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California State University, Sacramento

*Iranian & Middle Eastern
Studies Center (IMESC)*

**Presents a lecture:
“Behavioral Impediments to the Development of
Democracy in the Middle East”**

By

Dr. Mansour Farhang

Professor of Politics

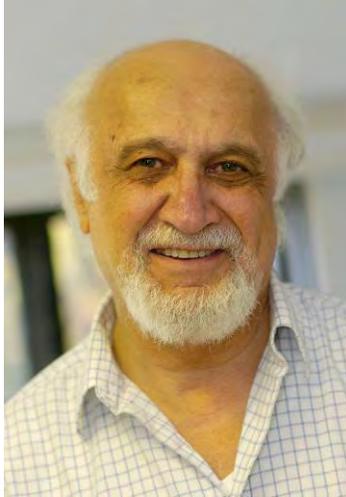
Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont

ABSTRACT

The transition from autocracy to democracy is a complex and gradual process. In this historic transition, there is a threshold that marks a qualitative break with the past in a society's governing system. Public attention to the substance of this threshold usually focuses on such developments as constitution making, institution building, judicial independence, legal equality of citizens and protection of minority rights. What is often missing in this approach is recognition of the need for behavioral and attitudinal adjustment to the requirements of democratic life. Those who struggle for democracy ought to exemplify their advocacy in their concrete behavior, otherwise they may succeed to change only the form and vocabulary of autocracy. And those who wish to export democracy to autocratic states must be aware that, unlike abstract ideas and institutional forms, democratic attitudes and behavior can only emerge, slowly and incrementally, from the efforts of the natives.

Thursday, March 23, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Hinde Auditorium, University Union



Dr. Mansour Farhang Biography

Mansour Farhang has a Ph.D. in political science from Claremont Graduate School. In 1970s he taught in the Government Department, at California State University, Sacramento. Following the 1979 revolution in Iran he served as an advisor to the Iranian foreign ministry and as ambassador to the United Nations. He resigned his ambassadorship in protest when his efforts to negotiate the release of the American hostages in Tehran failed. In the early months of the Iran-Iraq war he worked with international mediators to settle the war. During this period, he wrote and spoke about the threat of religious extremists who had come to dominate the course of the Iranian revolution. In June 1981, following the violent suppression of political dissidents, he was forced to leave Iran. He returned to the United States in the fall of 1981 and became a research fellow and lecturer at Princeton University. Since 1983 he has been teaching international relations and Middle Eastern politics at Bennington College in Vermont. He is the author of two books and dozens of articles, in English and Persian, published in both academic journals and popular periodicals. His opinion pieces have appeared in a variety of newspapers, including *the New York Times*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *the Washington Post*, and *the Christian Science Monitor*. His third book, *A Theology in Power: The Iranian Revolution* is near completion. He has been a human rights activist since his undergraduate days in California. Currently, he serves on the advisory board of Human Rights Watch/Middle East and is a designated speaker for the Vermont Council on the Humanities. He has lectured at many universities and colleges across the country and is a member of the Columbia University Middle Eastern Seminar. He has also been a participant in the seminars of Council on Foreign Relations and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He has appeared as a guest on numerous radio and television programs, including PBS News Hour, ABC's Night Line, Bill Moyer's Journal, 60-Minutes, CBS's Face the Nation and CNN. He is a regular commentator on the Persian broadcasting of both BBC and Radio France International.