

MEIWeekly.



At MEI's Annual Conference on Tuesday, Singapore's Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs K Shanmugam warned that the immediate recognition of a Palestinian state could likely harm the Palestinians instead of helping, and that the US was probably the only nation in a position to dictate Israel's actions.

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

READ: A “green revolution” is sweeping the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman recording some of the world’s fastest renewable energy growth. MEI explores what’s driving this in [Heard@theSouq](#). Read the article [here](#).

READ: Caught between survival and surrender, Iran needs a nuclear compromise deal urgently—but giving up uranium enrichment crosses a red line it cannot accept. Read the dynamics behind this high-stakes dilemma [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Minister Shanmugam: Recognition ‘Likely to Harm’ Palestinians

While reiterating Singapore’s stance and quoting Prime Minister Lawrence Wong’s comments that “Israel’s response in Gaza has gone too far”, the minister cautioned that public calls to downgrade or sever ties with Tel Aviv may backfire and harm the Palestinian cause instead.

Far-Right Israeli Minister Calls for West Bank to be Annexed

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich’s announcement came after more countries, including long-standing allies Britain and France, said they would recognise a Palestinian state this month. Rather than curb the hard-liners, these moves have pushed them to double down.



Mr Smotrich said that this was the proper response to international moves to recognise a Palestinian state, calling it “a preventative step against the diplomatic assault planned against us”, “The main goal is to remove, once and for all, the idea of a Palestinian state” and maps are being drawn up to annex “maximum territory”, he added. Photo: AFP

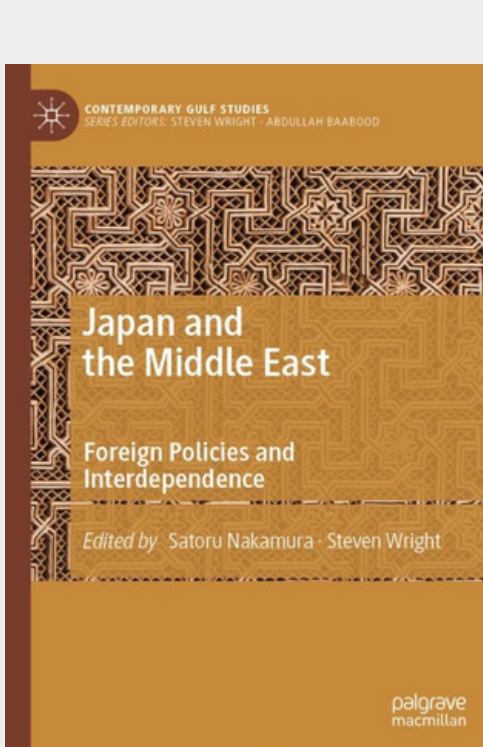
Houthis Vow Revenge After Several Senior Officials Killed

After an Israeli strike killed the Iranian-backed militia’s prime minister Ahmed al-Rahawi and “several of his colleagues”, the Houthis warned that Tel Aviv would “no longer taste the flavor of security”. These Israeli assassinations is likely to make the group more hawkish, said analysts.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

[Book Talk] Japan and the Middle East

This book talk will explore Tokyo’s evolving relationship with the Middle East, with a focus on the Gulf region. Drawing on country-specific case studies and thematic analysis, the discussion will cover Japan’s energy partnerships, including oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade, as well as security and broader diplomatic ties with key regional players such as Israel, Egypt, and Turkey. This event will be conducted both in person and online from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM (SGT) on Wednesday, 17 September 2025. To register, click [here](#).



Gain insights into the political economy, strategic interests, and foreign policy dynamics that shape Japan’s engagement across the Middle East. Photo: Satoru Nakamura and Steven Wright

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Time Is Running Out for Lebanon to Disarm Hezbollah: US

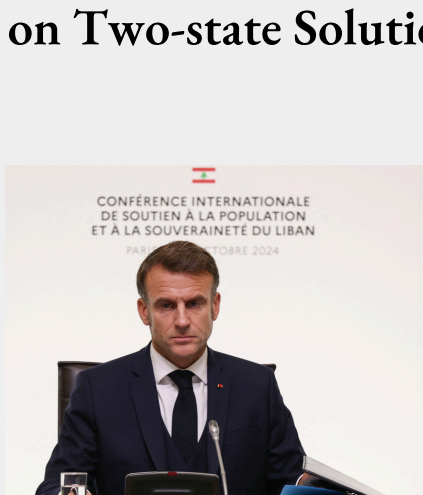
The Trump administration warned ahead of a key Cabinet meeting in Beirut on Friday that Lebanon’s leaders are running out of time to disarm Hezbollah or risk losing US and Gulf Arab financial support—and even facing a renewed Israeli military campaign. Washington, Israel and the Gulf states are pressing the Lebanese government to act decisively and not be intimidated by Hezbollah threats to incite violence.



US officials worry that Lebanon’s Parliamentary government will ultimately flinch from a potential confrontation with Hezbollah. Photo: AFP

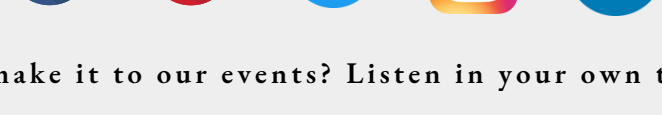
Macron and MBS to Lead Conference on Two-state Solution

French President Emmanuel Macron announced Tuesday that he will co-lead an international conference in New York on 22 September with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman to promote a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. This conference will coincide with the United Nations General Assembly and marks a renewed push for diplomatic engagement despite the ongoing war in Gaza.



“The goal is clear — to gather the broadest international support for a two-state solution”, Mr Macron said. Photo: AFP

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