the penalties on Russia by continuing to welcome targeted oligarchs.



Israel's President Visits Turkey

President Isaac Herzog was received on Wednesday in Ankara, with pomp and ceremony by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a state visit described by both sides as an effort to

#### reset broken relations between the one-time regional allies. Though the historic visit was more about mood and optics than executive decisions, it is believed to be a new turning point in the two countries' ties.

**CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS** 

growing in the Middle East.

JCPOA Negotiations

Since the start of the Iranian nuclear controversy about two decades ago, the European Union (EU) has been steadfastly mediating between Iran and the US. This webinar explores the EU's motivations behind its central role in the nuclear negotiations, the nature of Iran-EU relations and the

#ICYMI Iran-Europe Dynamics and the



Click here to catch the informative session we had. **#ICYMI** [Book Discussion] Routledge Handbook on China-Middle East Relations

Catch the insightful disucssion we had with China expert Jonathan Fulton, who shared about the various ways Beijing's presence is

Click here to know more about the effects of these developments.

organisation's foresight of Iran's role in the Middle East.



## **LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON** Iran's Envoy Back in Vienna for Final Talks

However, a last-minute hangup came with Russia's demand for guarantees that Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over the Ukraine war will not impact future trade with Iran. UN Aims for Libya Elections Agreement Soon

After a brief trip back to Tehran for consultations, Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani has returned to Vienna to resume talks about the deal. Iran has been been striving to portray the US as the party that needs to make the final political move.



#### and constitutional arrangements, with rival factions locked in a dangerous stand-off. Stephanie Williams said she wanted the talks between members of the parliament and high state council, the country's two recognised legislative bodies, to take place before 1 April. Libya faces a

political crisis after the parliament last week swore in a new government with the incumbent administration refusing to cede power.

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