

Science and Politics

Dr. Aref, 1st Deputy to the presidency, the esteemed ministers,

distinguished guests: the prestigious presidents and representatives of the member academies of the Association of Academies of Sciences in Asia(AASA), scholars and professors,

Honorable audience:

On behalf of the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to express my gratitude to you for accepting our invitation and welcome you to this event.

I wish you make a success of the Fourth General Assembly Meeting of the AASA and the International Symposium on Food Resources and Security, which is now being inaugurated.

AASA is an important association being capable of turning into a significant center for scientific cooperation in Asia. Consequently, the idea and measure taken by the scientists and academicians who established the association is praiseworthy. AASA is still in its infancy, and is not expected to become a base for tangible scientific cooperation at this early stage. Nevertheless, care must be taken not to turn it into a formal organization that would merely have annual meetings. Even if such meetings are valuable by themselves, AASA can do something of more significance.

Science, research and technology in Asia are interwoven with complex issues, of which, the most important one is the relationship between science and politics. I would like to suggest that this relationship be discussed in Tehran. In the present world, and particularly in Asia, in which planning for the development of science and technology is inevitable, the comprehension of the interrelationship of science and politics can be worthwhile. In the West and US, such a relationship has been

fairly balanced. In other words, science and politics have developed along with each other, and their influence in one another is relatively explicit. One may not be able to deny the impact of politics on planning anywhere. In the so-called developing countries, the intervention of politics even in the administration of universities and scientific institutes is more evident. Yet this does not imply that in Asia or anywhere else, it politics that directs science. Everywhere politics has been exploiting science either legitimately or illegitimately. However one should not mistake exploiting science for directing it.

Without science, new politics is devoid of support. If we consider science as the supporter of politics, obviously, we cannot state that politics directs science and designates its route,

In the recent two to three hundred years, big political forces have dominated the world by the power of science and technique. This has resulted in the misunderstanding that science is under the control of the world powers; and that they employ science in any way that they wish. They have considered the unification of science and power as the obedience of science to power. Such impression is apparently justifiable because in the developed world, big economic and military organizations allocate immense budgets for research and can designate the direction that research should take.

In most parts of the developing world, politics monitors the universities and research centers. In the case of ideological governments, occasionally science is exploited for the verification of ideology. Such exploitation is probably claimed to be for the development of science. However, such claim is not justifiable nor can science be used for the proof of an ideology. Moreover, science reaches an abyss or deadlock if it moves in the direction designated by economic or military powers. In a situation where ideologies have lost their significance, the idea of exploiting science for strengthening ideologies may not be much attractive or evident. But in the whole world, particularly in the developing world, political and scientific institutions do not have organic relations with each other, and rarely have been created and developed in a coordinated and appropriate whole. In such circumstances, the ideological attitude towards knowledge, culture, and art has not ended yet.

In recent years, whatever has been stated about the end of ideology, has been mostly political. Man will not easily abandon ideology. In other words, it is not easy

to put ideology aside. Considering ideology identical to strict pseudo-faith, is limiting the area of the meaning of this term. The developing world, even when it was inclined to Marxism to some extent, aimed mostly at development, and finding ways of getting rid of undevelopment. In fact, when every country's aim is development, and everything is at the service of development, then science is regarded as a means for development. In a sense, this is a true ideological view because science, is technological science and man uses it to change or adapt the world. Physics-mathematics, and other sciences that have developed on the basis of this science, is the science of possessing the creatures. But if we consider science as a technological science used to change the world, it implies our ignorance of the true that is not a means at the disposal of man, which can be used for the fulfillment of any goal.

Science is used in the sense just mentioned, but it is not a means to be used by everybody, or be purchased for any purpose by everybody regardless of his/her intention. Rather science is employed by the people whose souls belong to it, and whose existence has become coordinated by scientific discipline. Science is not a means for dominating the world but it is a dominating and controlling power.

In the developing world, science is employed for development. Yet science ignores and escapes those who want to use it as a means for the achievement of a particular goal. There are cases where the statement that science is the science of dominating the world is mistaken for the idea that science is a means at our disposal for changing the world. But new science is dominated by the essence of science; it is not a means for domination. Some people's impression of this notion may be that if science is not a means, then it must be a goal in essence. Science is neither a goal in essence nor a means at our hands; rather it can be the manifestation of the world's mathematical order and a facilitator for us. In modern thinking and modern world, there is no consummation beyond man, who achieves whatever s/he wishes through internal development . however in the recent two centuries