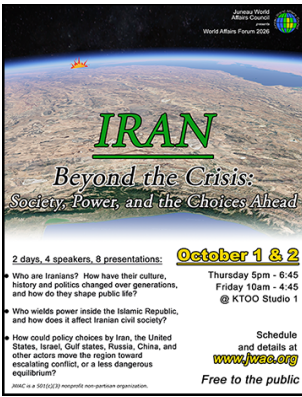




JWAC'S World Affairs Forum 2026:

Iran Beyond the Crisis **Society, Power, and the Choices Ahead**

October 1-2, 2026 @ KTOO Studio 1

Juneau, Alaska - Two days, four speakers, three questions:

- Who are Iranians? How have their culture, history and politics changed over generations, and how do they shape public life?
- Who wields power inside the Islamic Republic, and how does it affect Iranian civil society?
- How could policy choices by Iran, the United States, Israel, Gulf states, Russia, China, and other actors move the region toward escalating conflict, or a less dangerous equilibrium?

Schedule

Thursday, October 1, 2026

(5:00 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.)

Session I:

5:00 - 5:45 p.m. | KTOO

"Setting the Stage: Key Events that Shaped Americans' View of Iran -- The U.S. Embassy Seizure and Follow-On Rescue Mission"

-with **CSM (R) Glen "Nick" Nickel**.

Session II:

6:00-6:45 p.m. | KTOO

"Iran Beyond and Behind the Headlines: When Americans Hear "Iran", What Important Realities Do We Miss?"

-panel discussion with **Dr. Aria Fani, Mr. Omid Memarian and Dr. Dalia Dassa Kaye**.

Friday, October 2, 2026

(10:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.)

Session III:

10:00- 0:45 a.m. | KTOO

"Who are the Iranians? -Iranian Culture and Civilization"

-with **Dr. Aria Fani**.

Friday continued

Session IV:

11:00-11:45 a.m. | KTOO

"Culture, History, Identity and Everyday Life"

-panel discussion with **Dr. Aria Fani** and **Mr. Omid Memarian**.

Session V:

1:00-1:45 p.m. | KTOO

"What Trump Fails to Grasp About Iran"

-with **Mr. Omid Memarian**.

Session VI:

2:00-2:45 p.m. | KTOO

"Power, Dissent, and Political Change (How the Islamic Republic Works and How Society Pushes Back)"

-panel discussion with **Mr. Omid Memarian**, **Dr. Aria Fani**, and **Dr. Dalia Dassa Kaye**.

Session VII:

3:00-3:45 p.m. | KTOO

"Enduring Hostility: Putting the U.S.-Iran War in Context"

-with **Dr. Dalia Dassa Kaye**.

Session VIII:

4:00-4:45 p.m. | KTOO

"Iran and a Region at Risk: The Road Ahead"

-panel discussion with **Dr. Dalia Dassa Kaye**, **CSM (R) Glen 'Nick' Nickel**, **Mr. Omid Memarian**, and **Dr. Aria Fani**.

Speakers



Dr. Dalia Dassa Kaye is a senior fellow at the UCLA Burkle Center for International Relations and director of its Initiative on Regional Security Architectures. A life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dalia is an internationally recognized expert on geopolitics and Middle East policy.

During her fifteen years at the RAND Corporation, Dalia served as a senior political scientist and the director of the Center of Middle East Public Policy. She has received numerous awards and held previous positions at an array of research and public policy institutions, including as a Fulbright Schuman visiting scholar at Lund University, a fellow at the Wilson Center, an advisor at the Foreign Ministry of The Netherlands, an assistant professor of political science and international affairs at the George Washington University, a research fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill.

She is a frequent public speaker and contributor to leading media outlets, including BBC, CNN, NPR, PBS, and Foreign Affairs. She is the author of dozens of articles and policy reports, as well as three books, including most recently *Enduring Hostility: The Making of America's Iran Policy* (Stanford University Press, 2026).

Dalia holds her BA, MA, and PhD in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.



Omid Memarian is the Director of Communications at DAWN and also serves as the organization's Senior Iran Analyst. A journalist and human rights professional, he has extensively covered human rights and foreign policy issues in his writings and throughout his career.

At DAWN, Memarian leads the organization's communications strategy while also providing policy insight and analysis on Iran, drawing on more than two decades of experience in journalism, advocacy, and international policy. In this dual role, he appears frequently in media and public discussions on Iran-related issues, sharing his expertise with policymakers and the wider public.

He has worked with Human Rights Watch and, most recently, the Center for Human Rights in Iran. Previously, Memarian was a Rotary World Peace Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, Graduate School of Journalism. In 2005, he received a Human Rights Defender Award, the highest honor given by Human Rights Watch.

As a journalist and analyst, he has appeared on MSNBC, NBC, BBC, and Al Jazeera, and has written for Inter Press Service (IPS), The Daily Beast, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Foreign Affairs, The Wall Street Journal, Time, The San Francisco Chronicle, Politico, and OpenDemocracy. In 2009, Memarian received his dual master's degree in Journalism and Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.



Aria Fani is an associate professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of Washington, Seattle. At UW, he co-leads the Translation Studies Hub. Aria's first book, *Reading across Borders: Afghans, Iranians, and Literary Nationalism*, the winner of the ACLA's 2025 René Wellek Prize for the Best Monograph in Comparative Literature, was published by the University of Texas Press in 2024. The book details the dynamic and interconnected ways Afghans and

Iranians invented their modern selves through new ideas about literature (*adabiyāt*). *Reading across Borders* is available in both Iran (through a Persian translation published by Shirazeh Press) and India (Sanctum Books, New Delhi). Aria is the co-translator of *Shape of Extinction*, a book-length collection of Bijan Jalali's poems. In addition to teaching and research, Aria engages in social advocacy for non-citizen Americans, particularly asylum seekers from Central America.



Command Sergeant Major Glen "Nick" Nickel, retired out of uniform following 27 years of distinguished service with U.S. Army Special Forces and Joint/Interagency special operations. He led and conducted numerous operations in theaters around the world, including DESERT ONE in Iran, URGENT FURY in Grenada, DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM in Southwest Asia, RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, and three deployments to Bosnia. He supported interagency task forces in worldwide contingency operations, in joint missions with the Department of Energy Nuclear Emergency Survey Team (NEST), FBI Hostage Rescue Team (HRT); US Secret Service Presidential Protective Division, and the CIA and Department of State's Mobile Security Division with support to El Salvador and Colombia. He worked and trained with numerous foreign Special Operations units and nine major US metropolitan police departments.

Following his active-duty Army service, CSM (R) Nickel continued to serve in civilian capacities throughout the Defense and National Security community, to include supporting establishment of a Theater Special Operations Command for US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), and serving there as Deputy Director of Operations. He continues to support the nation with an active lecture tour at various professional military education institutions for service- and joint special operations, and at the services' military service academies.

His awards and decorations include induction in the USSOCOM Commando Hall of Honor, the Legion of Merit, Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award Medal, two Defense Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Meritorious Civilian Service Award Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, two Joint Service Commendation Medals, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Civilian Service Achievement Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Master HALO Wings, Special Forces Tab, SCUBA badge, the Expert Field Medical Badge, and foreign jump wings (Korean, Russian, Malaysian).

Upcoming Programs

- **Tuesday Travelogue** series - Stories of travel adventures from our friends and Neighbors, presented at the Gold Town Theater. Coming up: Portugal, Nova Scotia, and South Korea & Japan. Visit jwac.org to read more.
- **WorldQuest 2027 | February 6, Centennial Hall**



WorldQuest is JWAC's annual trivia night fundraiser -Juneau's premiere trivia event; the biggest and best! (according to the guy who writes it). The whole room plays together, in teams of around eight, while eating dinner, answering amusing and thoughtfully-crafted multiple-choice questions expertly presented with plenty of visuals. It is as low key or high stakes as you want it to be, and the theme each year is "high production value." Includes international buffet, silent and dessert auctions, and just shy

of four hours of solid, distracting entertainment when we need it most. Read more at jwac.org. This is some people's favorite annual community event. Be sure to put it on your calendar!

JWAC's All-Volunteer Board of Directors

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The Juneau World Affairs Council (JWAC) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), non-partisan organization. Its goal is to encourage dialogue and understanding of important international, economic, political and social issues through expert presentation, informed discussion, and other educational activities. Our 2026 season is generously sponsored by *Coeur Alaska Kensington Mine, Wostmann & Associates, Ramada Inn, and Jim Clark.*