Supreme Leader Meets with Pilgrims at Imam Ridha’s (a.s.) Shrine - 21 /Mar/ 2013

In a meeting with thousands of pilgrims at Imam Ridha's (a.s.) shrine in the holy city of Mashhad, Ayatollah Khamenei the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that it is necessary to evaluate the weaknesses and strengths that existed in the year 1391 and to make plans on the basis of this large-scale evaluation. He added: "Just as people need constant evaluation in the case of personal matters, so national evaluation is also important when it comes to national issues of the country. This is because such evaluation can teach us lessons and help us make better decisions in the future."

His Eminence said that other nations and their intellectuals are watching the Iranian nation's performance and achievements in order to make use of Iran's experiences. He added that the enemies are also tracking the Iranian nation's achievements and weak points. "From this perspective, the Iranian nation should have a large-scale and realistic outlook and an appropriate evaluation of the country's conditions."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that it is wrong to evaluate Iran's conditions by considering only such issues as high prices, decreases in production in certain sectors and economic pressures. He stressed: "The appropriate perspective is to see the great advances and achievements as well as the weaknesses and problems in this vast arena that is full of challenges. Such a large-scale evaluation will reveal the Iranian nation's pride and honor."

Ayatollah Khamenei stated that American officials have openly announced that the purpose of sanctions is to cripple the Iranian nation, further adding: "In this arena which is full of challenges, the Iranian nation has managed to turn threats into opportunities by relying on its intelligence, capacities and power. Just like a sporting champion, the Iranian nation has managed to emerge victorious out of a tough and tiring competition, making everybody praise it."

He reiterated: "If the conditions of the country are viewed from this perspective, the Iranian nation will definitely be the champion of this great arena."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution added: "The successes and achievements of the Iranian nation in this challenging arena are such that even perceptive political and academic elites in different countries, including the ill-wishers of Iran, have been forced to praise the Iranian nation."

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the people who are always unhappy about the advances of the Iranian nation and stressed: "These people are like the enemies of the Iranian nation and they use two methods to counter the advances of the Iranian nation: first, they create obstacles through such techniques as sanctions, threats and keeping government officials, outstanding personalities and the people busy with secondary issues that are not among the priorities and second, they broadcast widespread and massive propaganda in order to hide the advances of the Iranian nation and to magnify its weaknesses."

His Eminence said that from this perspective, the year 1391 was one the busiest years for the ill-wishers of the Iranian nation, adding: "They have announced that their goal is to cripple the Iranian nation and to bring it to its knees. Therefore, if our nation resists their pressure, stays vibrant and achieves more advances, they will lose credibility."

Elsewhere, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution posed two questions: "Which country is the center of machinations against the Iranian nation? Who are the enemies of our nation?"

Ayatollah Khamenei stated: "The main center for designing machinations against the Iranian nation is America and today after the passage of 34 years, whenever the word ‘enemy' is mentioned, the Iranian nation quickly thinks of America."

His Eminence added: "American officials should think carefully about this issue and they should ask themselves why the Iranian nation quickly thinks of America whenever they hear the word ‘enemy'."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to the enemies of the Iranian nation and reiterated: "Apart from America, which is the archenemy of Iran and the center of machinations, there are other enemies, including the evil English government, which does not enjoy independence and plays a complementary role as the follower of the American government."

Ayatollah Khamenei also referred to the French government and added: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has not had problems with the French government and people, but the French government has adopted a policy of clear enmity towards to the Iranian nation in the recent years, particularly since the time of Sarkozy, and this wrong policy is still being pursued, which is unwise."

Referring to the Zionist regime, His Eminence stated: "The usurping Zionist regime is too small to be considered among the first row of the enemies of the Iranian nation."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution touched on the Israeli threats of a military invasion against Iran and stressed: "If they make any such move, the Islamic Republic of Iran will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground."

Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated: "The Americans constantly refer to these few enemies of the Iranian nation as ‘the global community'. This is while the global community is not at all determined to be hostile towards the Iranians and Islamic Iran."

Having mentioned the true enemies of the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Khamenei explained their hostile actions throughout the year 1391 and added: "Despite their claims of friendship with the Iranian nation, the Americans started imposing harsh and widespread oil and banking sanctions on Iran and they insist that they should not be considered enemies in spite of these hostile actions."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that the current policy that America is pursuing is in line with the policy of extending an iron fist that is covered with a velvet glove. "In spite of these deceptive moves, they started a well-planned initiative and they expected that after a few months, the Iranian nation would give in to their bullying and put an end to its growing scientific activities. However, what happened was contrary to the will and predictions of the ill-wishers."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that American officials are happy about the effect that sanctions have had on Iran, adding: "The sanctions have had an effect, but they have not had the effect that they were after."

His Eminence reiterated: "If the sanctions have been effective, it is because our economy is dependent on oil and for this reason, an economy that is free from oil should be among the main plans and priorities of the next government."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed: "Seventeen, eighteen years ago, I told the government of that time and its officials that they should act in a way that we could shut down our oil wells whenever we wanted to. The so-called ‘technocrats' smiled in disbelief and said it was not possible."

Ayatollah Khamenei stated: "Building an economy that is free from oil is possible, but it requires appropriate

planning and implementation."

Having explained the hostile actions of the enemies on the economic front in the year 1391, His Eminence referred to the enemies' efforts on the political front and added: "One of the measures that were adopted on the political front by the ill-wishers of the Iranian nation was their efforts to isolate the Islamic Republic. However, the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran - which was attended by leaders and high-ranking officials of the Non-Aligned Movement, who praised Iran for its amazing scientific, technological and economic advances - foiled the enemies' plot."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that another measure that the ill-wishers have adopted on the political front is creating doubts in the minds of the Iranian people and trying to separate them from the Islamic Republic. "The massive and enthusiastic presence of the people in the rallies of the 22nd of Bahman and the way they expressed their affection for Islam and the Islamic Revolution, were a powerful punch in the mouth of the enemies."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that another measure that was adopted by the enemies of Iran was their unsuccessful attempts at decreasing the influence and power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region. He added: "The powerful presence of Iran behind the scenes of the 8-day war on Gaza and the defeat that the Zionist regime suffered at the hands of Palestinian combatants and also the ill-wishers' acknowledgement that the regional issues cannot be resolved in the absence of Iran, caused the enmities to fail on these fronts."

His Eminence stressed: "All these pressures and enmities, particularly the sanctions, have had great positive effects in addition to their negative effects. One the most important positive effects was that last year domestic capacities of the Iranian nation were activated and great achievements were made in areas relating to infrastructure."

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to certain advances and achievements that were made under sanctions in the year 1391, further adding: "Discovering new sources of oil and uranium, building and developing power plants and refineries, adopting measures relating to infrastructure in the area of building roads and developing the energy sector, accomplishing important scientific and technological achievements including the launching of the Nahid satellite and the Pishgam explorer which was carrying living creatures, building an advanced fighter jet, producing important and new pharmaceuticals, achieving the highest rank in the region in the area of nanotechnology, making outstanding achievements in scientific areas, increased rate of scientific progress, increased number of university students in the country and scientific achievements in area of stem cell research, new sources of energy and nuclear technology are among the amazing advances that Iranian youth and scientists achieved in a year in which the Iranian nation was supposed to be crippled by the sanctions."

His Eminence stressed: "The great lesson that the achievements and victories of the year 1391 contain is that a vibrant nation will never be brought to its knees as a result of its enemy's sanctions, pressure and harsh measures."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution reiterated: "The year 1391 was in fact an arena of practicing in which the Iranian nation managed to show its capabilities and advances and at the same time identify some of its weak points."

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the economic weaknesses of the country in the year 1391 and added: "Dependence of the country on oil, disregarding large-scale economic policies of the country and being tangled up in daily policies are among the weaknesses that our government officials - particularly officials of the next government - should pay attention to and they should know that the country must have large-scale economic policies that are clear, well-planned and well-organized."

His Eminence said another lesson that the year 1391 contained was that the country enjoys a strong foundation,

further stating: "When the foundations are strengthened, the effect of the enemies' hostile efforts will be minimized."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed that besides the economy, issues relating to security, healthcare, scientific advances, independence and national dignity are also important, adding: "With its advances in the year 1391, the Iranian nation proved that not only being independent of America and the superpowers will not lead to backwardness but that it will also bring about progress."

Having presented a large-scale evaluation of the conditions of the country in the year 1391, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the importance of trying to predict the enemy's next move and preparing plans to counter it, further adding: "The young Iranian scientists' move to produce twenty-percent enriched uranium to be used in the Tehran research reactor for the purpose of producing radiopharmaceuticals is one example of such intelligent proactive measures which should be adopted in the case of all essential issues of the country."

His Eminence said that adopting proactive measures in scientific areas is the great moral and rational responsibility of all Iranian governments, industrialists, farmers, capitalists, entrepreneurs, researchers, scientific and industrial designers, university professors, economic managers and science and technology parks. He further stressed: "It is everybody's responsibility to make the country resistant and impervious to the enemies' efforts."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution reiterated: "This is one of the requirements of an economy of resistance."

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to American officials' requests for bilateral negotiations and stated: "The Americans have been sending messages for some time asking Iran to hold separate negotiations with them regarding the nuclear issue, but on the basis of our past experiences I am not optimistic about such negotiations."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed that the Americans are not trying to reach a logical solution through the negotiations, further adding: "From the viewpoint of the Americans, negotiation does not mean that we should sit down together and try to find a logical solution. This is not what they mean by negotiation. What they mean is that we should sit down together and speak until Iran accepts their views. The goal has been announced in advance: Iran will have to accept their views. For this reason, we have always announced that this is not negotiation. This is imposition and Iran will not give in to imposition."

Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated that he is not optimistic about direct negotiations with America, but he added: "Of course, I am not opposed either."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Americans repeatedly state in their messages that they are not after a regime change in Iran. "We were never worried about your intentions of overthrowing the Islamic Republic because even when you had this intention and you would announce this openly, you could not do anything and you will not be able to do anything in the future either."

His Eminence stated: "The Americans constantly send messages saying that they are sincere in their offers of rational negotiations. They claim that they sincerely want to have rational negotiations with Iran - that is to say, they claim that they do not want imposition. In response, I would say, we have told you many times that we are not after nuclear weapons and you say that you do not believe us. Why would we believe your statements? When you are not prepared to accept a rational and sincere statement, why would we accept your statements which have been disproved on many occasions?"

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution added: "Our interpretation is that offers of negotiation are an American tactic to mislead public opinion in the world and in Iran. If this is not the case, the Americans should

prove their sincerity with actions."

Ayatollah Khamenei discussed a propaganda technique that his used by the Americans and reiterated: "At times, the Americans have claimed that certain individuals have negotiated with them on behalf of the Leader of Iran. But this is a downright lie and so far nobody has ever negotiated with America on behalf of the Leader."

His Eminence added: "Over the years in different governments, certain individuals have negotiated with them over certain short-term issues and I was not opposed. However, this was done by different governments. Of course, they had a responsibility to observe the Leader's red lines and today they have the same responsibility and must observe the red lines."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Americans do not want to reach a solution through nuclear negotiations, adding: "If the Americans truly want to resolve the nuclear issue with Iran, the solution is easy: they should acknowledge Iran's right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes."

Stressing that observing the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency can eliminate the existing concerns, His Eminence stated: "Past experiences and the existing conditions show that the Americans are not after resolving this issue and they want the nuclear issue to remain unresolved so that they have a pretext to pressure and 'cripple' the Iranian nation. Of course, much to the dismay of the enemies, the Iranian nation will not be crippled."

Ayatollah Khamenei proposed a solution to the nuclear issue, saying: "If the Americans sincerely want to put an end to the issues, the solution that we propose is that they should stop being hostile towards the Iranian nation in words and in action."

His Eminence referred to the failure of America's hostile policies against the Iranian nation over the past 34 years and stressed that such policies will fail in the future as well.

Elsewhere in his statements, Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the upcoming presidential elections and stated: "Elections represent the power and political valor of the Islamic system, Iran's national willpower and the pride of the Islamic Republic."

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the importance of a massive voter turnout in the presidential elections and stressed: "Massive and enthusiastic presence of the people in the elections, besides ensuring national security, will counter the enemies' threats and make them disappointed."

His Eminence stressed the need for the presence of different political orientations and currents in the presidential elections and added: "The elections are not for a particular political current or orientation, rather all those who are committed to our national interests and independence of the country have a right and responsibility to take part in the elections."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed: "Turning away from the elections is appropriate for those who are opposed to the Islamic Republic."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that only the votes of the people determine the results of the elections and added: "What is important is that you should exercise judgment and vote. You should do research, observe carefully and consult those you trust so that you can identify and vote for the most qualified candidate."

His Eminence stressed that the Leader has only one vote and that nobody will know what his vote is. "Nobody should say that the Leader supports such and such a candidate and not another. If such a claim is made, it is false."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution advised the people to be careful and not let their opinion be influenced by different statements that are spread through different channels, including text messages.

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that everybody should accept the rule of law and stated: "The events of the year 1388 started when certain people decided not to accept the law and the votes of the people, and they called on their supporters to conduct street protests, which was an irreversible mistake."

His Eminence added: "Fortunately we have the necessary legal mechanisms to eliminate the possible suspicions. Therefore, everybody should accept what the majority of the people decide through their votes."

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said: "Any in-coming president should enjoy the advantages that his predecessors had and should not suffer from the weaknesses of the previous presidents."

Ayatollah Khamenei added: "The governments that are elected one after the other should help us move towards improvement and perfection and we should gradually move towards electing the best among us."

At the end of his statements, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said: "Those who enter the arena of presidential elections should be committed to our values and to the Islamic Revolution. They should be committed to our national interests and have faith in running the country on the basis of communal wisdom."