

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to be among you again, both for myself and as president of the Persian Cultural Foundation. As you know, the Persian Cultural Foundation (PCF) takes pride in supporting all efforts aimed at shining as much light as possible on various aspects of Persian language and literature and Iranian culture, civilization and history through scholarship; only in this way can we hope to establish the truth of our culture and the true meaning and significance of our history's turns and twists over the centuries.

This conference is particularly promising in that it attempts in its first day to reflect back on the road that Iranian Studies has taken in the course of the past century, thus taking stock of what has been accomplished and what may have been neglected. This it can chart the course that lies ahead for you and your students, namely those who would be taking your positions in the future. I have no doubt that your deliberations will benefit not just the cause of Iranian Studies in the North America and the West but that it will impact the course of Iranian studies in Iran as well.

It is also great that this conference will then take a close look at the object of its scholarly attention, namely the country of Iran over the past century as it has emerged as a modern nation-state and made its way through the vicissitudes of the modern times, establishing itself as a voice among the voices that one associates with modern nations. To ponder the political structures and state institutions, to follow the changes in its economic, political and cultural changes that it has experienced and the storms it has weathered over those perilous periods is a task that only a gathering of this caliber can hope to tackle.

For my part, I am happy to support your deliberations in any way I possibly can. Let me once again congratulate the organizers of this event, Dr.s Homayon Katuzian and Tavakoli-Targhi in particular, and wish you complete success in the important undertaking you have set for yourselves in the next two days as well as over your entire career of teaching and research.