

# URPE

## (Union for Radical Political Economics)

### at the 2008 Left Forum

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## The Iran Crisis: Continuing Threat of War, Post-National Intelligence Estimate

SUNDAY, 10:00 AM ENGINEERING: 521

**Faramarz Farbod • Reza Ghorashi • Tom O'Donnell • CHAIR: Ruth Indeck**

In December 2007, the US NIE (National Intelligence Estimate) concluded that Iran has not been pursuing nuclear weapons since 2003. But if the reactions of Bush, Merkle, Putin, and Sarkozy mean anything, the confrontation with Iran continues – as all quickly asserted that Iran still must halt any enrichment of uranium, even if it is only intended for a civilian power program. This should not be surprising, as the confrontation was never really about nukes ... and it still isn't. Our panelists will explore some of the deeper issues.

Reza will look at Iran's underlying political and economic motivations that have contributed to its hostile relationship with the US. The release of the recent US intelligence report was an important development in the relationship between the two countries, and reaction to it among political factions in Iran has been varied. Consequently, their policy conclusions are different as well. With a US presidential election underway, and parliamentary and presidential elections coming up in Iran, these differences could play a vital role in the next two years. Potential outcomes range from a normalized relationship to an all-out war.

Faramarz will speak about the US neocon imperial vision and what its decline (post-Iraq catastrophe) could mean for Iran/US relations in the remainder of the Bush presidency and beyond, as well as the impact US aggression has had on internal politics in Iran.

Tom will look more specifically at US designs on Iran's oil. The fundamental issue behind US policies, he explains, is that the US – and now, the UN too – refuse to allow the present Iranian leadership to develop Iran's oil. They are not seen as trusted "businesslike" players in the globalized oil markets. The US fears they will use future oil revenues to acquire a military (nuclear or otherwise) capable of threatening US Gulf hegemony and its oil protectorates there. Meanwhile, the US and Iran have resumed negotiations about pacifying Iraq, raising further questions about US/Iran relations.

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**Faramarz Farbod** is an Iranian-American (a native of Iran). He taught politics in Iran for several years in the 1990s, and has been teaching politics in the US (Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA) since 1998. He is pursuing his PhD in comparative politics at Rutgers University. His primary areas of interest are: American foreign policy in the Third World (especially in the Middle East); issues related to globalization, empire, capitalism, and development; politics of dissent here in America; and issues related to the US media.

**Reza Ghorashi** has a Ph.D. in economics from Fordham University and teaches at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. His areas of research and interest are international trade, globalization, and the Middle East, particularly Iran. He has published articles in both English and Farsi on the listed subject matters.

**Tom O'Donnell** (Ph.D., nuclear physics) writes and lectures widely on the global oil order and US Middle East and Latin American relations. (See: <http://TomOD.com>) He is currently a US Fulbright Scholar in Caracas at The Center for the Study of Development (CENDES) at the Universidad Central de Venezuela researching the political economy of oil in Venezuela in comparison to Algeria. He teaches at The New School's Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA) in NYC. Dr. O'Donnell is writing a book on "The New Globalized Oil Order and the Middle East." He spent many years as an industrial organizer/activist in Detroit auto plants and on Chicago railways.

**Ruth Indeck** is the coordinator of Economy Connection, the speaker/resource bureau of URPE.