

*Χαιρετισμός της Α.Ε. του Πρέσβη
της Ισλαμικής Δημοκρατίας του Ιράν*

Medhi Mohammadi

In the name of God

Your Excellencies, the Minister of Education and Religion, the Be-attitude, the Alternate of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, the Rector of Panteion University, the Head of the Islamic Communication Organization, and the Head of the Islamic Azad University,

Dear Thinkers and Scholars, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The history of relations between Iran and Greece is full of events demonstrating the mutual benefits they got from each other's civilization. Greece has played a great role in the flourishing of thought and human culture. The science of logic and politics that today have got their common language, found their root in Greece. On the other hand, the Iranians, according to Greek literature, are the people who advocate the freedom of opinion, truth and justice, benevolence and moral conducts.

Dear friends,

The story of the ancient Greek philosophers such as: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and the other great thinkers of the world history and culture such as, Laotse and Zoroaster, have their special place in our today's memory and culture. Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics, as the source of philosophy and politics, have always been given the due appreciation by the world thinkers of philosophy and politics.

The relationship between Iran and Greece belongs to the old history. The influential character of Aristotle had great impact on Philip, the king of Macedonia, and his son Alexander. Alexander, due to his conquests, took with him the Greek philosophy to the East. Historians have said that when Alexander

invaded Western Asia, there were some physicians and philosophers accompanying him. They were Aristotle's students carrying his viewpoints and philosophy to the East. The first contact of civilizations got rooted at this age. The Iranians and the Greeks set to establish educational communications, and in the long run, their impact on each other helped the appearance of the new thinkers and scholars.

According to the ancient Iranian history, seven Greek philosophers, due to the tyrannical rule by the Roman Emperor "Justinianus", made a trip to Iran to continue their studies at the Iranian schools of philosophy. In the 7th century AD, the city of "Jondi Shapour" in Iran was the center of teaching of Greek philosophy in Western Asia. The school of "Jondi Anoushirevan" continued its importance in the world of Islam up to "Shapour" which was established in 555 AD by the Iranian king the period of "Abasian" dynasty. This school became a model example for many other scientific centers in the Islamic world.

The Greek philosophy had great impact on the Islamic philosophy, but it bore changes being suited to the views of the new thinkers. The Islamic philosophers began to develop this knowledge, so much so that in the late Middle-Age, and even up to the renaissance period, it could play a vital role in the flourishing of the new scientific studies such as: medicine, astronomy, mathematics, mechanics, polices, chemistry and geography. In this way, the Spirit of Aristotle's could join the East and the West, the wish that Alexander wanted to fulfil by the help of sword.

Dear friends, and Excellencies

We are now engaged in a highly critical world, far from the "policy of dialog" among civilizations. Today we are witnessing cruelty in the name of religion, domination in the name of civilization, dictatorship in the name of expediency. These are the phenomena of the "policy of force". Democracy is based on dialog among the independent and liberal sides, and I may recommend that the policy of "Dialog among Civilizations" be adopted as the ideal one to provide the world with the rule of people, ethics and democratic values. It respects the differences of the world, and proposes a wide universal out-look eliminating the central and marginal policies of force.

The story of the Greek philosophy and culture, before and after Islam, and the philosophical communications between Christians and Muslims, and their effect on the Eastern philosophy, and then its return to Greece, and to the Western world, is an interesting one that is to be presented by the esteemed thinkers and scholars. But it is to be noted that we are living in a millennium in which great philosophers of the past have had immense influence on its formation. We should learn to live together, tolerating our differences, and talk together, respecting our diverse views. Respecting the views of others as ours, is the main prerequisite for dialog.

Greece as the cradle of civilization and a progressing member-state of the E.U., and the Islamic Republic of Iran as an ancient and a powerful country in Asia, can play new roles in the establishment of regional and international peace and stability. I hope the two countries, by the use of their potentials, will open new horizons in their long-standing mutual relations.

Thank you