

Dr. Rahni keynote speech on behalf of Persian Cultural Foundation (PCF):

Dear Host and Co-Organizers, Speakers and Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning,

I stand before you as an advisory board member of the Persian Cultural Foundation, the co-sponsor of the Conference and the ISIS that follows in a few days in London. It is indeed an honor to return to Oxford where I spent a sabbatical leave in 1994 but then as a chemist and not as civic activist. This year's Conference is particularly timely as we commemorate the centennial anniversary of the 1906 constitution. This document was preceded by almost a hundred years of struggle led by freedom lovers such as Amir Kabir, Sattar Khan and Bagher Khan. They strove to modernize the absolute monarchy which was almost 2500 years in the making, with a constitutional monarchy, whereby the monarch (similar to the current UK system) would remain outside of politics. The rest is history. The Constitution of 1906 led the way to replacement of the Qajar dynasty with a more modern dynasty, the Pahlavis, who increasingly ran the country as "absolute" rulers rather than ceremonial monarchs. There are historians who have concluded that had the 1906 constitution been upheld closely, there would have not been any reason for the 1979 revolution and what has transpired ever since.

The Persian Cultural Foundation (PCF www.persiancultural.org), one of the co-sponsors of this Conference and ISIS that follows in a few days in London remains committed to providing multifaceted intellectual and material support for novel cultural and scholarly projects worldwide. The Mission of Persian Cultural Foundation as envisaged by its founder, benefactor and president **Dr. Akbar Ghahary** who is present here today, is to initiate, encourage and support community projects and cultural activities which promote and showcase the Persian cultural heritage, and to bring global recognition to this heritage. One of the major missions of PCF is to facilitate processes, thereby ensuring that our

youths, and their American or overseas friends and extended families are cognizant and appreciative of Persia's, *albeit* Iran's multifaceted historical and contemporary contributions to world civilization. Another PCF endeavor is to facilitate a global network of communities of Iranians to preserve their cultural identity while succeeding in their adopted new lands. PCF is committed to preserving and promoting our heritage in science and technology, art and literature, medicine and health, music and the performing arts, and business trade. PCF is further committed to the passage of this rich heritage to future generations, while ensuring that our historical and contemporary contributions to world civilization are duly recognized worldwide. While it is impractical to cite the very many projects PCF has spearheaded over the years, allow me to cite some of the current projects as follows: **Master Farshcian's** giant 2-volume art collection, **The Life and Poetry** of Simin Behbahani, **Ahmad Shamloo's life story** on film, **Bobak's first Norooz** animation on DVD, Persian Gulf Musical, a tribute, **The World of Achamaenid Persia** (London, September 2005), **Iran Facing the New Century** (University of Oxford, April 2004), **Private Lives, Public Spaces** (University of Oxford, July 2005), Compilation of a book on **Who's Who in the Iranian American Community** to bring the community closer and allow the broader community to refer to it seeking experts, advice, and for consultative purposes, **Hearing Eye**, Iran Daroodi's art collection compendium, and the establishment of PCF regional chapters.

As a humble member of the board of advisor of Persian Cultural Foundation, I once again thank the organizers Mr. Hakimzadeh and his colleagues and the conference chairs and hosts, thank You for your participation in this Conference, and wish you all the best for a productive and enjoyable meeting.