

President's Diary Sept. 2021

Science is supposed to be a domain of human activity that transcends cultural biases, religious leanings or political preferences. To undertake unbiased enquiry into the nature of physical world unencumbered by any value-system is the core principle that all scientists are expected to adhere to. Thus, science by default is a universal endeavor in search of truth and a common heritage of all mankind. It has the potential to bring together disparate social groups across the world under the umbrella of a single scientific fraternity. Science is, therefore, rightly considered as a force for unity of mankind and a means of creating bridges among nations. Numerous examples can be given where 'science diplomacy' has brought about reconciliation, understanding and cooperation in the face of strongly conflicting political ideologies. Unfortunately, many examples can also be given where political agendas continue to undermine scientific ethos.

In Pakistan, we have firsthand experience of how a belligerent and hostile neighbor, with a leadership blatantly following an obscurantist Hindutva philosophy, is blocking the progress of an entire subcontinent, in spite of good personal repertoire and mutual respect among their scientific elites. One has only to sit in a colloquium in Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (AS-ICTP) at Trieste, Italy, to find the bon homie among Pakistani and Indian scientists. After all if you are engaged in a quest to understand the ultimate nature of matter or the large scale structure of universe than regional rivalries on a speck of dust in the vast cosmos make little sense to be obsessed with. The noble task of increasing mankind's common stock



of knowledge is, however, severely hampered by vile propaganda spitted out from hundreds of fake media channels and websites set up by India, as revealed by EU Dis Info Lab, in its fifteen-year long study

entitled "Indian Chronicles". The object of this hybrid war is none other than discrediting and destabilizing Pakistan and diverting attention of the world from brutalities being committed by Indian security forces in held Kashmir.

The scientists on both sides of the boundary have a moral duty to call upon their respective governments, to give science a chance to heal the scars of hatred. The air, the water, the weather systems, the flora and fauna and resources of land and sea are the shared bounties of nature that this ancient land, which is the birthplace of human civilization, is endowed with. Why should this region remain mired in poverty and underdevelopment? Why not give 'science diplomacy' a chance to play its role in building trust. The first step in this direction

could be the shutting down of 'hate diplomacy' outlets studiously planted by India over decades before being fully exposed. Finally, a reminder to the 'enlightened' scientific leaders in the West to stop judging nations on the basis of their system of governance. They are not on a moral high ground to sermonize the world on merits of western politico-economic order, remembering that their prosperity was built on exploitation and oppression perpetrated in large parts of the world during the last couple of centuries, and continues to be based on imposing their neo-colonial agenda through wars.

If sermons are needed, they must be directed at the military-industrial complex created by the so-called 'free world' leaders, which has been responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands and destroying the lives of millions in all corners of the world over the last few decades. The sane voices of scientists in support of coexistence of multiple social orders should be louder than the war cries against all those who do not strictly conform to western way of life.

The comments and criticism of this diary are most welcome by all, especially by the members of Pakistan Nuclear Society.

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