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Geopolitical Dynamics: Iran

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Speakers:

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Remarks as delivered

[Dr. John Iskander] Good afternoon. Hello. Okay. Hi everybody, my name is John Iskander. Welcome to the last full panel of the day, with the topic of course being Iran. We have four sessions today that I'm very much looking forward to hearing, and I think that you will as well. The theme in effect of this afternoon's session has to do with the question of strategy and of strategic power, as well as sort of the place in the world. In Iran, the thing of course when we think of Iran is this question of what is Iran's place? Its place in the Gulf, its place more broadly in the world order, and that this has been the huge challenge.

I should've started, I work at the State Department, I should start by saying I'm here purely on my personal capacity, so I'm not representing the State Department. I can say one of the thing that of course the challenges, among the challenges, precisely for us, for the United States, but also for the other Gulf countries and the countries of the Middle East is figuring out the answer to this question. What is the role and status of Iran? How can Iran be integrated into or excluded from any kind of security architecture; generally the focus here is on exclusion from. Are there ways of integrating into? How does this all work? What's the role? And what's our domestic politics? What do these things all have to say about this? So we're going to have differing points of view, which is actually a great deal more interesting than having everybody agree I suppose on a topic like this, and it's Iran, so we can have lots of differing points of view.

So we're going to start off, the order is going to be Ken Katzman and Flynt Leveritt starting off looking on the questions of sort of power in the Gulf, vis a vis the United States, and Iran sort of more broadly. And then turning to Janne Nolan, who's going to take us looking at U.S. strategy, also towards Iran, and then concluding with Afshin Molavi with the title and the topic of Iran and the GCC in a regional and global context.

Ken Katzman, of course, comes to us from the Congressional Research Service. He's a senior Middle East analyst for U.S. Congress. As you all know if you were here yesterday you've heard the introduction, and many of you know him anyways. He's well-respected and a well known scholar working on Iran-Iraq, Persian Gulf states, and much, much more.

Flynt Leveritt teaches international affairs at Penn State. He's a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation.

Ashvin Molavi, a senior research fellow, New America Foundation's Senior Middle East Advisor, Oxford/Analytica co-Director, World Economy Roundtable, and if you are on Twitter, you can get his Tweets.

Janne Nolan is the Director of the Nuclear Security Programs at the American Security Project, and also with a great deal of experience on this specific issue, nuclear issues, strategic questions more broadly.

So thanks very much. Please join me in welcoming the panel, and then we will take questions at the end. Our session's going to end sharply at five. Once the speakers have all

gone, had their chance to speak, we will take questions as the usual custom. Thank you, join me in welcoming our panel. Ken Katzman.

[Dr. Ken Katzman] Thank you very much to the council for inviting me. Speaking in a personal capacity today. I know originally on the panel today was supposed to be Flynt's lovely wife, and I'm substituting, so I was thinking of coming today in drag, but then I looked in my closet and those clothes weren't clean. Again, I'm in a personal capacity today.

The title of my talk is the decline of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the decline of the Islamic Republic of Iran. By many indications, the high-water mark for the Islamic Republic of Iran is long passed. Iran is on a steepening slope of decline that is likely to result either in wholesale change of regime, or a dramatic alteration of the power structure. Iran's political system is like a fruit that is rotting from the inside, and the rot is spreading outwardly at a rapid rate. Under Ayatollah Khomeini, the authority of the Supreme Leader was unquestioned. Under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that authority is questioned regularly, to the point where the Supreme Leader is now openly maneuvering to either dismiss the current President, weaken him severely, or potentially he's raised the issue of abolishing the post of President all together.

Doing so, were that the choice, that would further distance the regime from the population, because the head of government would not be directly elected by the people. A Prime Minister would be selected by the Parliament, but the head of government would not be directly elected by the people. The next Supreme Leader and Khamenei is not a young man obviously. He was at Khomeini's right hand, he was a disciple of Ayatollah Khomeini he's not young, and he's certainly not going to live forever. Even if the current palace structure continues, Iran's political system is increasingly anachronistic and unsatisfactory to Iran's population. One authoritarian regime after the other in the region is crumbling, potentially including Iran's close ally, Bashir al-Assad.

True, Iran was able to defeat thus far and suppress the green uprising, green movement uprising of 2009, but many believe there will be another uprising at some point, because large segments of the Iranian public are openly dissatisfied. Furthering that sentiment is Iran's traditional condescending attitude toward the Arabs. Iran sees itself as an ancient civilization full of universities, learning, scholarship, et cetera, yet now Iran is actually behind as the Arab world modernizes its politics, and Iran remains mired in its outdated, backward political system. This serves as additional motivation for pro-green movement Iranians to become active again.

Iran is probably more isolated than at any time. Foreign investors are pulling out of its energy sector. It is cut off from the international banking system to the point where oil customers are having difficulty paying for the oil, and numerous international firms have reduced or ended their presence in Iran.

A key indicator is how Iran's neighbors are treating it. Normally, the neighbors would be the least likely to risk upsetting Iran, or going against it, or upsetting traditional trading patterns; however, we are now seeing an increasing willingness of even Iran's neighbors to

help the United States and others strangle Iran's economy. Last year, the U.A.E., one of the most vulnerable to an Iranian backlash implemented the full authority of Resolution 1929, to restrict Iranian banking activity in U.A.E. Kuwait has stopped selling gasoline to Iran. Turkey has stopped some Iranian weapons shipments transiting Turkey, en route to Syria or to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Turkey is actively now working against Iran's main ally, Bashar al-Assad. India has placed billions of dollars of oil payments in escrow rather than deal with sanction banks that would be needed to process oil payments to Iran. Iran's central bank is running short of hard currency, because of the difficulty in processing these payments, and the Riyal is falling, because the central bank serves to stabilize the Iranian currency.

In line with the payments difficulties, many observers tell me they are seeing a lot more Chinese-made goods showing up in stores, suggesting that reports that Iran is being paid for its oil with goods, and not hard currency, suggesting those reports are accurate. Following the Iran-Iraq War, which ended in 1988, Iran purchased a large quantity of conventional weaponry from China and Russia. Those arms are now out of date, and Iran is banned by U.N. Resolutions from buying any new heavy weaponry. It will not be long before Iran's arms deteriorate to the point where Iran can barely defend itself.

The deterioration of the support for the regime is increasingly evident in rampant official corruption. A recent 2.6 billion dollar allegation of fraud of falsification of letters of credit is only the latest example. More and more of Iran's economy is gobbled up by the Revolutionary Guard, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, crowding out entrepreneurship and private investment. It is increasingly becoming a kleptocracy, much as the Soviet Union was before it collapsed. Just because Iranians might be more dependent on the government than they were before does not mean they support that government. It just means the support is being bought, not earned.

As we've seen in several of the uprisings in the region this year, financial links to the government do not cause people to stick with that government if that government is going down, is collapsing. It can be argued that Iran's nuclear program, its development of space vehicles; its braggadocio about new weapons development and the like are actually signs of weakness. Iran's government offers its people no sense of accomplishment or investment, and so Iran has to tantalize the public with announcements of prestige accomplishments, which are often later proved to be less dramatic than Iran's leaders advertise.

To sum up, just to restate the view that the high-water mark of the Islamic Republic of Iran has long passed, and the current Islamic Republic of Iran is increasingly anachronistic outdated, and misplaced in its region. Thank you.

[Moynihan] Before our next speaker comes up, may I mention also that we welcome questions submitted on cards and letters as before, because we expect the panel will provide interesting answers to your queries, thank you.

[Dr. Flynt Leverett] Okay. Thank you all. Hillary and I were delighted when John Duke Anthony and the other conference organizers asked both of us to speak on this panel. Unfortunately, as John Iskander noted, Hillary's not in the end able to make it today. She

conveys her regrets for that. I too convey my regrets, for her absence means that you're stuck with me, but I'm sure we'll make the best of that.

Let me start with two fairly blunt statements, which will undergird pretty much everything else I have to say here today, and having just listened to Ken Katzman, you will be entitled to a certain level of intellectual whiplash with what I'm about to say.

First, the United States is clearly a declining power in the Middle East, and second, the biggest beneficiary of America's ongoing decline in the region is the Islamic Republic of Iran. If you're not sure you agree with those two statements, I would ask you please just go through the following mental exercise. First, compare America's position in the Middle East ten years ago to its position there today. Then compare the Islamic Republic's position in the region ten years ago – not ten days, or ten weeks, or ten months – but ten years ago, with its position today. It's hard to see how any sentient person could go through this exercise and not conclude that relatively speaking, the United States is in a profoundly weaker position today than ten years ago, and that conversely the Islamic Republic is in a significantly stronger position than ten years ago.

Now, to be sure the United States still has and will for the foreseeable future retain a unique ability to project large amounts of military force into the Middle East. No other established or rising power is capable of doing that, or will be able to do that for many years to come. But frankly, military capacity is simply less and less relevant to the challenges Washington faces in the Middle East, and by virtually any non-military measure of influence, the United States is today a declining power in the region.

Hillary and I have been arguing since 9/11 inside and outside the U.S. government that America's standing in this vital part of the world is declining primarily because of U.S. policy mistakes. And these mistakes all stem from the same fundamental source: succumbing to a post-Cold War temptation to act as an imperial power in the Middle East. Instead of dealing soberly and effectively with the region's political and security dynamics, the United States has tried to remake it in accordance with American preferences, and with scant regard for Middle Eastern realities. For the past twenty years, the United States has not been content simply to maintain its military primacy in the Middle East, defend its interests there, and legitimate its leadership in the region with important strategic and political benefits for its regional partners. Instead, across the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and now Barack Obama, it has tried to coerce political outcomes across the region, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in the Arab-Israeli arena.

This effort has not worked, even in its own terms of reference. Just look at what has transpired in Iraq, with the failure to conclude any sort of follow-on to the Status of Forces Agreement. However much President Obama tries to tell us that he is just keeping his campaign commitment to pull all U.S. soldiers out of Iraq, the claim is fundamentally dishonest. If Obama had had his way, the United States would be keeping perhaps as many as twenty thousand U.S. soldiers in Iraq on an open-ended basis. He is, quote unquote, keeping his commitment to withdraw only because Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is obliging him to do so. And Maliki is obliging him to do so not least because of the influence

of the Sadrists and other Iraqi political forces closely linked to Iran in the Prime Minister's governing coalition.

Make no mistake, in terms of long-term strategic and political influence in Iraq in coming years, the United States lost its war in Iraq. The Islamic Republic won.

When one considers the U.S. policy mistakes that contributed to the dramatic shift in the Middle East balance of power that I ascribed at the opening of my remarks, the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 looms large. This was grand strategy at its worst. More generally, the imperial turn – if you'll permit me to call it that – in America's post-Cold War Middle East policy has proven not only quixotic, but also deeply damaging to U.S. standing and interests, both in the region and globally. Of course, the temptations of empire have lured great powers before the United States into what historian Paul Kennedy famously called "imperial overstretch." But America's drive to remake the Middle East has arguably set a new record for the largest amount of influence and wealth squandered by a great power in the shortest period of time. And again, in the Middle East, the biggest beneficiary of American incompetence has been the Islamic Republic of Iran and its regional allies.

Clearly America's grand strategy in the Middle East is in serious need of revision, but rather than face up to bipartisan strategic failure and have a serious conversation about how to address it, American elites remain constantly on the lookout for a deus ex machina, some magic bullet out there that will set things to rights by slaying the Iranian dragon and restoring the United States and its allies to their rightful position of unquestioned regional dominance. In 2009, in a collective act of analysis by wishful thinking, American elites focused on the Presidential campaign of Mir Hossein Mousavi and the so-called green movement that emerged out of that election as the key to solving America's strategic problems in the Middle East. American and other western elites widely anticipated a Mousavi victory. When Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won reelection, those same elites almost universally condemned the election as a fraud. They did so despite the fact that every methodologically-sound poll conducted in Iran before and after the election, including not just polls conducted by the University of Tehran, but surveys conducted by western polling organizations indicated that Ahmadinejad's reelection with roughly two-thirds of the vote, which is what the official results show that he received, was imminently plausible.

This is something that Hillary and I pointed out publically from literally the day after the election. American and western elites clung to the fraud narrative despite the fact that Mousavi never presented any evidence to back up his various claims of how the election was supposedly stolen, even though if any of these claims were actually true it would be very easy for Mousavi to document them, but he never did so. Linked with the never demonstrated but nonetheless fervently believed narrative of electoral fraud in Iran was American and western elites' Romanization of the green movement. It was evident to anyone prepared to look soberly at reality that the green movement did not represent anything close to a majority of Iranians inside the Islamic Republic. And within a week of the election, the social base for the movement was not expanding; it had in fact started contracting. Again, Hillary and I pointed this out literally from late June 2009.

But lots of people in the United States and elsewhere don't want to be bothered with facts, where Iran is concerned. So it's not particularly surprising that over the last ten months or so many of the same American and western elites who engaged in such analytic malfeasance regarding the green movement and the Islamic Republic's enduring stability have been at it again. This time with regard to the Arab Spring. Through the pro-green lens that continues to shape most western commentary on Iranian politics, it seemed – for some it still seems – inevitable that waves of popular discontent like those which took out pro-American leaders in Tunisia and Egypt, and which may yet take down a U.S.-allied government in Yemen, and which seriously threatened another U.S.-allied government in Bahrain will engulf the Iranian government as well.

Most of the pundits and Iran experts who jumped on the regime change bandwagon in 2009 hopped back on for another ride. After all, they argue, hadn't the green movement come so close to bringing down the Islamic Republic in the weeks and months following the June 2009 election? In February of this year, billionaire financier George Soros, appearing before a worldwide television audience on CNN's GPS with Fareed Zakaria, who's frequently proclaimed his own wish to see the Islamic Republic disappear, even proffered a bet that quote, "the Iranian regime will not be there in a years time." So, coming up, February 2012, won't be there. Two days later, in the pages of Foreign Policy, we took Soros up on his wager. We even upped the anti, betting that not only would the Islamic Republic still be Iran's government in a years time, but that the balance of influence and power in the Middle East would be tilted further in Iran's favor. We never did hear from Mr. Soros, and I'm really sorry about that, because I think that the opportunity to collect on a bet with George Soros would be just an enormous opportunity.

But this same kind of analysis by wishful thinking continues. It is reflected in the overblown commentary we saw in the spring and summer about the back and forth between the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini and President Ahmadinejad over the status of the Intelligence Minister. It's reflected now in the equally overblown commentary we're reading about quote unquote "deepening divisions" within the Iranian leadership over the Obama Administration's accusations of Iranian government complicity in an alleged plot to assassinate Saudi Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir here in Washington. Whenever we see any sort of contestation over positions, policy, what in most places in the world we describe as politics, when we see that in Iran, we call it a crisis. But it just ain't so.

Let me come back briefly to the point, my bet, our bet with Mr. Soros, and how we upped the anti to not only will the Islamic Republic still be Iran's government in February 2012, but that the regional balance of power will be tilted even further in Iran's favor in February 2012 than it was in February 2011. I think that's going to come true too. From an Iranian perspective, they think they are winning. They think that to the extent that regional governments in the Middle East become more reflective, in some measure, become more reflective of their populations' attitudes, beliefs, concerns, grievances, et cetera, that they will become more independent in their foreign policies, they will become less enthusiastic about strategic cooperation with the United States and Israel, and they will become more open to Iran's message of independence and resistance.

And I think that is exactly what you see happening. It is happening in Iraq, it is happening in Egypt, and it will happen elsewhere. And don't bet on Bashar al-Assad going anywhere. I think that's more analysis by wishful thinking. The Iranians don't think he's going to be overthrown. Even if there were regime change in Syria, don't think that Iran doesn't have options for that, too. And on balance, Iran is going to emerge as the big winner in strategic terms from the Arab Spring. Thank you very much.

[Dr. Janne Nolan] So I didn't know I was going to come in between a food fight, but I'm delighted. First I'd like to thank John Duke Anthony for inviting me to be on this panel, and to be at this event. His decades of very courageous and resilient dedication to discourse, I think they are a tribute everywhere to him and to all the people who have worked with him a very long time. I'm glad actually that I'm talking about what I'm talking about, and I'm reading from my iPhone here, it's not because I'm checking my email while I'm talking – of course I haven't quite figured out how to do that yet. But this is where my talk is.

I want to talk about how geo-politics begins at home, and I want to talk about in fact the importance of American politics in the determination of what American strategy towards Iran is and will be in the future. And that for all of the people who spend a lot of time talking about grand strategy or contributing to that debate, they often tend to overlook the fact that there is no strategy that will survive or ever be good enough if it's lacking a basic political consensus to carry it forward.

Actually, I had quite an agreement with both of the previous speakers, but I'm not about to parse and not getting anywhere near close to it. I do something much simpler most of the time, which is work with particularly U.S. military officers and senior officials from across the political spectrum to try to deliver messages to legislators to help to raise the level of discourse, and to persuade them to act in a bipartisan fashion. I've tilted at many windmills overtime, but this is my latest one.

It actually worked out pretty well in the surprising way that the START Treaty became the target of partisan assault for reasons that really had nothing to do whatsoever with nuclear strategy or the future of nuclear security.

So what does this have to do with Iran? This new project that I've started just recently, that I'm co-chairing with Jeff Kemp from the Center formerly known as the Nixon Center, which is involving military officers, officials, and Israeli officials in the discussion of the consequences, devastating consequences of military engagement with Iran from the economic, political, and military standpoint.

Let me say five things. And I have to say, you always have to start by referring to your recent trip to a distant place to establish your legitimacy, and I just came back from Pittsburgh where – and actually John Duke Anthony was invited to this event – but it was a remarkably refreshing two days of dialogue of a small Middle East institute that I helped to establish a few years ago because there wasn't one there that maximizes the interest of people in the area and improving business ties to the region. So this year was particularly interesting, because the presence is largely Saudis and people from Oman carrying on the

business of their enlightened self-interest and cooperative engagement without discussion of any kind of conflict. And this is the message that, you know, when you move outside the beltway, you find that you actually have to travel a little bit outside of this place to have a cosmopolitan conversation about what's going on in the world.

This sort of steady diffusion of knowledge, of engagement, of cooperation, people who speak multiple languages who think nothing about traveling across five or six countries in a week or two, who can insert their technical expertise into different cultural media without thinking twice about it. So with the exception of present company, I don't find that very much in Washington, and so to that degree I agree with Flynt about the terrible bankruptcy of our discourse, particularly with respect to Iran. It was very nice to be away from this sort of deadly, frantic blizzard of headline questing and superficial debate.

So there is a parallel universe going on, maybe not so much specifically with respect to Iran, but there are people all over the world who are pursuing things like trade councils and regulatory reform and the advancement of cooperative engagement, and not obsessing about where to find the next conflict.

Four points.

The U.S.-Iran debate is a stand-in politically, and domestically, for a few subtexts that really have nothing to do with Iran. I think you could challenge most of the people in Congress to point to Iran, and I mean no offense by this, to point to Iran on a map, and they would not necessarily do so immediately. So the issue really is often content-free in the sense that we're really not talking about Iran. We're talking about a placeholder for what we don't know, what to do about the, two or three things: how to contain the spread of nuclear technology and increasingly globalized economy and technological market; how to deal with a – how we have defined it – a rather non-specific, conflated and often inflated threat of terrorism. A super subtext of American discussion about how now, almost two decades of effort, to replace the Soviet Union with an aggregate threat that is of sufficient simplicity that it resonates with wide numbers of people. So we have the axis of evil for a while, we had the rouge state; the axis became the axel of evil. We still struggle to define this sort of new principles of engagement through this reduction of simplistic approach. I'm not saying that this isn't about Iran, entirely, but most of the time the rhetoric really isn't; it's about things that are still extremely difficult and dilute consensus.

Second, I think both speakers, certainly Flynt referred to this and prior speakers said is the enduring challenge in this town of inserting empirical content into what you're talking about. Most people aren't all that interested in it. There are issues like the globalization of the technological market, which we still try to cope with, with old instruments like supplier controls and supply-site enforcement, and have absolutely nothing to do with the trans-national nature of what the challenge is about. We have constantly self-inflicted wounds on our own knowledge base arising from the politicization of the intelligence debate. I served on something called the Gates Panel. It was years ago, talking about the threat of missile, the inter-continental ballistic missile threat to the United States emerging from the so-called third world. We came up with the wrong answers so we were sort of dismissed, and

the Rumsfeld Panel was appointed instead, and they came up with a better answer which was – we actually corroborated the intelligence – the second panel said no, that there would be inter-continental ballistic missiles within five years. And that was about eight years ago, I forget how many years ago.

But time and again, you find as you all know the ascendancy of domestic politics holding good governance hostage. Which leads me or has led me over time to try to emphasize more and more the need to be articulate to a political audience about what you're doing. I think this is the first time in, I don't know, twenty years that I'm not in a room where I know almost everybody, and I know almost no one here, which is great, I know Ken, met Flynt. And that's a problem here, that's a problem. You know, you all know each other probably very well. You're not getting out there and talking to military audiences, you're not getting out there and talking to people in Pittsburgh, you're not talking to economists.. I'm sure, yeah, you are talking to economic influencers, but there is – this has come up in the previous discussion as well – the tremendous need for multi-lingual engagement, and I'm not talking about linguistics, I'm talking about idiom. We have a real problem of talking to each other, to ourselves, in a way that isn't advancing the kind of sophisticated strategy that both previous speakers are looking for, certainly that Flynt was talking about.

A couple more points. Iran also is a stand-in for the narrative that the nuclear world, the sky is falling, that proliferation is abounding, it's breaking out all over, it's just a question of time, and so on. And this isn't actually a very old concept, it's more related to the domino theory than it is to, certainly to the empirical reality. Case after case of countries going down the nuclear road, and then renouncing nuclear weapons for calculated self-interests, not for any particularly high-minded reason, but because they're expensive, they're difficult to manage because they don't in fact earn you the kind of stature that you imagine that you will get, et cetera. And the list is eclectic. I've actually done some fairly extensive empirical work on what does motivate a state to try to acquire nuclear weapons, and then to give them up. The list goes from South Africa to Libya to Ukraine to Brazil and Argentina, et cetera, it's not – in each case which you find, it's interesting if Ken is correct that the internal, the perception of the internal bankruptcy of this strategy inside the society is what leads to a discussion and then a decision to forgo the nuclear option in favor of things that are more societally beneficial and politically beneficial. And there are things that work. One of the important things that we struggle with in this country I think is this naïve notion that there are quick fixes, and that the use of force is a decisive instrument, everything else is just fuzzy.

So I will leave you with a thought, that smart diplomacy is not for wimps. It requires a lot of skill and nuance, and it requires a lot of courage to pursue. And I think, though I don't have to take sides between these two individuals here, but one thing we can recognize is that effective strategy starts with the recognition that, again, no superior force, no amount of effort can succeed until we recognize that the perception of legitimacy around the world is an absolutely critical ingredient of any kind of success. Thank you.

[Ashvin Molavi] Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, John. And thank you very much to the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. It's really a pleasure to speak, anytime the

National Council invites me to speak, I'm really honored, because about seventeen years ago, I was very fortunate to receive a National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations Journalism Fellowship, which began me on my journey into Arabia and on my journey into the Middle East. So I'm always grateful to Dr. John Duke Anthony, I'm always grateful to the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations for everything that you do, and everything you have done since. Now, one of the things that was interesting, Dr. Anthony may be interested to know this. I was sent to work for a newspaper in Saudi Arabia called the Arab News, and since then I visit Saudi Arabia quite regularly. A columnist in Saudi Arabia recently referred to me as an American-Iranian-Saudi, which in this geo-political environment is a confusing identity to have. But I wanted to say thanks to the National Council for having me here today.

I have three broad points. I'm going to talk about, a little bit about Iran's economic troubles, a little bit about the political divisions taking place in Iran right now. I'm also going to talk about the Iran-Saudi Arabia relationship, because these are the two geo-economic heavyweights of the Middle East, not just of the Persian Gulf region, and I think the nature of the relationship is very important for us to understand historically, it's important to understand what's going on today. And thirdly, I'd like to inject China into this debate. I'd like to inject the new silk road into this debate because I would argue that the most significant geo-economic event facing the Persian Gulf region over the next ten to fifteen years is the rise of China, the rise of India. These are going to be very important players in the future for this region.

So, let me just start with Iran itself, and the economy, and some of the political divisions taking place. And let me take you to terminal three of Dubai International Airport, where I was about – I'm doing what you said, I'm establishing legitimacy – I was in Dubai ten days ago everyone. I was in Dubai at terminal three of Dubai International Airport, this steel and glass complex that has kind of become the caravansary of the new Silk Road. And you see everyone there – Kazaks, and Arabs, and Iranians, and Europeans, and Asians – and I had a meeting there with an Iranian businessman. We could not connect while I was in Dubai. He happened to be passing through Dubai, because that's what one does, one passes through Dubai. And as we were talking in this airport, he began telling me about what is going on in his world. He is an investor; he invests in industrial projects in Iran. He is also someone who has consistently been bullish on the Iranian economy, to the point that I sometimes thought he was looking through rose-tinted glasses as he was telling me about the Iranian economy. But in this particular meeting he was subdued, he was concerned. He said to me that the sanctions are indeed biting, kind of some of the points that Ken was making on an anecdotal level, he was saying that it's very difficult to get letters of credit. Banks are not dealing; Iranian banks have trouble getting international banks to deal with them. Steel producers are paying a premium on imported, raw materials. And it's not only sanctions, it's also President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's subsidy reform program, which has pushed up both consumer price inflation and producer price inflation. Consumer price inflation is at about twenty percent; producer price inflation is about thirty-five percent right now.

Now, having said that, I think that was actually a smart piece of legislation. Iran did need to eradicate some of those subsidies. Iran was living too heavily on these subsidies, but it does

have an affect, and it's having an affect on the business community. And he was talking about this, you know, that was just his point of view, but one need not only look at one businessman's point of view, one can look at a sanctions scorecard, so to speak. When you look at the oil sector, oil, which accounts for eighty percent of Iran's hard currency earnings, fifty percent of its fiscal revenues, and you look at the, by Iran's own admission, the National Iranian Oil Company has noted that Iran is losing about three hundred thousand barrels of oil production per year because of their inability to finance new exploration.

There's not a single western multi-national energy company willing to invest in Iran's upstream right now. Why? Because of the web of sanctions: EU sanctions, United States sanctions, United Nations Security Council sanctions. So what are you left with? You're left with Chinese companies. CNPC and SINOPEC. And what are they doing? They're dragging their feet. You will always, you will hear big headlines: forty billion dollars worth of concessions owned by Chinese oil companies. All you really have to do is read Platt's or read Middle East Economic Survey, or read the oil industry press and you will see that on a weekly basis, on a monthly basis you will find conflicts because the Iranian authorities are complaining that China is dragging its feet in those projects. And if you are CNPC and if you are SINOPEC, you are dragging your feet because you're operating in thirty countries around the world. Iran is one country, and not only that, you have to deal with the U.S. Treasury breathing down your neck, you have to deal with the U.S. Congress breathing down your neck. You also have to deal with a state pension fund movement. There's a pension fund movement that threatens to divest from companies that do business in Iran. And you're CNPC and you're SINOPEC, you're a global energy player right now. I often say that China's a bit like its national animal, the panda. The panda has to eat bamboo eighteen hours a day to survive. China is an energy panda – it needs to eat energy twenty-four hours a day to keep up with its economic growth rate.

So, are you going to risk the ire of the U.S. Treasury, the ire of the U.S. Congress by pouring in billions of dollars in Iran, or are you just going to hold on to the concession and wait as you did in Iraq? Wait until maybe Iran is brought back into the international community. So in the oil sector, Iran is feeling it.

In the gas sector, Iran has the world's second-largest gas reserves, but it is exporting only to Turkey and Azerbaijan. It's unable to get, and it's using most of its gas at home. When you compare the way Qatar has exploited its share of the South Pars Gas Fields and the North Field, compare that to how Iran has exploited their share, Qatar is far ahead of Iran in that game. And that's what you get when you are partnered with Exxon/Mobil, when banks around the world line up to finance your projects. And so it comes to a question and a real interesting point that was made to me by an Iranian professor in Tehran, where he once said to me that Iran wants to on the one hand upend the rules of the international game, but on the other hand be at the seat of world powers. And when you're trying to do both, you find yourself facing these kinds of problems.

The shipping sector. I mean, it's tough to be an Iranian shipper these days. You can't get insurance. Lloyd's will not insure you. And not only that, the U.S. Treasury has a

honeycomb of sanctions on Islamic Republic of Iran shipping line ships, to the point where there are ports around the world that simply do not want Iranian ships to come. And not only that, ports operators, Tidewater, has faced the wrath of the U.S. Treasury. Mersk Sealine, the biggest container shipping line in the world, which accounts for fifteen percent of global shipping, has six months ago said they will no longer go to Iranian ports. Why? Again, they don't have anything against Iran; they don't have anything against the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are these sanctions, there is this nucece that is tightening, and as a senior western oil executive said to me, anytime you do an investment in Iran, you have to answer this question: is this investment worth the headache? And the headache, by what he meant, was both the bureaucracy and some of the mismanagement and the red tape that you have to deal with, but also the headache of the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Treasury and others breathing down your neck. And when you have to choose between a four hundred billion dollar economy or a fourteen trillion dollar economy in the U.S., most companies are choosing the fourteen trillion dollar economy. This is just a fact.

And now, you could go on and on, on the sanctions, but the question that is often asked is will sanctions work? It depends on what you mean by work. If what you mean by work means that Iran will get on its knees and say okay, we will stop our nuclear program, I think the answer is no, it will not work. If what you mean by work is it will raise the costs that the Iranian state and state entities, and frankly the private sector, the Iranian private sector has to pay for your nuclear program, then yes, then yes you could say the sanctions are working.

So now let's move on to the Iran-Saudi Arabia relationship, because I think this is the key relationship, and I think that certainly we're at a very hot period right now. So let me just briefly go through the sort of four phases in this relationship, and John has given me a note. I was telling John earlier, he said that given the amount of time we have, we have to be a little bit more brief. And I said you're talking to a Persian here, John. It's hard for me to be brief. But I will try here.

When we look at these four phases of the Iran-Saudi Arabia relationship, we look at the period from '79 to '89 as the first phase. There was real shooting, it was real, the conflict was really serious back then. Iranians were shooting at Saudi oil tankers; Saudi airplanes were shooting down Iranian airplanes during the Iran-Iraq War. This, when we look at what is happening today, we think this is unprecedented, but we've seen worse, we've seen worse. And not only that, we've seen far worse rhetoric. Ayatollah Khomeini, if you want some light reading, read Ayatollah Khomeini's last will and testament. He excoriates the al-Sauds, he excoriates Saudi Arabia, and he says in his last will and testament that he will improve relations with the United States before he ever improves relations with Saudi Arabia. His grave was not even warm when Hashemi Rafsanjani became President in 1989, and decided to move towards a rapprochement with Saudi Arabia.

So in this constant dichotomy between is Iran a pragmatic actor or is it an ideological actor, there's plenty of areas where they act very pragmatically. I prefer to refer to them as a survivalist actor rather than a pragmatic one or an ideological one. And then when we look at the height of Saudi-Iran rapprochement from '97 through 2003, I mean I was in Tehran

in '97 when Crown Prince Abdullah visited Tehran for the Organization of Islamic Conference Summit, and I can tell you Iranian officials were delighted. They were delighted because this was, and the last point I need to make on this is that sometimes the issue is framed as Shia versus Sunni, or Arab versus Persian; it's not framed that way in Iran. Iran likes to view itself as a pan-Islamic power. They don't use Shiite sectarian language. You would be hard pressed to read thirty years of speeches by Ayatollah Khomeini, I don't recommend it by the way, he doesn't have a very rosy outlook on life, but you'd be hard-pressed to find any sectarian language, but he does say we need to protect oppressed Muslims around the world. Why? It just doesn't make sense for Iran to play a sectarian game if they want to be a pan-Islamic power, because they're only dealing with fifteen percent of the world's Muslims if they play a sectarian game. And that's an important point.

Now we are certainly at a low point in Saudi-Iran relations today. The deterioration began in 2003, with the Iraq War as articulated by Prince Saud al-Faisal in a 2005 speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, the view in Saudi Arabia was that we've handed this entire country over to Iran. And this was the view that was expressed over and over again. It's a view that I hear in Riyadh today. We can talk about it in the question and answer session about what this all means.

Lastly, China, very briefly. When King Abdullah ascended the throne in Saudi Arabia in 2005, he took two state visits as his first two state visits, and they were to China and they were to India. He didn't go to Cairo, he didn't go to Washington as his first two state visits, because he understood the future of energy dynamics. And when you look at the future of global growth in world energy, you will see that the future growth is in China and is in India. So the Iran-China relationship is an important one to look at, in which we have looked at, but when you compare that to the Saudi-China relationship, that looks like a strategic relationship.

You've got Saudi Aramco investing in refineries in China. You have Hu Jintao, in addition to trade flows and capital flows, I also think it's important to look at heads of state flows. Hu Jintao has visited Saudi Arabia twice. He has not visited Iran. It's important. And on one of his visits to Riyadh, he did it shortly after visiting Washington in 2007. And if you recall that visit in 2007, he visited Washington, there was a heckler who got onto the White House lawn and embarrassed him, it embarrassed the Bush Administration, and he got on the flight and went to Riyadh afterwards. Now, it's not quite on the way, you could pass over Riyadh, you didn't have to refuel in Riyadh, but he went to Riyadh, and it was a signal.

You visit Washington and you visit Riyadh on the same visit. And in Riyadh, he was given the rare honor of speaking before Majlis al-Shura. And this gives you a sense of this relationship that is growing. So I think that the last point on this is that as China plays a more significant role, as China sources more of its oil from the Persian Gulf region, China's going to have to ask itself at some point will it continue to be a free rider on the American security umbrella, because they are right now a free-rider on this American security umbrella. And whenever there's talk of conflict between Iran and the United States, and Iran will threaten to close down the Straits of Hormuz, on one hand that's kind of like not cutting your nose despite your face, that's cutting your face despite your nose, because

that's where Iran's oil goes through, but on the other hand it won't only be the United States that is upset by that. It would also be China. And I think that's a very important trend to watch going forward. So, thank you for indulging me a little bit over. Thank you.

[Moynihan] Okay, so we have some questions here. If you have more questions, please go ahead and send them up. Please do send them up, but we have a few minutes left for the panel, and I'm hopeful that they'll timely and thoughtfully respond. The first note from those sitting with us today notes that the title of the conference is Framing the Arab and U.S. Response. And on that note with respect to Iran, we should note that the Arab opinions may be determined by some things not discussed on the panel. They may be determined by Wikileaks. Well, we know the opinion of senior GCC Arab leaderships and councils is in fact quite concerned about Iran, maybe not more than they've ever been concerned, maybe not more than during the exporting the revolution stage of the first decade, but nonetheless very concerned, and they're very concerned about strategic weapons. Reports of recent enrichment from five to twenty percent are perhaps of interest in that sense. The other thing I would mention is that there's been polling of the Arab publics, and the Arab publics almost have a different view than the Arab leadership, because by majority, the Arab republics would welcome Iranian nuclear power. So I don't know how to reconcile that, but I'm sure the panel can help.

[Leverett] Let me just say one thing about Wikileaks and one thing about how to think about Arab public opinion on this issue. A number of the Wikileaks cables received an extraordinary amount of attention. One that did was of course one that has Ambassador Al-Jubeir telling U.S. officials that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia is exhorting the United States to quote unquote "cut the head off of the snake" where Iran is concerned. And I just ask you to keep some perspective on this. I am personally very, very dubious that the Saudi leadership on a kind of consensus collected basis really wants the United States to attack Iran. In 2006, if I recall correctly, Prince Saudi al-Faisal came to Washington to deliver a letter personally from King Abdullah to then President Bush. I was told that the letter said, you know, Dear Mr. President, we have two nightmares where Iran is concerned. One is that Iran will get a nuclear weapon; the other is that the United States will go to war to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. You must find a path in between these two nightmares. Fast forward to early 2009, the early days of the Obama Administration, and I said to some of my Saudi interlocutors I think you guys have gotten a third nightmare. The third nightmare is that the United States will actually try serious diplomacy with Iran, and that it will succeed. And my Saudi interlocutors said yeah, that's the third nightmare.

Now I told them, and I think I was right about this, you don't have to worry about the Obama Administration trying serious diplomacy with Iran, that ain't going to happen, and the Administration has never tried serious diplomacy with Iran. But I think you need to evaluate, I think the Saudis have these three nightmares where the U.S. is concerned with Iran. If they think we're being quote unquote "too soft" with Iran, maybe thinking about rapprochement with Iran in a way that they think would come at their expense, cut the head off the snake. If they think things are actually headed towards a military confrontation, you know, they come here and say you need to be talking to these guys, we talked to these guys, you need to be talking to these guys.

So I think some of those statements, look at when they're made, what the context is, and thinking about it in terms of how the Saudis manage us. And we are a high maintenance ally, okay. On public opinion, I think the point is exactly right. There is a big divide between elites and sort of mass opinion regarding Iran in the Arab world, even in the Sunni Arab world. Some variations across countries, but basically the Iranian message of resistance, the Iranian message of independence from the United States, all that; that really resonates. Now, some in the region try, and I think Afshin made exactly the right point, the Iranians don't play the sectarian card. It's certain Arab states that play the sectarian card. And sometimes that has a little bit of a dent on Iranian public standing, but overall, I think the Iranians, and Ken is right, they have real, serious problems in terms of conventional military capabilities. They know it. They think they win on the soft power. Thank you.

[Molavi] On the Wikileaks, I think it was a really fascinating episode because when you saw Iran's reaction to the Wikileaks cables, particularly the first batch of cables where we had those kinds of statements like cutting off the head of the snake, and Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates urging military action, even the King of Bahrain. You know, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was asked one day after this news broke at a press conference what he thought of this. And as you know he's not someone who's given necessarily to restraint, and he dismissed it. He said this is a plot. This is a plot by Zionists, by the west, by the C.I.A. to break us apart from our brotherly neighbors. Well what was going on there? What was going on there was that President Ahmadinejad was reflecting a national security elite consensus in Iran, which began under the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani, accelerated into the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, that basically argued that the Persian Gulf region is Iran's most important concentric circle of its foreign policy, and a hostile position towards Iran's GCC neighbors is not good for their foreign policy. He was reflecting that elite national security consensus. Now, is that elite national security consensus fraying as we speak? It could be – this isn't Rafsajani's Iran's anymore, this isn't Khatami's Iran anymore – but this was Ahmadinejad saying that. And just one week ago Ayatollah Ali Khomeini said our relations with Saudi Arabia is based on mutual respect, they are our brotherly neighbors. I mean this is the kind of language that they use. And again, this is not a regime that is shy about using colorful language when they want to use colorful language against a particular flight. So I thought that was an important piece of the Wikileaks.

[Moynihan] This will be the last question for the panel so they can finish up on time and move on to our business. And it concerns sanctions, which have been discussed. I have a note, and I missed this, apparently Fahreed Zakaria in yesterday's Post suggested that the sanctions had virtually no impact on the Islamic Republic's commercial and trade relations, and they had prepared for the sanctions before they occurred. They're used to sanctions because they've been sanctioned virtually since the revolution occurred in '79, they have established grey markets for most of the things that they need to do, and there are indeed states in the world who are prepared to ignore all sanctions as long as the trade can be at least tacitly obscured. So we have a difference of opinion. And then we have of course our own Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggesting that after the used car salesman's assassination threat against the Saudi Arabia Ambassador here that sanctions would be

further increased and brought to the level of crippling. And then there was active speculation about what else could be done. So as we close out, and realizing that sanctions themselves are in fact controversial even in the case of South Africa, when they mention successful sanctions took two generations to produce change. I wonder if the panel could talk again about the effectiveness of sanctions as a policy, particularly with respect to Iran?

[Katzman] Yeah I have done a lot of work on that. No, I mean I phrase it exactly the same way. It depends. Effectiveness is a very broad term. The core goal of the sanctions is to cause Iran to change its position on its nuclear program, and to accede to U.N. Security Council requirements that it suspend uranium enrichment. And if you measure effectiveness on that level, then no, it hasn't been effective. If you measure it on putting economic pressure on the Islamic Republic, then I would say it has been effective. Now, as far as the piece that was cited, and we've had two presentations today, mine and Afshin's, that have given very specific examples of how the sanctions have produced economic pressure. And I would just refer people to the statements of Iran's own officials, many of whom, several of whom have acknowledged that the sanctions have hurt investment, that they're not going to meet certain goals for foreign investment, that their goals of raising energy, oil production will not be met – in fact we are looking at a deterioration. Every year, they export fewer barrels of oil than previous. What a lot of U.S. officials say is very soon, Iraq, which was basically declared as few as three or four years ago a failed state, is likely very soon to be actually exporting more oil than Iran is, or at least producing more oil than Iran is. And you know, again, we have a situation where Iraq is able to import weapons. In fact, we've just agreed with the Iraqi government to sell I believe thirty-two F-16s. Iran is able to get no weapons. So I don't see a bright future strategically for the Islamic Republic.

[Molavi] I'll just add to that briefly. I think Ken said it right when he said that all you really have to do is read the Iranian media, and you'll come up with dozens of quotes from Iranian businessmen, Iranian heads of chambers of commerce, even Iranian officials who say either elliptically or quite openly that sanctions are hurting them. Sanctions are raising the cost of doing business. I mean, how can they not be hurting you when you can't get letters of credit, international banks are not dealing with you? Iran's oil sector, which you know, Iran is an underperforming economic giant. I often remember what Charles de Gaulle once said of Brazil. He said Brazil has enormous potential and it always will. Iran seems to me like that, because they say oh, we have this oil reserve, this gas reserve, this. Yes, Iran does have these enormous reserves. It also has enormous human talent, probably some of the best human talent in all of the region. And yet, as a result of these sanctions, as a result of mismanagement, it is not achieving its enormous potential, and I'll have to talk to my friend Fahreed about this column, I haven't seen it yet.

[Leverett] I just want to say one thing about the rhetoric from the Obama Administration about increasing sanctions. About the only sort of strategically significant uptake on sanctions that I think they could pursue would be to sanction the Central Bank of Iran. There have been a number, there have been people in the Administration all along that wanted to do that. The main reasons for not doing it are, first of all, the evidentiary case – not all that clear, but I think more importantly if you sanction Central Bank, you are basically imposing an embargo on Iranian oil exports, and that is a red line for a number of

key U.S. allies, and a number of key international states that are crucial to having any kind of sanctions regime, including China. And I think that if the Administration is foolish enough to try and go down that road of sanctioning the central bank, it is going to get some extraordinary international pushback on that. Stay tuned on that.

[Iskander] With that thought, will you please join me in expressing our appreciation for the panel for their thoughts?

Dr. John Iskander

Dr. Iskander is the Chair of the Near East and North Africa section of Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) at the U.S. Department of State. FSI has long been the premier agency within the U.S. Government tasked with educating and training America's diplomats and other executive branch personnel assigned to the Arab countries and much of the Middle East.

Dr. Iskander was previously Professor of Religion and Islamic Studies at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Santa Clara University in History and Political Science, a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies from UCLA, and a Ph.D in Religious Studies from the University of California-Santa Barbara. Dr. Iskander's research interests focus on issues of religious identity, sanctity, and the impact of modernity. He has lived in Egypt and speaks Arabic.

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Mr. Afshin Molavi

Mr. Molavi is a Senior Research Fellow at the New America Foundation's American Strategy Program, a non-partisan think tank devoted to pragmatic solutions to global problems. He is also senior Middle East advisor for Oxford Analytica, a global macro advisory and analysis firm with a network of over 1,400 specialists around the world, and writes a regular column on geopolitics and geoeconomics for The National, and Abu Dhabi-based English language daily.

A former Dubai-based correspondent for Reuters news agency, a Tehran-based correspondent for the Washington Post, and a Riyadh-based correspondent for UPI and the Arab News, Mr. Molavi frequently comments on Middle East affairs in the international media, including BBC, CNN, NPR, Al-Arabiya, and Al-Jazeera. His articles and commentaries have appeared in the New York Times, the Financial Times, Businessweek, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the Journal of Commerce, National Geographic, Institutional Investor, and several academic and specialty publications. He wrote the

National Geographic cover story on Dubai – “Sudden City” – that appeared in all 29 language editions of the magazine.

A frequent keynote speaker at corporate events who has advised governments and businesses on GCC and Iran issues as well as the economic fall-out of “The Arab Spring”, Mr. Molavi is currently at work on a study of the “The New Silk Road” – the growing geocommercial and economic corridor between the Middle East and Asia – and argues the “the ’twain have met – West Asia and East Asia,” describing the regions critical role in fueling “The Asian Century”. As he puts it, “there would be no ‘Asian century’ without West Asian energy”. He is also Co-Director of the New America Foundation’s World Economy Roundtable, an ambitious effort to remap the global economy in the wake of the Great Recession.

A graduate of the John Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies’ in Middle East History and International Economics, Mr. Molavi was named by the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2005 as a Young Global Leader, a title accorded to leading thinkers, political figures, scientists, academics, and civil society actors under the age of forty.

Mr. Molavi is also the critically acclaimed author of “The Soul of Iran” (W.W.Norton), which was described by Foreign Affairs as “a brilliant tableau of today’s Iran”, by the Washington Post as “invaluable, now more than ever”, and by the Columbia Journalism Review as “the best of the recent crop of Iran books:.

He is also a self-described “proud alumnus” of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations’ Joe Alex Morris Jr. Journalism Internship Program. He recently said, “Whatever modest achievements are under my belt, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the National Council for kick-starting my journey through the Middle East as a recent college graduate almost twenty years ago.

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Dr. Janne Nolan

Dr. Nolan is the Director of Nuclear Security Programs at the American Security Project. She has held numerous senior positions in the private sector, including as Professor of International Affairs and Deputy Director of the Ridgway Center at the University of Pittsburgh, Director of Foreign Policy for the Century Foundation of New York, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution , and Senior International Security Consultant at Science Applications International Corporation.

Dr Nolan’s public service includes positions as Foreign Affairs Officer in the Department of State, Senior Representative to the Senate Armed Services Committee for Senator Gary Hart, and as a member of several blue ribbon commissions, including: the White House

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Author of six books, Dr. Nolan's work includes: "Guardians of the Arsenal: The Politics of Nuclear Strategy", "Trappings of Power: Ballistic Missiles in the Third World", and "An Elusive Consensus". She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Committee on International Security [second appointed term], the Aspen Strategy Group [Distinguished Emeritus], and the Cosmos Club.

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Dr. Flynt Leverett

Dr. Leverett is Director of the Iran Initiative and a Senior Research Fellow in the American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation. He is a leading authority on U.S. foreign policy, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, and global energy issues.

From 1992 to 2003, Dr. Leverett has a distinguished career in the U.S. Government, serving as Senior Director for Middle East Affairs at the National Security Council, Middle East Expert on the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff, and Senior Analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency. He left the Bush administration and government in the spring of 2003 because of disagreements about Middle East policy and the conduct of the war on terror more generally. He is a consultant to the World Economic Forum's "Gulf Cooperation Council and the World 2025" scenarios project and the Club of Madrid on global energy issues. He is a peer reviewer for the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook.

Among Dr. Leverett's many publications are "Dealing with Tehran: Assessing U.S. Diplomatic Options toward Iran" [2006] and "Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire" (2005). His op-eds and articles on Middle Eastern issues and global energy affairs have appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Financial Times, the National Interest, the Washington Quarterly, and the American Prospect, among other publications. He has appeared on a wide range of news and public affairs programs as well as the Daily Show with John Stewart. He appears regularly before prominent academic and policy fora in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and has provided testimony to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. He also speaks to business audiences worldwide.

Dr. Leverett holds a Ph.D in Politics from Princeton University and is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

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Dr. Kenneth Katzman

As a specialist with the Congressional Research Service, Dr. Katzman serves as Senior Middle East Analyst for the U.S. Congress, with special emphasis on Iran, Iraq, the Persian Gulf states, Afghanistan, and extremist groups operating in the Middle East and South Asia. He provides reports and briefings to Members of Congress and their staffs on U.S. policy and legislation on these countries and issues. He has also written numerous articles in various outside publications, including "The Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard", and given numerous official presentations and briefings at conferences and in bilateral meetings throughout the Islamic world. During 1996 and July 2001-March 2002, he was assigned to the Majority Staff of the House International Relations Committee to work on Middle East issues, including hearings and legislation.

Among other major publications, Dr. Katzman wrote working papers on the ballistic missile capabilities of Iran and Iraq for the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States ["Rumsfeld Commission"] in 1988. In late 1999, the Atlantic Council published his study, "U.S.-Iran Relations: An Analytic Compendium of U.S. Policies, Laws, and Regulations". Dr. Katzman is quoted frequently on the Gulf region in the U.S. press and he appears frequently on Middle Eastern news stations including Alam TV, Al Hurra, Al Arabiyya, LBC, and Al Akhbariya. During 2004, he was a consultant to CBS News on al-Qaeda and related groups.

Dr. Katzman holds a Ph.D in Political Science from New York University. His dissertation focused on "Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: Radical Ideology Despite Institutionalization in the Islamic Republic". From 1989 to 1991, he was an analyst for Defense Systems, Inc., in McLean, Virginia, where he wrote analyses for clients in defense and policy analysis community. Among these projects were ones focused on military and security forces in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein's intentions, and the combat effectiveness of several Middle Eastern military forces. During 1985-1989, he served as an analyst for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, where he was tasked with preparing written reports for U.S. Middle East policymakers on leadership dynamics in Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf states, and with briefing senior U.S. officials.