
SCIENCE AS A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD: THE VIEW FROM EUROPE

Geoffrey Boulton

ISC FUNDAMENTALS

- Vision: Science as a Global Public Good
(what does this mean in practice?)
- Mission: The Global Voice for Science
(what does this mean in a changing political world?)

Is ISC making progress to advance the vision and to realise the mission?

WHY DO GOVERNMENTS FUND SCIENCE?

- To support economic growth through technology/knowledge transfer
- To provide workable policy options
- To create a “scientific temper” in society

Do they indeed want these things?

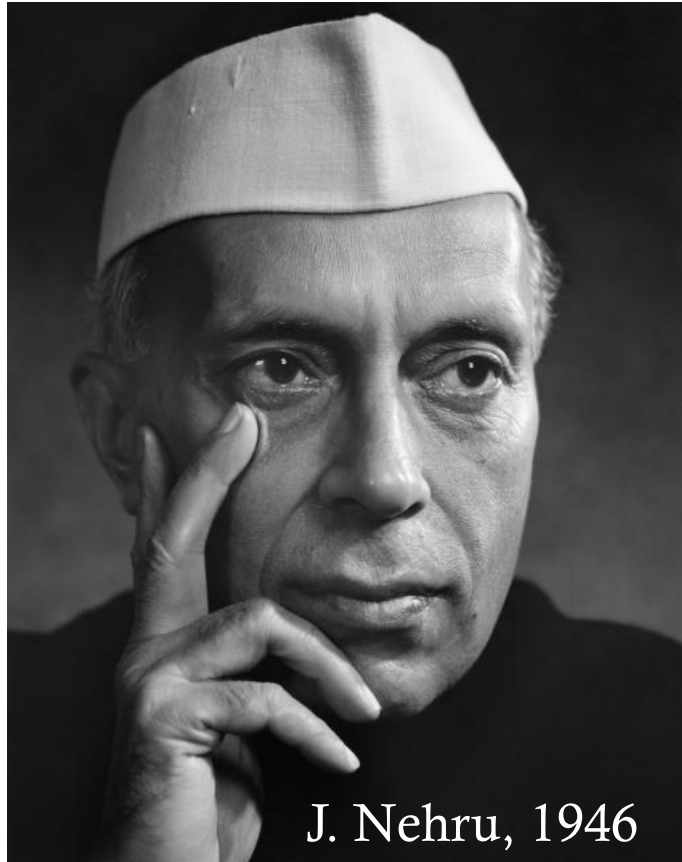


Liberal democracy

Illiberal democracy

Autocracy

A “SCIENTIFIC TEMPER”



J. Nehru, 1946

- the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial,
- the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence,
- the reliance on observed fact and not pre-conceived theory]

it is the temper of a free man

TRENDS IN THE LANDSCAPE OF INFORMATION

- Fragmentation into “bubbles” of certainty - mis- and dis-information
- Politicians/parliaments derided (apart from strong men/women)
- Social cohesion reduced
- Universities seen as “elites” and defunded
- Science merely “an opinion”
- Global collaboration and rules-based system fails

THE VOICE FOR SCIENCE?

ISC REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS

- Africa – in discussion from 2022
 - Asia and the Pacific – 2023-2028 (“to ensure that their unique needs and priorities are integrated into the global scientific dialogue”)
 - Latin America and the Caribbean - 2022
 - Europe – a self-governing body
-

THE ROLE OF A EUROPEAN GROUP-1?

- From Asia-Pacific FP ? “to ensure that their unique needs and priorities are integrated into the global scientific dialogue”
 - Or, to discuss how European members could contribute to ISC priorities?
 - An annual major issue?
 - Information sharing, as in the case of a dues review?
-

ROLE OF A EUROPEAN GROUP-2?

- How should a topic be chosen?
 - Should discussion be contained within the space of an annual meeting and chosen so that this necessarily occurs?
 - Or should inter-sessional work be permitted if the topic appears to need it?
 - The topic chosen by the management group for this session was “Scientific Freedom” – how should it be dealt with?
 - The group has a unique role as a European entity that links to a global entity, unlike ALLEA, EASAC, Science Europe etc. Its work should respect this distinction.
-