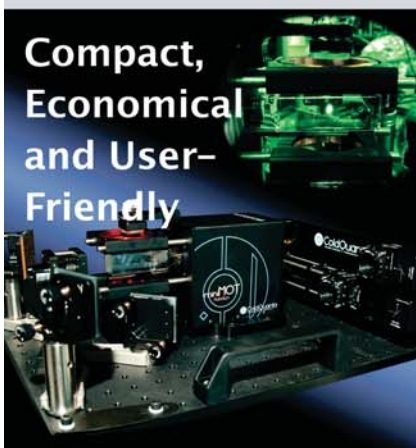




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as “Dr.” Scientists who provide narratives for TV programs should require that their degree appear on screen in conjunction with their name. And a dialog should be initiated with the print media to have the Associated Press naming convention changed.

In our society, titles are used as a sign of respect and credibility. As physicists we must demand the same level of respect other professionals receive; to demand less diminishes our science and demeans our profession.

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Investing in electron-volt physics

I read with great interest in the article “Singapore applies itself to science” (PHYSICS TODAY, June 2011, page 20) that Singapore has deliberately established policies to ensure economic growth through the application of science and technology. The sole purpose of Singapore’s support of R&D is to generate new products and industries and with them new permanent jobs.

The support of physics research described in the article is heavily biased toward electron-volt physics, which I termed “the science of what happens on Earth” in earlier letters (see, for example, PHYSICS TODAY, July 1991, page 84). As I noted in those letters, it is electron-volt physics that will generate new products, industries, and permanent jobs. Absent from the Singapore research portfolio is high-energy particle physics, which had not in 1988—and still has not—ever produced permanent jobs for anyone except high-energy physicists and their acolytes and assistants. The scale of energy exchanges in high-energy physics is simply too large to be useful on Earth.

An article in a recent issue of *Science* points out that the US is ranked only sixth among 40 nations in research-based competitiveness and calls for renewed investment in innovation to restore the US to its former position as number one.¹

I believe that we have much to learn from Singapore’s investment in such innovation. We must learn, first, to couple research and development much more closely than we have in the past and, second, to focus the research on electron-volt physics, because that’s where innovation and economic growth will come from.

Reference

1. *Science* **332**, 1048 (2011).

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Endnotes on Israel–Iran relations

As a child of an Iranian immigrant, I read John Hauptman’s letter titled “On Iran–Israel relations” in the April 2011 issue of PHYSICS TODAY (page 10) with sadness and concern. Hauptman takes issue with an earlier letter by William Katz and uses the opportunity to attack critics of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He advances several claims, the most egregious of which must be challenged.

History has shown that governments of men lie like men. Japanese diplomats were negotiating peace with the US at the time of the Pearl Harbor attacks. Nazi Germany reneged on its nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union when it attacked that nation in 1941. So let us examine Hauptman’s claims, looking not at official statements from the government of Iran but at its actions.

Hauptman says Iran has no stated goal of annihilating Israel. Yet the military engagements Israel has faced since 1979 bear the stamp of Iran’s direct influence through its support of Hezbollah in Lebanon and of Syrian aggression. The decision to send warships through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea following the fall of the Mubarak government in Egypt this year, an act that serves no vital Iranian defense interest, further indicates Iran’s intention of expanding its military reach to threaten Israel. Iran has been developing missile technology with weapons capable of delivering a biological or nuclear weapon to Israeli territory.¹

The Iranian government does not clamor for or threaten nuclear war, says Hauptman. Actually, Iran is aggressively pursuing a nuclear program that it claims is intended only for peaceful energy production. However, given the existing oil and gas resources in tectonically active Iran, a desire to increase its energy independence should lead it to be developing its tremendous solar and wind energy potentials and its domestic fossil-fuel sources rather than risk building nuclear power plants sensitive to seismic activity. Recent revelations of