

Iran: Propaganda and Perception 41 Years After the Revolution

Atlantic Council

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

9:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Atlantic Council Headquarters

Speaker Biographies



Graham Brookie

Director and Managing Editor, Digital Forensic Research Lab, Atlantic Council

Graham Brookie is the director and managing editor of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab). Prior to joining the DFRLab, Brookie served in various positions at the White House and National Security Council. His most recent role was as an adviser for strategic communications with a focus on digital strategy, audience engagement, and coordinating a cohesive record of former US President Barack Obama's national security and foreign policy. Previously he served as the adviser to the assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism (APHSCT), the president's top aide for cybersecurity, counterterrorism, intelligence, and homeland security issues. He also worked in the East Asia, Middle East, and North Africa directorates at the National Security Council. Brookie graduated cum laude with degrees from American University in Washington, DC.

He also completed the London School of Economics' general course.



Emerson T. Brooking

Resident Fellow, Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab), Atlantic Council

Emerson T. Brooking is a Resident Fellow at the Digital Forensic Research Lab of the Atlantic Council and coauthor of *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media*. Most recently, he was Research Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations—the youngest researcher in a generation to receive such an appointment. Brooking has spoken regularly on the topic of information warfare and political manipulation, advising multiple U.S. technology companies and national security entities. He has appeared widely in broadcast media, including NPR's "Fresh Air," and his work has been published in *Foreign Affairs*, *WIRED*, and *Rolling Stone*, among others. Brooking was recently named to the *Forbes* "30 Under 30." He holds a BA in Political Science and Classical Studies from the University of Pennsylvania.



Farnaz Fassihi

Writer and Political Journalist

Farnaz Fassihi writes about Iran for the New York Times. Previously, she was a senior writer for the Wall Street Journal for 17 years, based in the Middle East and at the United Nations in New York. Fassihi has covered wars and uprisings across the Middle East, including in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Gaza, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. She served as the Journal’s Baghdad bureau chief from 2003 to 2006 and is the author of a book on the Iraq War titled, “Waiting for An Ordinary Day.” Fassihi has been honored with more than a dozen national journalism awards and is a 2018 recipient of an Ellis Island Medal of Honor. She is currently working on a book about Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps.



Nazila Fathi

Author and former Tehran Correspondent, The New York Times

Nazila Fathi is a former New York Times correspondent based in Tehran and the author of *The Lonely War: One Woman’s Account of the Struggle for Modern Iran*. She covered Iran from 1993 to 2010 and wrote about Iran’s politics, culture and society. She became a target after the Green Movement uprising in 2009 and had to leave the country. She won two Harvard fellowships, a Shorenstein Press and Politics and a Nieman Fellowship, for her coverage of Iran. She was also an associate at Harvard Belfer Center. Fathi is the author of two recent children’s books, *My Name Is Cyrus* and *Avicenna, The Father of Modern Medicine*.



Congressman William Hurd (R-TX)

US House of Representatives, United States

William Hurd, a San Antonio native and Texas A&M Computer Science Graduate, is an American politician and former CIA officer serving as the US representative for Texas’s 23rd congressional district since 2015. The district stretches about 550 miles (890 km) from San Antonio to El Paso along the US–Mexican border. Since being elected in 2014, Congressman Hurd has continued to deliver bipartisan results for the 800,000 Texans he calls his “bosses” by working with anyone – regardless of politics. Hurd has been described as a leading congressional voice on technology issues. Texas Monthly and Politico Magazine have called him “the Future of the GOP.” His efforts to put good policy over good politics have clearly struck a chord in a country that is often consumed with what divides

us instead of what unites us.



Simin Kargar

PhD Researcher, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Simin Kargar is a PhD researcher at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University. Her research focuses on the interplays of social media, power and propaganda in the Middle East and the evolution of statecraft in digital era.



Suzanne Kianpour

Nonresident Senior Fellow, Middle East Programs and the Digital Forensic Research Lab, Atlantic Council

Suzanne Kianpour is a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and a foreign affairs and political journalist. With postings in Washington, Beirut, London, and LA working for the BBC, Kianpour's reporting has taken her around the world: from conflict zones in the Middle East, to covering Secretary of State John Kerry's role in the Iran nuclear negotiations in Europe, to Latin America and the US detente with Cuba. Over the course of her career, Kianpour has landed interviews with high-profile individuals, including Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal. She is also a UCLA public diplomacy lecturer and 2018 fellow at Georgetown's Institute of Politics and Public Service focusing on media's role in public service. Her work at the Atlantic Council focuses on Iran in a joint fellowship with the Middle East

Programs and the Digital Forensic Research Lab.



Asieh Namdar

Anchor, CGTN America

Asieh Namdar is an anchor for CGTN America in Washington, D.C. She comes to CGTN with more than 20 years of experience at CNN, where she served as an anchor for CNNI, a senior writer for HLN, and a contributor to CNN.com. Namdar has written and reported on many international stories, including the trade dispute between China and the US, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the tsunami disaster in Asia, the disputed 2009 election and protests in Iran, as well as the Iran nuclear agreement. In 2004, she traveled to ancient city of Bam in Iran for a humanitarian mission after a deadly earthquake. It was her first and last trip to her native Iran since she left at the age of 12.



Jason Rezaian

Global Opinions Writer, The Washington Post

Jason Rezaian is a writer for Global Opinions at the Washington Post. He served as The Post's correspondent in Tehran from 2012 to 2016. He spent 544 days unjustly imprisoned by Iranian authorities until his release in January 2016 and is the author of *Prisoner: My 544 Days in an Iranian Prison—Solitary Confinement, a Sham Trial, High-Stakes Diplomacy, and the Extraordinary Efforts It Took to Get Me Out*. He is also a CNN contributor.



Barbara Slavin

Director, Future of Iran Initiative, Atlantic Council

Barbara Slavin is the director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council, an adjunct professor at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs 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 at 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*.



William F. Wechsler

Director, Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East & Middle East Programs, Atlantic Council

William F. Wechsler is director of Middle East Programs and the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council. Mr. Wechsler's most recent government position was deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combatting Terrorism. Previously, Mr. Wechsler served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats, where he directed a budget of \$1.6 billion and oversaw military and civilian programs around the globe. During the Clinton Administration, Mr. Wechsler served as special advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury, where he helped establish the legal regime and policies, we use to impose foreign sanctions and combat money laundering. He had previously served as Director for Transnational Threats on the National Security Council staff, and prior to that was a Special

Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Wechsler is a graduate of Cornell University and received an MA from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.