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Andrei Sakharov Prize Talk: Human Rights and International Science – a Symbiotic Relationship¹

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International collaborations, with which scientists have long been involved, have made them staunch defenders of human rights around the world. Collaborations involving a pair, or a small group, of scientists from different countries have been common for more than 100 years. Starting more than 50 years ago, CERN has become the quintessential example of the benefits of large scale international cooperation. Now many national laboratories and projects have major participation by foreign scientists. As a result, scientists around the world quickly become aware when their colleagues are persecuted for opinions and activities that are commonly accepted in most countries. Their prompt and sustained protests to the offending governments have often resulted in the release of imprisoned colleagues. They have helped dissidents leave the danger in their home countries and provided employment opportunities to sustain them in other countries, and allow them to continue to function as scientists. In 2001 I became aware that an Iranian colleague, with whom I had worked on the SESAME Project (www.sesame.org.jo), was imprisoned for opinions critical of his government. I had long been involved with efforts to help scientists and other dissidents being persecuted in countries such as China and the Soviet Union. However this was the first time that someone with whom I had a working relationship, and who I respected and admired, was severely persecuted (solitary confinement, torture) for opinions which I shared. In this talk I will review what I have learned from this case and other experience about coming to the aid of dissidents. In particular I will describe the activities of Scholars at Risk (<http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>) and the Scholars Rescue Fund (<http://www.scholarrescuefund.org/pages/intro.php>). Their offer of \$20K to any institution which will provide matching funds to support an endangered dissident has saved careers and lives.

¹DOE Office of Science