



THE IRAN ENIGMA

NAVIGATING STRATEGY AND SECURITY.

APRIL 10, 2024 CONFERENCE REPORT

**GLOBAL &
NATIONAL
SECURITY**
FACTORY
POLICY DIALOGUES



SOUTH FLORIDA
Global National Security Institute





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I've spent a good portion of my life and most of my professional career studying the Middle East. I've spent time in nearly all the countries in the region and have a lot of experience in it. As a military historian, I recognize the extreme volatility that has plagued the region for hundreds of years, dating back to the Ottoman Empire's war with the Iranian Safavid Dynasty.

land attack cruise missile, and drone attack. Nations in the region need modern, capable air and missile defenses

Bluntly, I believe now is the most dangerous period of time in the Greater Middle East that I can recall. And, just as bluntly, I believe Iran is the greatest danger and greatest threat in the region.

In *"The Iran Enigma: Navigating Security and Strategy,"* we explored the geopolitical chaos cultivated and exported by Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary government, led by Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The country is ruled by a thuggish, theocratic regime that is bad news for everyone. It's a regime that America has consistently underestimated and frequently overlooked because of wishful thinking "that it will just sort of go away."

It's not going to go away. It's an Imperial culture that is thousands of years old and will continue to be a dominant country in the region for a long time.

The current Iranian government considers itself a *revolutionary regime*. They are determined for their revolution to outlive their generation without changing. That's a rare occurrence. Seldom do revolutions outlive the revolutionary generation.

The current regime in Iran knows this and they are determined to guarantee the survival of their revolution by whatever means necessary and to export it throughout the region.

Despite this and the inconsistent messaging and policies from the United States about our role and responsibilities in the Middle East, I believe there is a path forward for us and it is centered on air and missile defense. The primary and growing threat from Iran is that of ballistic missile,



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[Davenport](#) added another consideration, "Iran's nuclear
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[Slavin](#) cuugtvfg"oy"ecp"rtqrqg"xctkwu"ogcuwtgu"kp" return for various concessions that do not have to be dtqwi"jv"dghtq"vjg"W0U0"Eqpi"tguu"cpf"uetwvkkp|gf"wpfgt" vjg"ng"ikuncvkqp"vjcv"y"cu"rcuug"y"jgp"vjg"LERQC"y"gpv" kpvq"ghhgev⁰"Kvau"rtqdcn{"vjg"dguv"y"ecp"fq⁰"Ujg"y"gpv" qp"vq"uvcvg."ok"vjkip"Ktcp"ku"uvkn"cv"cvkqpcn"cevqt"vjcv"ecp"dg" kpl"wgpegf"ykvj"rtci"ocvke"kepgvkvxgu"cpf"vjcv"y"gu"ujqwnf" gzjcwuv"gxgt{"qvjgt"qrkvkqp"dghtq"y"vcnm"cdqww"vjg"oknkvt{" option."

Iran's Social Movements

[Rahleh Dayerizadeh](#) started the panel discussion by highlighting Iran's rich history of social movements and its culture of activism. The panel discussion focused on vjg"rcuv"cpf"ewttgpv"ektew"ouvcpegu"qh"y"q"ogp"kp"Ktcp"cpf" the regime's response to recent protests. [Dayerizadeh stated](#). "o [qw"ugg"y"q"ogp"kp"Ktcp"htqpv"cpf"egpvt"qh"vjgug" o"q"q"ogpvu⁰"Ktcpkcp"y"q"ogp"rww"vjgkt"dqfkgu"qp"vjg"nkp" every day."

[Eq o c p f g t" P k e q n g" E c n g](#) put into context the courage and determination of the Iranian population as they have suffered over many years. She dove into the history of Ktcpou"tgukvcp"og"q"ogpvu"cpf"ocfg"kv"xgt{"engct."oy"jgp" {qw"vcnm"cdqww"Ktcp."{qw"owuv"vcmg"ectg"vq"fkuvkpi"wkuj" dgvyggp"vjg"tgikog"cpf"vjg"Ktcpkcp"rqrwncvkqp⁰"Yg"nkxg"kp" c"eqwpyt"ykvj"ci"iqxgtp"ogpv"vjcv"ku"tgrtgugpvckvxg."uq"yg" fqpp⁰"cwwq"ocvkecnn{"ocmg"vjcv"ugrctcvkqp⁰"[She explained](#)

that the Regime does not represent the beliefs of most of the Iranian population and said, "Elections in Iran are not free, fair, and representative."

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Vjg"Yqogp."Nkhg."Htggfqo"o"q"q"ogpv"fkfp⁰"qewt" separate from outside civil resistance instances.

[Eq o c p f g t" E c n g" y c u" s w k e m" v q" r q k p v" q w w" o" Y q o g p" j c x g" been protesting the hijab and their treatment since the regime's beginning. The population has protested for tghqt"okp"vjg"rcuv."cpf"kpuvcgf"qh"cf"ftguukpi"vjgkt"gxgt/ i"tqykip"itkgxcpegu."vjg"tgikog"fqwdngu"fqyp"ykvj" increased degradation." Mortazavi also illustrated that before Masha Amini's death, there had been other instances qh"xkqngpeg"ci"ckpuv"y"q"ogp⁰"Vjku"igpgtcvgf"cpigt"cpf" dgec"og"cy"cvgtujgf"o"q"ogpv"cu"y"q"ogp"jcxg"dgpp"Li"jvkip" this dress code for decades. Mortazavi said many people uc"y"vjg"ogunxgu"kp"Co"okp."gurgekcn{"vjgug"kp"vjg"tgnk"ikquw" community. "To the majority of the Iranian society, she nqmqmg"xgt{"pqt"ocn⁰"Kp"hcev."c"nq"qh"tgnk"ikquw"y"q"ogp"fq" ftguu"nkmg"vjcv."o"\[Mortazavi said\]\(#\).](#)

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 or online media outlets, rather, they are getting their
 information from their peers or social media. [Dayerizadeh
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 channel that if he had been saying it on Voice of America or
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Regime Legitimacy

Some of the regimes' attempts to suppress protestors
 included mass arrests, brute force, and internet disruptions.
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 year's presidential election.⁷öVjg { "lwuv"y cpvfg"vq"ugg"vjg"
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[Blout explained](#)ö"Vjg"rtqvuvu"ncuvfg"cdqww" c"yggm"dghqtg"

Failed movement or a way to move forward

[I gpgtcn"OeMgp|kg](#) stated the main priority of Iranian leadership is the preservation of the theocratic regime. "I have more hope from them here than people actually do in Iran," [j g"uckf0"õ Yg"pggf"vq"tg o g o dgt"vj g{ "ugg"vjg o ugnxgu"cu](#)

Speakers:

General (Ret) General Kenneth F. McKenzie. "Gzgewkxg" Fktgevqt"qh" I PUK"cpf" hqt o gt"Eq o o c p f g t"qh" W0U0" Egpvtcn" Eq o o c p f" *WUEGPVEQO+

Fireside Chat:

Mohsen Milani, PhD, "Gzgewkxg" Fktgevqt"qh" v j g" Egpvtg" hqt" Uvtcvg i ke" (" Fkrnq o cvke" Uv w f k g u. "cv" v j g" Wp k x g t u k v { " q h" U q w v j" Florida

Vali Nasr, PhD, "v j g" O c l k f" M j c f f w t k" R t q h g u u q t" q h" O k f f n g" G c u v" U v w f k g u" c p f" K p v g t p c v k q p c n" C h c k t u" c v" L q j p u" J q r m k p u" University

Panel 1:

Arman Mahmoudian, PhD, " * O q f g t c v q t + " T g u k f g p v" T g u g c t e j" H g n n q y. " I P U K" c p f" C f l w p e v" H c e w n v { " q h" W U H" L w f { " I g p u j c h v" J q p q t u" E q n n g i g" c v" v j g" W p k x g t u k v { " q h" U q w v j" H n q t k f c

Sanam Vakil, PhD. " F k t g e v q t. " O k f f n g" G c u v" c p f" P q t v j" C h t k e c" R t q i t c o o g. " E j c v j c o " J q w u g

Major General Sean Salene, " F k t g e v q t" h q t" U v t c v g i { . " R n c p u" c p f" R q n k e { " * L 7 + . " W U E G P V E Q O

Alex Vatanka, " F k t g e v q t" q h" K t c p" R t q i t c o" c p f" U g p k q t" H g n n q y. " D n c e m" U g c" R t q i t c o" c v" v j g" O k f f n g" G c u v" K p u v k v w y g

Panel 2:

Sina Azodi, PhD " * O q f g t c v q t + " X k u k v k p i" U e j q n c t" c p f" R t q h g u u q t k c n" N g e w t g t" c v" v j g" I g q t i g" Y c u j k p i v q p" W p k x g t u k v { ø u" G n n k q v v" School of International Affairs

Barbara Slavin, " L q w t p c n k u v" c p f" F k u v k p i w k u j g f" H g n n q y" c v" v j g" U v k o u q p" E g p v g t

Dario Teicher, " C t o u" E q p v t q n" c p f" R t q n k h g t c v k q p" U g e w t k v { " K p k v c v k x g" * R U K + " R t q i t c o u" O c p c i g t. " W U E G P V E Q O

Kelsey Davenport, " F k t g e v q t" h q t" P q p r t q n k h g t c v k q p" R q n k e { " c v" v j g" C t o u" E q p v t q n" C u u q e k c v k q p" "

Panel 3:

Raheleh Dayrizadeh, PhD. " * O q f g t c v q t + " C u u k u v c p v" F k t g e v q t" h q t" v j g" G f w e c v k q p" C d t q c f" Q h L e g" c p f" C f l w p e v" H c e w n v { " c v" U S F

Commander Nicole Cale, " K t c p" U v t c v g i k u v. " L 7 3. " W 0 U 0" U r g e k c n" Q r g t c v k q p u" E q o o c p f

Emily Blout, PhD, " U g p k q t" X k u k v k p i" T g u g c t e j" H g n n q y. " K p v g t p c v k q p c n" K p u v k v w y g" h q t" E q w p v g t v g t t q t k u o. " T g k e j o c p" W p k x g t u k v {

Negar Mortazavi, " L q w t p c n k u v. " U g p k q t" H g n n q y < " E g p v g t" h q t" K p v g t p c v k q p c n" R q n k e { ""

Disclaimer:
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Endnotes

- ¹ "The International Atomic Energy Agency" U.S. Department of State, Accessed May 5, 2024, [jwru<ll y y 0 u v c g 0 i q x l k c g c l % < ø v g z i ? V j g ' 4 2 I A E A % 2 0 s t r e n g t h e n s % 2 0 t h e % 2 0 g l o b a l . e f f o r t % 2 0 t o % 2 0 p r e v e n t % 2 0 n u c l e a r % 2 0 t e r r o r i s m .](https://www.dhs.gov/iaea-20strengthens-20the-20global-effort-20to-20prevent-20nuclear-20terrorism)
- ² T q d k u q p. " M c n k l" ø Y j c v" k u" v j g" K t c p" P w e n g e t" F g c n A ø" e h t l q t i. " E q w p e k n" q p" H q t g k i p" T g n c v k q p u. " n c u v" o q f k L g f" Q e v q d g t" 4 9. " 4 2 4 5. " j w r u < l l y y 0 e h t 0 q t i l d c e m i t q w p f g t l y j c v / k t c p / p w e n g e t / f g c n
- ⁵ ø T g u q n w k q p" 4 4 5 3" * 4 2 3 7 + " q p" K t c p" P w e n g e t" K u u w g l ø" W p k v g f" P c v k q p u" U g e w t k v { " E q w p e k n. " c e e g u g f" O c { " 7. " 4 2 4 6. " j w r u < l l y y 0 w p l q t i l u g e w t k v { e q w p e k n l e q p v g p v l 4 4 5 3 l d c e m i t q w p f
- ⁴ O k n n u. " E n c k t g l" ø" Y j c v" k u" v j g" u v c v w u" q h" v j g" K t c p" p w e n g e t" f g c n A ø" J q w u g" q h" E q o o q p u" N k d t c t { 0. " C r t k n" 4 6. " 4 2 4 6. " j w r u < l l e q o o q p u n k d t c t { I A E A % 2 0 s t r e n g t h e n s % 2 0 t h e % 2 0 g l o b a l . e f 0 4 0 0 4 5 0 8 0 2 0 0 5 4 2 0 e 4 9 1 4 . 8 6 0 T 5 6 0 4 8 0 0 4 7 0 0 0 8 0 8 0 0 2 1 7 . 4 4 0 0 4 6 0 4 E 0 0 4 A 0 0 5 5 0 0 5 2 0 0 5 8 0 0 5 1 0 . 2 4 7 0 0 6 0 0 8 0 4 4



About USF Global and National Security Institute

Today's national security environment is increasingly complex and covers global problems such as strategic competition, emerging technologies, biothreats, climate change, and cybercrime.

To address these challenges, the University of South Florida formed the Global and National Security Institute (GNSI), positioning USF as a leader in developing robust interdisciplinary analyses of large-scale global security problems.

Advances in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and biometrics will require national security policymakers to understand new complexities. GNSI will work closely with leaders and experts from academia, government and the private sector

to provide actionable solutions for decision-makers at local, state, national and global levels.

Located on the boundary of security, policy and technology, GNSI is well situated to leverage the existing academic excellence of USF, a member of the Association of

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