

Iran Event Moderator

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen for coming to what promises to be an enlightening panel, and hopefully a lively discussion to follow.

My name is Mahmood Karimi-Hakak. I am a Professor of Creative Arts at Siena College and standing here in front of you, I am reminded of Miranda's line from Shakespeare's **The Tempest** "O Wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O Brave new world that has such people in it!"*

And indeed, it is such "goodly creatures" that make up this "brave new world." A world in which humanity is cherished and humility praised.

We are gathered here tonight to engage in perhaps what is the most critical debate of our time, **The Conflict over Nuclear Power and Human Rights between Iran and the United States.**

As activists, artists and teachers, we all strive to build bridges. Bridges that connect what **is** to what **may be**. Bridges that connect **past experiences** to what is **to be experienced**. Bridges that connect **our** world to **theirs**. And tonight we hope to add another truss to this much-needed Bridge.

It is indeed a rare occasion when a soldier, a poet, and a financier, join hands to defend mankind, to protect the rights of those living under unpopular regimes, and to stop war-mongers from drowning all our values in a sea of blood.

And we need such rare occasions when most modes of communication are set at destroying bridges instead of building them.

It is my great privilege and honor to introduce to you our three distinguished guests:

Mr. Scott Ritter has had an extensive and distinguished career in government service. Rising to the rank of Major, he is an intelligence specialist with a 12-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps including assignments in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East.

Mr. Ritter joined the United Nations weapons inspections team in 1991, and participated in 34 inspection missions, 14 of them as chief inspector. He resigned this post in 1998, citing US interference in the work of the inspections.

Scott Ritter is the author of many books, including: **Endgame**, an account of his experience serving as the person in charge of searching out weapons of mass destruction within Iraq, **“Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the UN and Overthrow Saddam Hussein,”** and most recently **“Target Iran: The Truth About the White House’s Plans for Regime Change.”**

Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages & Literatures at Washington University in St. Louis, MO., where she served as Director of the Graduate Program in Jewish, Islamic, and Near Eastern Studies, Director of the Center for the Study of Islamic Societies and Civilizations, and President of the Association of Women Faculty.

A published poet in her own right, Ms. Keshavarz’s scholarly contributions include: **Reading Mystical Lyric: the Case of Jalal al-Din Rumi**, and **Recite in the Name of the Red Rose: Poetic Sacred Making in Twentieth Century Iran**, as well as numerous articles and essays. Her latest book, **Jasmines and Stars: Reading more than Lolita in Tehran**, blends personal memoir with literary analysis and social commentary.

As a public intellectual, she was invited to speak at the UN General Assembly on implications of cultural education for world peace in May 2007. She has been a guest on NPR on numerous occasions, and is the recipient of the 2008 **Hershel Walker Peace & Justice Award** by People’s Weekly, and **The Choice Magazine Award**, among others.

Mr. Jahangir Golestan-Parast has lived in 4 and traveled to 40 countries. This has provided him with a unique perspective on the many cultures that comprise today's world. An international financier, and a student of film making at UCLA, Mr. Golestan-Parast's first documentary “**Isfahan, A City Known as Half the World**” was released in 1997.

Set to educate the world about the true texture of the Iranian culture and people, he expanded his efforts into “**The Essence of Iran Series.**” His second documentary, “**Iran, a Video Journey**” was released in the year 2000.

When the Bam earthquake struck, Mr. Golestan-Parast realized that here was a story to be told. A story, not of devastation, but of hope. A story that would transcend geo-political differences. **Bam 6.6** was released in December 2006.

Dr. Keshavarz and Mr. Ritter will speak for 10 minutes each. Then we will watch Mr. Golestan-Parast’s documentary film, **Bam 6.6**, together, followed by a relatively brief Q and A.

I sincerely request that our speakers observe the ten-minute rule, and to that end, I will give them a two-minute signal. I also ask that our audience save their questions and comments for the Q and A section of the program, and that they limit their question or comments to **1** minute, thus allowing time for adequate response, and for others to address their concerns.

Thank you

* Miranda, upon seeing a large group of people for the first time.
The Tempest 5.1.181-185