

CIRA

KAMRAN DADKHAH

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual CIRA conference, jointly sponsored by CIRA and Northeastern University, was held April 23 and 24 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, with the theme of 'Iran at the Threshold of the New Millennium'. More than 100 researchers, journalists, students, poets and artists from several countries participated.

The CIRA conference was opened with a welcome address delivered by Dr Richard Freeland, President of Northeastern University. Sessions were held in the mornings and afternoons in the Egan Research Center at Northeastern University, which boasts a number of state-of-the-art facilities for research and conferencing. The most popular sessions were those dealing with the current political situation in Iran, its relationship with the United States, media coverage of Iran, and issues related to Iranians abroad. Michael Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts and De-

mocratic candidate for the presidency in 1988, chaired a session on foreign and defence policies of Iran, where the relationship between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the conflict with Afghanistan were discussed. James Bill gave a keynote speech on the United States-Iran relationship, characterizing it as a conflict between two hegemonies, one global and the other regional. In another session, Ali Jalali of the VOA, Stephen Fairbanks and Iraj Gorgin of Radio Free Europe, and Baqer Moin and Setareh Alavi of the BBC discussed the effect of foreign broadcasting on Iranian society.

Other topics included Islam and modern-day problems, women, human rights, civil society, and evolution of Iranian society in the

post-revolution decades. Homayoun Katouzian addressed a plenary session and presented a theory of Iranian revolutions. In sessions devoted to the Iranian economy, analysis was provided on monetary policy and the independence of the central bank, Iran's membership in the World Trade Organization, banking laws, the agrarian question, development problems, and the role of foundations that are gigantic economic conglomerates. One of the most popular sessions was on assimilation, identity, and community among Iranians in diaspora. In addition to current economic and political questions, the agenda included talks on literature, cinema, architecture and history. In one session, two poets – Ahmad Ghazinoor and Morteza Rezvan – read their

poetry, and Hamid Mossadegh, who recently passed away, was remembered. Four sessions had the format of 'author meets critics' in which the author of a book on Iranian society engaged in a dialogue with a number of critics. Participants were treated to a showing of *The Pear Tree*, a film by Darius Mehrjui. ◆

*The 18th annual CIRA conference will be held April 28–29, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, with the theme of Iran 2000: The Challenges Ahead'.*

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## The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the **Center for Iranian Research and Analysis**