

After Sistani and Khamenei: Looming Successions Will Shape the Middle East

Middle East Programs

Monday, July 15, 2019

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Atlantic Council Headquarters

Speaker Biographies



Abbas Kadhim

Director, Iraq Initiative, Atlantic Council

Abbas Kadhim leads the Atlantic Council Iraq Initiative. He is an Iraq expert and author of *Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of the Modern State*. Most recently, he was a senior foreign policy fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He was formerly an assistant professor of national security affairs and Middle East studies at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and a visiting assistant professor at Stanford University. He also previously held a senior government affairs position at the Iraqi Embassy in Washington, DC. His books include *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa* and *The Hawza Under Siege: Studies in the Ba'ath Party Archive*. He earned a PhD in Near Eastern Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.



Barbara Slavin

Director, Future of Iran Initiative, Atlantic Council

Barbara Slavin is the director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council and a columnist for *Al-Monitor.com*, a website devoted to news from and about the Middle East. The author of *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the US and the Twisted Path to Confrontation* (2007), she is a regular commentator on US foreign policy and Iran on NPR, PBS, and CSPAN. A career journalist, Slavin previously served as assistant managing editor for world and national security of the *Washington Times*, senior diplomatic reporter for *USA TODAY*, Cairo correspondent for the *Economist*, as an editor at the *New York Times Week in Review*. She has covered such key foreign policy issues as the US-led war on terrorism, policy toward “rogue” states the Iran-Iraq war, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. She has traveled to Iran nine times. Slavin also served as a public policy scholar the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, where she wrote *Bitter Friends*, and as a senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, where she researched and wrote the report *Mullahs, Money and Militias: How Iran Exerts Its Influence in the Middle East*.



Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar

Associate Professor, Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University; Fellow, Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University

Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar is an associate professor in the International Affairs Department at the Bush School of Government at Texas A&M University. He is also a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. His research areas include international security and Middle East politics. He is the author of *Religious Statecraft: The Politics of Islam in Iran* (2018). His articles have appeared in *Security Studies* and *Journal of Strategic Studies*. He has also written for *Foreign Affairs' Snapshot*, *Foreign Policy's Middle East Channel*, and *Washington Post's Monkey Cage*.

Moderator Bio



Mohsen Milani

Executive Director, Center for Strategic & Diplomatic Studies, University of South Florida

Mohsen Milani is the executive director of the Center for Strategic & Diplomatic Studies, and professor of Politics at the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies at the University of South Florida. An internationally recognized scholar, he has been a research fellow at Harvard, Oxford, and the Ca' Foscari University in Venice, Italy. He served as chairperson of the Department of Government and International Affairs at the University of South Florida (1999-2012). Milani has authored more than 80 publications. Some of his works have been translated into French, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Persian and Portuguese. His latest articles include: *The Turbulent*

History Shaping Iran's Opposition to an Independent Iraqi Kurdistan (2017); *Iran in a Reconnecting Eurasia* (2016); *How Rafsanjani Became the Pragmatic Voice of Iran's Revolution* (2017); *Iran's Strategy in the Syrian Civil War* (2013), and; the following articles in *Foreign Affairs*: "Iran and Russia's Uncomfortable Alliance;" "How Iran's Moderates Triumphed;" "Saudi Arabia's Desperate Measures;" "Why Tehran Isn't to Blame for the Civil War in Yemen;" "Rouhani's Foreign Policy;" "The Ayatollah's Game Plan;" "Meet me in Baghdad;" and "Iran's US Policy."