



e-CAMCA Forum Speaker Bios

Tuesday, June 22 – Panel Session

Moderator:



Michael Doran, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Michael Doran is a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C., where he specializes in Middle East security issues. In the administration of President George W. Bush, Doran served in the White House as a senior director in the National Security Council with responsibility for the entire Middle East except Iraq.

Before coming to Hudson, Doran was a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and has also held teaching positions at NYU, Princeton, and the University of Central Florida. He publishes frequently in major newspapers and magazines. His latest book, *Ike's Gamble*, is a study in the evolution of President Eisenhower's Middle East strategy. He received a

B.A. from Stanford and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton.

Panelists:



Dr. Omar Sharifi, Country Director, American Institute of Afghanistan Studies, CAMCA Network Member

Omar Sharifi is Assistant Professor in the American University of Afghanistan, the Senior Research Fellow and Kabul Director of the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies. He is an Asia Society Fellow and member of Afghan 21 Young Leaders Forum. He graduated from Kabul Medical Institute in 2003.

Following his medical studies, he worked as Head of research and publications for the Foundation for Culture and Civil Society in Kabul, and as Director of the Open Media Fund for Afghanistan. From 2006 to 2008, he studied Cultural Anthropology at Columbia University in New York under a Fulbright Fellowship. He also received a fellowship through the Rumsfeld Foundation at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University. He completed his PhD in

anthropology from Boston University in 2019.



Ikram Sehgal, Chairman, Pathfinder Group and Chairman, Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR)

Graduate, Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul; served in Pakistan Army (Infantry and Army Aviation). First Pakistani PoW in history to escape from India (July 1971).

Director of EastWest Institute USA (Director of the Year 2016), writes weekly columns for various magazines and newspapers. Former Director Bank Alfalah Ltd (16 years), Chairman K-Electric and Foundation Member, World Economic Forum (WEF), Switzerland, formerly Member WEF Global Agenda Council for Counter-Terrorism and now “Anti-Corruption and Transparency” and Member WEF Partnering Against Corruption Initiative. Former Member Business Advisory Board, International Organization for Migration, Geneva. Director and Member Advisory

Committee on CPEC Projects of the National Institute of Strategic Communication, Peking University. Regular Speaker at Defense Services Institutions (National Defense University, etc.), Vice Chairman Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE).



Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, Senior Visiting Fellow, the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi; former Ambassador of India to Afghanistan (2010-2013), Myanmar (2013-16) and Syria (2006-08)

Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhyaya (IFS 1980) has served in Indian Embassies in Mexico, France, Cuba, the Permanent Mission of India, New York, and Ministry of External Affairs, India; as well as on deputation with the Ministries of Culture and Defense of India, Consultant on Social Development at the UN, New York, and Visiting Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C.

He graduated from the National Defense College (NDC) and re-opened the Indian Embassy in Kabul in November 2001 after the ouster of the

Taliban. He then served as India’s Ambassador to Syria, Afghanistan and Myanmar before retiring from service in May 2016. He is presently affiliated to the Centre for Policy Research as a Senior Visiting Fellow focusing on Afghanistan, Myanmar, India’s Act East policy, the Indo-Pacific and the North East of India.

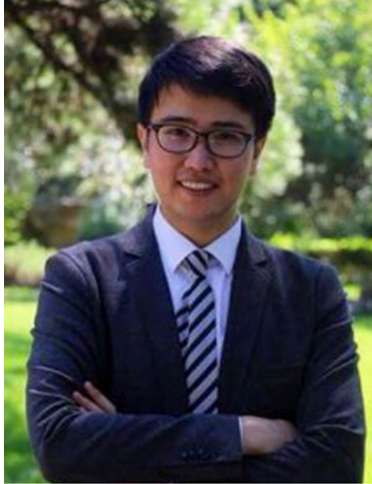


Alex Vatanka, Director of Iran Program and Senior Fellow, Frontier Europe Initiative, Middle East Institute

Alex Vatanka is the Director of the Iran Program at the Middle East Institute.

He specializes in Middle Eastern regional security affairs with a particular focus on Iran. He was formerly a Senior Analyst at Jane’s Information Group in London. Alex is also a Senior Fellow in Middle East Studies at the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) at Hurlburt Field and teaches as an Adjunct Professor at DISAS at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Born in Tehran, he holds a BA in Political Science (Sheffield University, UK), and an MA in International Relations (Essex University, UK), and is fluent in Farsi and Danish. He is the author of two books: “The Battle of the Ayatollahs in Iran: The United States, Foreign

Policy and Political Rivalry Since 1979” (2021) and “Iran and Pakistan: Security, Diplomacy, and American Influence” (2015). He is currently working on his third book “Iran’s Arab Strategy: Defending the Homeland or Exporting Khomeinism?”



Iskander Akylbayev, Executive Director of the Kazakhstan Council on International Relations and an Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow

Iskander has more than 10 years' experience working in the sphere of foreign policy, government relations and mass media. Previously he worked as advisor to the CEO on foreign policy issues at the Qazaqstan TV Channel and senior fellow at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KazISS) under the President of Kazakhstan. Iskander also served as a senior fellow at the Institute of Diplomacy at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan. He focuses on Kazakhstan's foreign policy, security and geopolitics of Eurasia.

He is Asia 21 Young Leader at the Asia Society, Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow, Pacific Forum Fellow, and Rumsfeld Fellow. In 2020, Iskander was selected as the only security fellow from Central Asia by Arms Control Negotiation Academy (ACONA) organized by Harvard University's Davis Center, MGIMO, Wilson Center, Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre, National Research University Higher School of Economics and Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

He is an MPA candidate at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (Singapore) and holds MA degree in international relations from the University of Tsukuba (Japan).