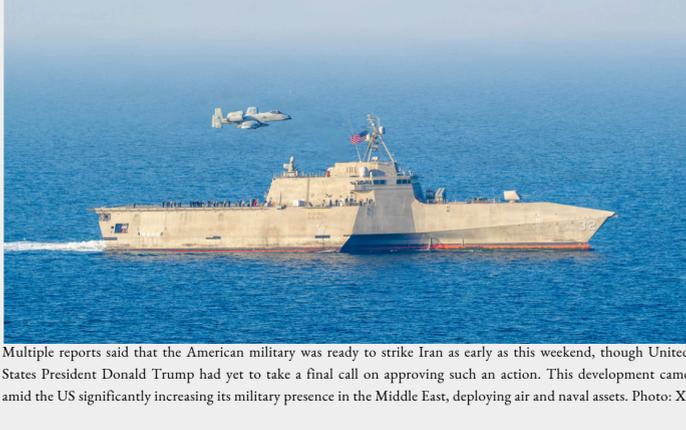


MEIWeekly.



Multiple reports said that the American military was ready to strike Iran as early as this weekend, though United States President Donald Trump had yet to take a final call on approving such an action. This development came amid the US significantly increasing its military presence in the Middle East, deploying air and naval assets. Photo: X

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

READ: As the US mulls a strike on Iran, MEI's Heard@theSouq explores how a potential attack could reshape borders, alliances, nuclear ambitions, and ignite a new security race. Read the article [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Trump Gives Iran 10-Day Ultimatum

At the inaugural meeting of his Board of Peace, President Donald Trump said the world will find out "over the next, probably, 10 days" whether the US will reach a deal with Iran or take military action. "We have to make a meaningful deal otherwise bad things happen", he added.

Israel Takes Steps to Claim West Bank Land as 'State Property'

Tel Aviv approved a plan to claim large parts of the occupied territory as "state property" if Palestinians cannot prove ownership, sparking regional outcry and accusations of de facto annexation. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called it part of a "settlement revolution".



The decision allows private Israeli citizens to buy land and also shifts parts of the administration in the territory from the military to civilian authorities. While referring to the Palestinian territory as "Judea and Samaria", Mr Smotrich added that the government was "restoring order and governance" to land administration. Photo: AFP

Ramadan Begins in Gaza Amid Ruins of Shattered Mosques

Despite the devastation and severe shortages of materials, people were attempting to rebuild sections of mosques and set up makeshift prayer spaces using reused plastic sheeting and wood. "Now we pray in tents, and the mosques have become centres for the displaced", some said.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ICYMI: China's Digital Silk Road in the Middle East

China's technology footprint in the Middle East — particularly across the Gulf — is expanding rapidly, turning the region into a key testing ground for Beijing's digital ambitions. This MEI webinar examined how firms such as Huawei and Alibaba are growing their presence through cloud services, artificial intelligence (AI) deployments, data-centre investments, and partnerships with regional governments and businesses. Missed the discussion? Watch the video or listen to the podcast [here](#).



The webinar examined Beijing's strategic goals, including securing long-term connectivity and setting digital standards in the Middle East. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Bahrain, Egypt Reportedly Mediating UAE-Saudi Rift

A source close to the Saudi government insisted there was "no need for mediation" because direct channels are open between the two countries. Although Riyadh and Abu Dhabi did not break ties, they have had no high-level diplomatic contact since the last week of December, reports suggest, citing several sources. "Bahrain is leading mediation efforts between Saudi Arabia and the UAE aimed at ending the ongoing misunderstanding", said a Gulf official, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.



"It's a Gulf issue and it should be resolved in the Gulf," he said, adding that this was a "Bahraini effort, not a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) effort". Photo: X

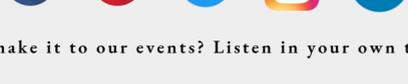
American Troops to Depart Syria

The US is preparing to largely withdraw its remaining troops from Syria over the next few months, a senior official added that the Syrian government had agreed to take the lead combatting terrorism within its borders and US military presence "at scale" was no longer required. He also noted that the decision to remove the roughly 1,000 remaining troops from Syria is part of a conditions-based transition, and that Washington remains ready to respond to any threats in the region.

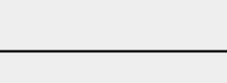


The news comes amid an increased presence of US troops in the region, specifically near Iran. Photo: AFP

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