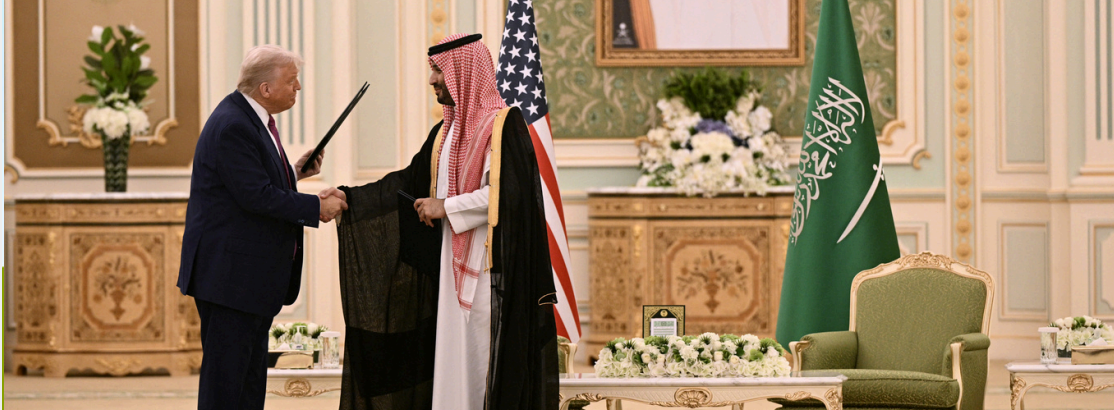


MEIWeekly.



US President Donald Trump arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, kicking off a four-day Middle East tour that included stops in Qatar and the UAE—the first overseas trip of his second term. He received a lavish welcome from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who Mr Trump called an “incredible man” and “my friend”. Photo: AFP

WHAT’S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS, & MORE

READ: Prior to US President Donald Trump’s Middle East trip, experts from MEI and beyond shared their insights on what to expect and the potential outcomes. Click **here** to read more.

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Trump to the Middle East: ‘No More Lectures on How to Live’

In a striking denouncement of longstanding American foreign policy in the region, Mr Trump declared an end to US nation-building and interventions. The audience erupted in applause as he urged the people of the Middle East to chart “your own destinies in your own way”.

Washington Prepares to Lifts Sanctions on Syria

After a historic meeting with Syrian President Ahmed al-Shara at the request of Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince, Mr Trump announced plans to lift US sanctions on Damascus. This decision took many in his administration by surprise and is expected to take effect in the coming weeks.



The conversation, which lasted half an hour, granted another stamp of recognition to Mr al-Shara, who is still designated a terrorist by the White House for his past affiliation with Al Qaeda. Photo: Saudi Foreign Ministry / X

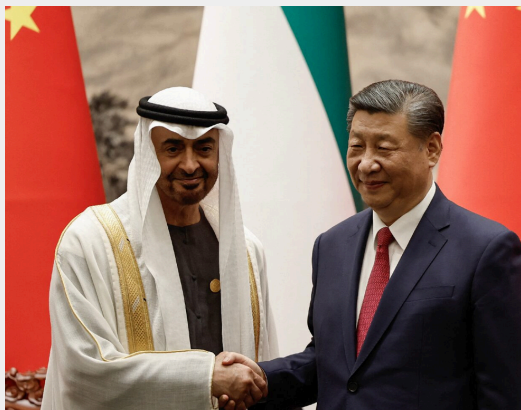
Qatar’s Makeover Scores Another Success

President Trump’s visit to Doha capped a successful charm offensive by the Gulf state, which included the offer of a luxury jet. Labelled “a funder of terrorism” eight years ago by Mr Trump, Qatar worked hard to rebuild its global image in a dramatic turnaround.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

[Book Talk] China’s Engagement with the Middle East

This webinar will explore Beijing’s evolving role in the Middle East and how regional and global actors are responding. It will highlight the key contrasts with that of Western approaches and will offer fresh insights into the region’s shifting geopolitics. This virtual book talk will be held on Wednesday, 21 May 2025, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM (SGT). Sign up **here**.



Abu Dhabi, for one, serves as a key partner in China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), given its strategic location and trade-oriented economy. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Iran Proposes Nuclear Enrichment Venture with Arab States

Tehran floated the idea of a consortium of Middle Eastern countries – including Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE – to enrich uranium, in a effort to overcome US objections to its continued nuclear programme. The proposal is seen as a way of locking the Gulf states into supporting the Islamic Republic’s position that it should be allowed to retain enrichment capabilities.



Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Oman on 11 May for talks with the US, which may have covered the idea of the proposal. Photo: AFP

Israel Agrees to Resume Gaza Aid After Two-Month Freeze

The Israeli government agreed to resume humanitarian aid delivery to Palestinians in Gaza, the new Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) said in a statement on Wednesday. This effort would bypass the decades-old infrastructure put in place by the UN and its agencies, despite protests by the international body and several world leaders.



The announcement came as Tel Aviv prepares for a major operation to occupy the enclave if no ceasefire is reached this week. Photo: AFP

Follow us for the latest updates!



Can’t make it to our events? Listen in your own time!

