Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with President Rouhani and Cabinet Members - 28 /Aug/ 2013

The following is the full text of the speech delivered on August 28, 2013 by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet members. The meeting was held on the occasion of Government Week.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I welcome the dear and honorable brothers and sisters and I would like to congratulate all the friends, all of you and the honorable President on the occasion of Government Week. Government Week is an occasion when one can congratulate and appreciate the efforts of all executive managers and officials. I do not want to miss this opportunity and I congratulate all of you and all the managers and officials who are busy working and rendering services in the executive branch. I ask Allah the Exalted to bestow on all of them and all of you the blessing of rendering services.

One of the auspicious things in this occasion is that the names of two wise and knowledgeable martyrs [Shahid Rajai and Shahid Bahonar] who rendered many services, have adorned all of our statements and writings. It is very remarkable and significant to see that during these years, all administrations and government officials have based Government Day and Government Week on the remembrance of these two diligent martyrs and they did not let the passage of time and different events consign to oblivion the value of martyrdom and the value of the genuine and humble services of these two great personalities.

I deem it necessary to express my sincere gratitude to the honorable President for his prompt action in introducing ministers to the Majlis. I saw and knew about his persistence and I praised in my heart this persistence for forming the cabinet as soon as possible. Fortunately, he managed to do this and from the first moment after the endorsement ceremony, he proposed the ministers to the Majlis without wasting any time. Also, I express my gratitude to the honorable MPs who approved the proposed ministers with good and, in a number of cases, massive votes and, in fact, the administration and the Majlis have started their work. On the one hand, this shows their determination and on the other hand, this shows the cooperation that exists between the two branches. These are the two elements that I am sensitive about. I am sensitive both about the cooperation between these two branches - which, at this first stage, showed itself in a very good way - and about the issue of prompt action.

I hope that, by Allah's favor, your administration will be able to show its strong points and continue its effort to boost the hope that - as the President pointed out - has been created in the hearts of the people for doing great and outstanding things and removing the existing obstacles.

Of course, Mr. Rouhani himself is undoubtedly one of the strong points of this administration. He is an experienced personality in the Revolution and he had many experiences during revolutionary activities. He has adopted good and appropriate positions during the past 30-plus years and he put himself forward as a candidate so that people can judge and elect him. And thankfully today, he has assumed the leadership of the executive branch as a good and trustworthy president. From his statements and his experience and background, one notices that he and his colleagues have great determination to move things forward in the best way possible. I pray that, by Allah's favor, both you and the President will be successful in doing what a good administration should do.

In this first meeting that I have with you dear friends, let us review the criteria and standards which help an administration to be considered a good administration in this era. Of course, we do not claim that our government is

an Islamic government in every sense of the word. When I look at myself, I see that I have many weak points. When I compare myself with the disciples of the holy and immaculate personalities who offered us the gift of Islam during the early Islamic era, I see that we are inferior to form or even endure the thought of forming such an excellent government. However, in our era and according to our own conditions, there are certain criteria for an Islamic government. I will refer to a number of these criteria. Of course, these are not new issues and you yourselves already know these criteria. But reviewing the things which we already know is always beneficial for us and there is no harm in reviewing them once again.

The first criterion is morality, faith, ideological health, moral health and the health of an action which originates from true beliefs and the right outlook on the realities of society. Particularly, high-ranking officials should fulfill this criterion. This is the first criterion. Fortunately, we are not confused about the issue of true beliefs and the issue of rights. Besides Islamic sources - of course, it is possible that different people have different interpretations of Islamic sources - we benefit from the instructions of our magnanimous Imam. Imam is accepted by all of us and we all believe in him. Well, the statements, orientations and instructions of Imam are available to us. This is a criterion for us. We should believe in and act according to this. When there is ambiguity, we should refer to this major criterion. This is ideological health. These things constitute the principles and values of the Revolution and these principles and values can be seen in the statements of Imam. These are the things which will produce results and create a good future for us and which will help us move things forward if we are committed and attached to them and if we implement our plans based on this attachment.

Regarding the issue of genuine and heartfelt beliefs and orientations, one of the things which I lay great emphasis on is reliance on Allah the Exalted and divine promises. This is one of the issues which I strongly believe we should not be negligent about. Allah the Exalted firmly promises that "If you help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you." [The Holy Quran, 47: 7] And "Allah will certainly aid those who aid his cause." [The Holy Quran, 22: 40] When Allah the Exalted promises in such a direct and emphatic way that if you support His religion and follow and assist the divine path, God will help you, then we should believe in this promise and we should do what He says.

This may seem impossible and unlikely to those who have not experienced divine assistance. But you and I have experienced this. We have seen how an impossible thing became possible. There is nothing which is more unlikely than overthrowing - with bare hands and presence on the streets - an arrogant and oppressive regime which was dependent on global powers and replacing it with an Islamic government. And this Islamic government was not founded on western standards and criteria. Rather, it was founded on Islam and fiqh. Who would have believed that such a thing is possible? But this event, which seemed impossible, happened.

The seditions which were staged during the early years after the Revolution and before the Sacred Defense Era is another example. As you remember, these seditions were supported by people outside the country and they took place in eastern, western, northern and southern areas of the country. Where did these tribal and other such seditions not exist? Which country and which newly formed government that does not have an equipped army and did not have competent security forces, could confront and overcome such seditions? But the Islamic Republic did this.

The imposed war and the Sacred Defense Era is another example. Well, these things have been mentioned a thousand or thousands of times before, but we should evoke the memory of these events. The imposed war was not only waged by a neighboring country against us. It was an international war against us which benefited from all kinds of weapons. Everyone made their efforts, but they could not occupy even one milimeter of our soil. Is this a minor achievement? The same is true of other events. Well, these are the promises which were fulfilled. If other people have only read, "If you help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you" in the Holy Quran, we have experienced it in life. Therefore, you should trust God and carry out your responsibilities for the sake of Him. Gentlemen, you should set yourselves divine goals. You should be sure that Allah the Exalted will open up the path.

Sometimes we can see that Allah the Exalted easily solves complicated equations such as the one described by Mr.

Rouhani, which is full of contradictions and problems when one looks at it. But such things have happened. Sometimes you want to fix something into its proper place, but there are tens of problems and you may not know how to do it. When a person who is skilled at such things comes and moves it a little bit, it will be easily fixed. All these issues can be tackled and clarified with a wise, intelligent and appropriate outlook which is, of course, based on reliance on Allah the Exalted and trust in Him. I believe in this. Anyway, trust in God and reliance on spirituality is one of the criteria.

I request that you do not break off your relationship with the Holy Quran - of course, it may not be necessary for me to ask you this and perhaps you already do this. You should definitely read the Holy Quran on a daily basis and you should strengthen your relationship with dua and reliance on God. This reduces the pressure of work, removes hardships and makes you energetic and prepared to encounter big obstacles. That is to say, this refreshes the soul of a believer. This is a very important issue. Also, recomended prayers and other such things have many blessings.

The second criterion is rendering services to humanity. Having the spirit of rendering services is one of the main discourses of the Islamic government. The philosophy of our existence is nothing beyond this. We have come to render services to people and nothing should distract us from doing this. Of course, each of us has certain attachments, orientations and opinions in political and social arenas. Each of us has certain friends and enemies. These are all peripheral issues. The main thing is rendering services. We should not let these peripheral issues influence the main issue.

There is one point regarding the issue of rendering services and that is the fact that there is a limited time that is available. Four years or perhaps eight years is a limited time and it quickly passes. In this room or in another one, where a number of you were also present, I repeatedly said the same thing to previous administrations. On the first day of your administration, you should think of the fact that your term will quickly come to an end. When one looks back and sees the passage of four years, he thinks that these four years passed as quickly as a day. Time "passes away like summer-clouds." [Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 20] However, in this limited time, there is an unlimited number of opportunities. That is to say, every hour is an opportunity for you. Every event is an opportunity for you. Every thought and innovative idea that crosses your mind is an opportunity for you. You should not miss these opportunities.

The second issue regarding rendering services is that you should do it in a jihad-like manner. This does not mean lawlessness. You friends with many of whom I have worked for years - I have cooperated with many of you brothers in different areas - know my behavior. I am not the kind of person who invites people to lawlessness. I am strongly against lawlessness, but I believe that within the legal framework, we can work in two ways: one is the kind of administrative work which is common and another is jihadi work. Jihadi work means overcoming obstacles and being enthusiastic about one's tasks. It means that we should not magnify small obstacles, we should not forget ideals and we should not forget our path. This is jihadi work. Our tasks should be done in a jihad-like manner so that, by Allah's favor, services are rendered in an efficient way.

The third criterion is justice. During these years, I have said many times, in private meetings with a number of you that I do not believe in progress without justice. We have named this decade "The Decade of Progress and Justice". Progress without justice will lead to the kind of progress which you can see today in the flashy western civilization. One could not imagine that in this era, westerners would benefit from such wealth, power, science and technology. They have these things at maximum capacity. However, you can see that justice does not exist there. Of course, they speak at length about judiciary justice in their movies, fiction and other such things. But much of such propaganda - about 80 percent of it - is a lie. The information that we have regarding judiciary issues in the West shows that such propaganda is not true.

But this injustice is quite visible in economic areas. There are people who die of hunger and there are people who die at a temperature of 10 degrees below zero or 40 degrees above zero. Why should somebody die at a temperature

of 40 degrees above zero? Is there any other reason except that they have no shelter or house, that they live on the streets and that at such a temperature, they have no water to drink? These things exist in western countries and on the other hand, there are legendary sources of wealth in the West. This is injustice. We do not want this. Islam does not want us to do this. We need progress - which is referred to as development in today's western literature, but we call it progress - and this progress should definitely be accompanied by justice. Well, as you can see in the Holy Quran, all messengers and prophets were sent down "That men may stand forth in justice." [The Holy Quran, 57: 25] They were sent so that society lives with justice. So, this is another criterion which should always be taken into consideration.

Another criterion, which is the fourth criterion, is promoting economic health and combating corruption. You should notice that executive positions are positions of power and in such positions you will be in charge of financial resources. Temptations will not let you feel comfortable. On the issue of corruption, you should not only be careful about yourselves. You may think that you are religious people and high-ranking officials and you can resist these temptations. However, those officials who serve at lower levels may not be able to resist such temptations. You should be vigilant. You should sharpen your watchful and critical eyes in the entire executive branch - which is under your management - so much so that economic corruption cannot grow in any corner and individuals do not yield to such temptations.

You should do this before organizations in charge of supervision enter the arena. Well, we have certain organizations in the country which are in charge of supervision. These organizations - including the Majlis, the judiciary branch and the executive branch itself which can carry out certain investigations - have certain responsibilities in this regard. However, before it is their turn to exercise supervision, the manager of any organization should be careful about economic health and this requires constant vigilance. You should not be negligent in this regard. When I sometimes sit and talk to a number of friends and managers, I tell them that they should act like the searchlights which exist in fortresses and strongholds and which constantly turn in different directions. The searchlights of your eyes should constantly turn in different directions so that there is not any way for corruption to infiltrate. We should always be vigilant and careful. Corruption is really like a termite. You should not let corruption, bribery, favoritism, extravagance and overspending infiltrate into your branch.

Part of the solution which was put forward by Dr. Rouhani regarding the issue of economizing and combating different kinds of corruption is possible. Additional and unnecessary expenses should be avoided. Sometimes such expenses are not haraam, but they are unnecessary. Perhaps, this is haraam in one sense, but we cannot clearly say that it is haraam. And by exercising supervision great things can be done in this regard. In fact, in executive organizations, most of the staff are diligent and morally healthy. However, when there are one, two, ten corrupt individuals in an organization, they act like microbes and termites. In such circumstances, the efforts of these diligent workers will come to nothing. Their reputation will be damaged and their efforts will be futile. Corruption destroys the atmosphere of trust.

The next criterion is obeying the law. Well, obeying the law is very important. The law is like a railway system. If our train derails, we will definitely be harmed. Sometimes a law is incomplete and flawed. But violating this incomplete law will create chaos and anarchy and it will cause more harm than enforcing it. This idea should be firmly established in all organizations. One of the requirements of obeying the law is obeying the basic rules and implementing the major plans which fortunately exist in the country today such as general policies, strategic plans and different resolutions passed by supreme councils like the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution and the Supreme Cyberspace Council.

It was yesterday or the day before yesterday that I briefly spoke to Dr. Rouhani about the Supreme Cyberspace Council and we will speak more about this issue. In this room, during four meetings which lasted three, four hours, we addressed this issue with the heads of the three branches. This council has been formed and it is extremely important. The Supreme Cyberspace Council has issued certain resolutions. These resolutions should be considered

valid and lawful and they should be adopted. If the issue of obeying and observing the law is firmly established, much of the damage will definitely be undone.

One of the things which is good to be mentioned regarding general policies is the policy of transforming the administrative system of the country which has been adopted and carried out. We really suffer from serious problems in administrative areas. These policies have been formulated and they have been examined in the Expediency Council. In my opinion, these are very good policies and you should plan to implement them. This is one of the important things which has unfortunately been ignored and delayed.

Another criterion is wisdom and acumen in doing things. You should do your work by applying expertise, carrying out a careful examination, considering the consequences of an action and even a statement. Sometimes, the statements of a high-ranking official who speaks to the people cause damaging effects. In such circumstances, if one wants to reduce the effects of such statements, he should try very hard. It is like throwing a stone in a well which will create serious problems. We should speak in a tactful and sensible way. It should not be the case that we share with the public opinion whatever crosses our mind about a particular issue while we have not carefully examined the different sides of this issue. Sometimes, correcting this mistake is very difficult. This is wisdom and acumen in managing affairs.

One of the manifestations of wisdom is benefiting from the great capacities of the country in the area of expertise. Fortunately, in different sectors, we have great capacities in terms of expertise. It is fair to say that the country has great capacities in terms of expertise. If we utilize these capacities and benefit from the many people who blossomed and entered the arena of rendering services after the Revolution, it will definitely be to our advantage.

I would like to mention another criterion and then I will not continue this issue. This criterion is reliance on the domestic capacities of the country. We should not rely on capacities outside the country. This is my advice to you, but it does not mean that we should not benefit from the resources which exist outside the country. These two things should not be confused. What I am saying is that we should not pin our hopes on capacities outside the country.

Outside the country and the Islamic Republic, there is a big camp which has tried with all its power to prevent this Revolution from growing roots, continuing its life, making progress and becoming a role model in different areas. We cannot expect friendship and friendliness from an enemy which has used hostile methods. I am not saying that you should not benefit from their capacities. Rather, I am saying that you should not trust and pin your hopes on them. You should rely on capacities which exist inside the country. Inside the country, there are many resources. If we rely on these resources - in economic, cultural and other different areas - and if we manage to benefit from domestic capacities, this will be the key to our problems. That is to say, the resources inside the country can be utilized in a wise way. These resources should be identified. This is the thing which will help us achieve a high rank in the world.

In international arenas, the share of each country is as much as its domestic power. In such arenas, the more powerful a country is, the larger its shares will be. We should do this and fortunately, it has gradually been done over the past years. That is to say, over these years, the authority of the Islamic Republic has constantly increased. As a result, you can see that the dignity of the Islamic Republic has increased and its position has been raised. And there is ample evidence for this. These were the six, seven criteria which I wanted to discuss. Of course, as I said, these are not new issues for you. Rather, these are an essential review of the things which you already knew.

I would like to raise two, three other points: we should take priorities into consideration. You are energetic and you have just entered the arena. However, your resources, your determination and your time are not unlimited. You should see what the priorities are. You should attend to all issues. You cannot delay a task until another is completed. You should find out which issue receives more attention.

In my opinion, there are two issues which are necessary for us to pay attention to. One is the issue of economy and another is the issue of science. In my opinion, today these two issues should be put at the top of our agenda. These should be done primarily by you who are executive officials and secondarily by officials in other branches.

Fortunately, today there are many infrastructures in economic areas which did not exist a few years ago. During the past 10, 12 years, many infrastructures which can be utilized have been built in the country. Well, one of the issues that is of primary importance is stability, tranquility and handling the economic turmoil. That is to say, the turmoil which exists in economic areas - whether the psychological distress of the people, or the disorder which exists in the market - should be handled with wisdom and acumen. Of course, this depends on your policies, your statements and your prompt actions.

Other important issues are the issue of controlling inflation and the issue of fulfilling the basic needs of the people. These are the things which have priority and which should first be dealt with. Another issue is accelerating national production. These are the main issues in our economy. You should pay attention to them. Of course, problems exist. Dr. Rouhani pointed out many of these problems. We too are more or less familiar with these problems. We know that there are a number of problems. You should see how you can eliminate these problems. If you can create tranquility in economic arenas, control inflation and accelerate production, this will be a starting point for the economic epic which I discussed and asked the people and all the officials to consider in the beginning of the year.

Of course, an economic epic cannot be achieved in six months, or in one or two years. A long-term movement is necessary. Neither we, the people, nor any fair-minded individual expects the administration to solve all these problems in a short time. Rather, all of us expect the movement towards progress to be started. We would like to feel that there is a movement towards solving problems and that a wise outlook is adopted on different events. There are many points about economic issues, but there is no time to discuss them.

I would like to refer to the issue of economy of resistance. The guidelines for economy of resistance have been issued and all the policies necessary in this regard have been formulated. These policies have been submitted to the Expediency Council for proper consultation and they are examining them. Economy of resistance does not mean enduring economic hardships and being isolated. Rather, it has a broader and deeper meaning which is justifiable and defensible. Economy of resistance is the cure for our problems. We should be able to create the kind of economy which is resistant to crises and international fluctuations. This is a necessary thing to do. Of course, this has certain prerequisites. By Allah's favor, the Expediency Council will offer its opinion. How good it is if Dr. Rouhani - who is also a member of the Expediency Council - asks them to do this as soon as possible.

Since 10, 11 years ago until today, we have benefited from a rapid movement in scientific areas. A good movement has begun and the way I see it and according to the reports that I read, this movement has gained strength on a daily basis. The first day when we discussed the issue of the scientific capacities of the country and the software movement and the idea of crossing the borders of knowledge, I myself did not believe that there are such capacities in the country for progress at such a rate. Then, we suddenly saw that scientific progress bubbled like a spring from different corners of the country. Today, if you take a look, you will see that our research centers, our scientific-technological organizations and our universities are bubbling like a spring in different sectors. This should not be stopped. In economic areas too, this is the thing which will enormously help us. If we manage to move things forward in scientific areas and adopt an economic outlook towards science - I will refer to this issue later on - then this will definitely be much more beneficial to us than selling our crude oil and other such things.

This year, in a meeting which was held in the month of Ramadan - I do not remember whether this meeting was with professors or students, but it was in one of these two meetings - one of the participants delivered a speech. He introduced a certain product and he said that the profit which this product yields will be several times larger than the profit that we earn out of selling our oil or gas. Unfortunately, because I do not remember the figure, I cannot say how much it was, but I have written it down. He claimed that if we work on such a product which has potential

customers and which is easy to produce, we can earn such profits. In fact, one of the keys to solving economic problems is relying on science.

We should prevent the rapid movement which exists today from being slowed down. The administration especially should make efforts to do this. As I said, this is one of the two main priorities of the country. The issue of scientific progress should be pursued in particular. Of course, the organizations which are mainly responsible for the issue of scientific progress are the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Health. However, the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Agriculture and even those ministries which provide different services can and should offer help. Cooperation between universities, scientific and research centers and the organizations which provide different services - such as the Ministry of Industries, the Ministry of Roads and Transportation, the Ministry of Petroleum, the Ministry of Agriculture and the different ministries which are involved in technical issues - is really necessary. They can act like a suction pump and they can obtain the products of science out of scientific and research organizations and they can help that organization to be active and diligent.

Of course, there are two factors involved in scientific issues. One is that we should complete the chain of science and technology. That is to say, we should complete this chain which is made up of first ideas and thoughts, second science, third technology, fourth production and fifth market. If we carry out research and achieve technological advances, but we cannot engage in large-scale production or find a market for that, our efforts will be futile. All of these things should receive attention and the issue of scientific chain should be followed up until it leads to production and breaks into the market. Our attention should be focused on all the links of this chain. This is one factor. The other factor is knowledge-based companies. Fortunately, today many knowledge-based companies have been established. You should benefit from these companies as much as you can.

Well, my speech became too long. About cultural issues and foreign politics too, I have many things to say. Of course, I will discuss them with the officials in charge. Dr. Rouhani raised very good points about the issue of foreign policy. I listened to an interview with Mr. Zarif and the part that I listened to was very good. Gaining a proper understanding of the slogans of dignity, wisdom and expediency is necessary. We should understand these three slogans in the proper way. If we manage to act on these slogans, our foreign policy will satisfy the need of the country and will parallel the status of the Islamic Republic. I have also many things to say about cultural issues.

I would like to refer to regional issues as well. As Dr. Rouhani pointed out, the Middle East region is a sensitive region and it is experiencing critical days. We do not at all like to interfere in the domestic affairs of Egypt, but we cannot be indifferent about the killing of the people of Egypt either. We condemn this slaughter, no matter who the perpetrator of this act is. Sometimes there is a people who begin an armed struggle against a government. In such conditions, this government has an excuse to fight back. But shooting the people - who carry no weapons - in such a way and killing hundreds or thousands of people should be vigorously condemned.

Regarding the issues of Egypt, we believe that a civil war should be seriously avoided. On the day of Eid ul-Fitr, I said that one of our anxieties and worries is that - God forbid - a war, in the real sense of the word, may break out between different groups of people in Egypt and this will be a disaster for the world of Islam and the region. The goal should be a return to democracy and the votes of the people. Finally, after many years of the domination of arrogance and dictatorship over Egypt, the people in this country managed to have good elections thanks to Islamic Awakening. This movement cannot be stopped and it cannot retrogress.

As for the issue of Syria, the Americans have threatened to interfere. This will definitely be a disaster for the region and the Americans will definitely suffer a loss if they do this. They should know that they will certainly suffer a loss, as they suffered a loss in Iraq and Afghanistan. This will be another loss for them. The interference of foreign and non-regional powers in a certain regional country means nothing except warmongering. This will only increase nations' hatred of them and it will make them more infamous. Besides, this interference will not at all create a bright future. That is to say, the region is like a gunpowder store. If any spark of fire is produced in this store, we will not

be able to measure the consequences of that.

I hope that Allah the Exalted will protect the region from America, the Zionists and other ill-wishers. I hope that He will protect our country, our people, our government and our president in the shade of His guidance and support so that you will be able to carry out your responsibilities.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings