# Supreme Leader's Speech in Meeting with Air Force Commanders and Personnel - 8 /Feb/ 2014

The following is the full text of the speech delivered on February 8, 2014 by Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with commanders and personnel of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army. The meeting was held on the occasion of the historic pledge of allegiance of Air Force officers to Imam Khomeini (r.a.) on the 19th of Bahman of 1357.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I would like to welcome you dear brothers, commanders and personnel of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army. I congratulate you on this auspicious day and this great memory. I would like to express my gratitude to those people who created the event of the 19th of Bahman. This event was very sensitive and important. I thank the honorable commander in this meeting for his report and I express my sincere gratitude for the meaningful and expressive song which was performed in this meeting.

A number of events are greater than what they seem to be. Sometimes, an event develops to such an extent that even those who created it do not expect this development. In the Holy Quran, God says, "Like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong, it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, filling the sowers with wonder and delight" [The Holy Quran, 48: 29]. God mentions certain characteristics when portraying the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) and the believers during the early Islamic era. He likens them to a seed which sprouts, gradually gains strength and grows in such a way that even the farmers - those who sow the seeds - become astonished.

The event of the 19th of Bahman was like this. On that day, one could not see the many dimensions of this event. These dimensions became clear gradually. On a larger scale, the Revolution itself was like this. The day our magnanimous Imam (r.a.) began the movement in the year 1341, no one could think of this great scope and this astonishing product, but this event happened. Of course, there are certain reasons why an event becomes blessed, whose discussion is beyond the scope of our meeting.

In any case, the event of the 19th of Bahman was a blessed event. One of the things which the analysts of this event have ignored is the role of this event in bringing about independence. Where did it exert such influence? It exerted such influence in the army - that is to say, part of the social class which endured the most sufferings because of the domination and interference of foreigners during the time of taghut. The event of the 19th of Bahman awakened the feeling of independence in this organization. It awakened this feeling in the entire army - first in the air force and later on in other branches of the army.

This event showed soldiers that one can free oneself from the influence of interfering and transgressing foreigners. This was the reason why I was saying to the friends in this meeting that the first place the self-sufficiency jihad emerged in, was the air force. It developed later on in the entire army. This spirit of independence and self-confidence was important for the army and the armed forces. It continued to be important until today and it will be important in the future as well.

I would like to say this in parentheses - the main point that I want to discuss is something else. In order to be able to show your competence in confronting threats against your position, which is the position of preserving the aerial security of the country, you should have a feeling of independence from others and reliance on your own capacities.

If you have such a feeling, talents begin to emerge. Of course, they have emerged until today and they will continue to emerge in the future as well. The issue of independence is an important issue for the entire country and the Revolution. Independence was one of the bases of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic. The slogan of "independence", together with the slogan of "freedom" was, is and will be one of the most important slogans of the Revolution.

Notice that after the defeat of the method of direct colonialism - which was common in the past and through which they colonized countries in a direct way - it became obsolete and it was replaced with neocolonialism. In neocolonialism, interfering powers did not directly involve themselves in controlling colonized countries. Rather, their agents and those who listened to these powers and who were dependent on them were brought to power. Because governments which rely on the outside cannot rule without dictatorship, they ruled in a dictatorial way and they safeguarded the interests of foreign powers.

This was neocolonialism. Fighting against dictatorship will get nowhere without fighting against those foreign powers which are behind domestic dictators. The same is true of today. If a people who are exhausted with the dictatorship of their rulers spark an uprising and fight with domestic dictators, but compromise with the foreign imperialists who are behind these dictators, the fate of this revolution and its officials and managers is either failure or treachery. Their fate will be limited to either of these two things. They, their revolution and their country will either be betrayed or if they will not be betrayed, they will be defeated and they will be deleted from the scene.

As we witnessed in a number of the revolutions which were conducted in recent years, people fought with domestic dictators, but they showed negligence in confronting the force which was supporting the dictators or they thought of compromising with this force. The result of this is what you see today. If you fight with dictators, but you compromise with arrogant powers, this will get you nowhere. Those revolutions will succeed and achieve victory which see and fight against the interfering power behind the dictators.

When our youth went and captured the Den of Espionage and when they dealt a humiliating blow to America, Imam said, "This is a revolution which is greater than the first one". This is the reason why he said this. The first Revolution was a great and unique revolution, but in the second revolution, the people of Iran showed that they know the next layer of domination, calamity and disaster and that they can confront and fight against it.

One can understand the issue of independence from this movement of the people. Independence means that a country knows the interfering power and that it confronts and stands up to it. Independence does not mean behaving in a wrong and harsh way towards the entire world. Rather, it means confronting a power which wants to interfere, command and take away the dignity and honor of a people for the sake of its interests. This is the meaning of independence.

Who is the enemy of the independence of a people? Foreign and interfering powers are the enemy of this independence. It is they who are afraid of the feeling of independence in a country. They are afraid of this feeling and they try to weaken it in people, in their leaders and those who guide them.

This is the reason why their propaganda networks engage in discouraging nations from pursuing independence. They say in their propaganda that the political, cultural and economic independence of countries contradicts their progress. You have heard what they say. Those who are familiar with global propaganda have heard these things as well. They promote these ideas in think tanks as philosophical ideas and some people inside different countries - including ours - promote these ideas on their behalf.

These people say, "If a country wants to be among advanced countries in the world, it has no option other than suppressing the feeling of independence in itself because if a country wants to be independent and completely rely

on its own interests, this contradicts their desire to be among global advanced countries". Well, this is completely wrong and it has been fabricated by those who are opposed to the independence of peoples.

The hope and goal of interfering powers is to safeguard their own interests by interfering in the affairs of all countries. They do not care if the interests of countries are jeopardized and trampled upon. They persist in interfering the way they used to persist in interfering in the affairs of our country during the time of taghut. They used to determine who we should and should not establish relations with, who we should sell our oil to, how much we should sell, how we should consume it and who should and should not undertake a sensitive responsibility. They directly interfered in such affairs.

In such conditions, a country becomes an instrument and a tool for safeguarding their interests and its own interests will be completely forgotten. When this happens, the goal of leaders and rulers of this country will no longer be to defend national interests. Rather, their goal will be to further the interests of interfering powers. Independence halts and prevents this wrong and treacherous trend. This is the meaning of independence for a country.

Independence does not mean breaking off one's relations with other countries. Rather, it means building a dam against the influence of other countries so that they cannot overshadow the interests of our country and our people by their own interests. This is the meaning of independence and this is the most important goal for any country.

What can bring about independence for our Islamic Revolution is highlighting the principles of the Revolution in a forthright and clear way. The principles and values of the Revolution should be highlighted in a forthright and clear way, as our magnanimous Imam (r.a.) did this. From the beginning of the revolutionary movement, Imam expressed his viewpoints in an outspoken and unambiguous way. From the beginning, he rejected the taghuti, hereditary, oppressive and monarchic regime and he did not give it any consideration.

It was clear from the beginning that Imam was after forming a popular government. Imam used to say in an outspoken way that hereditary monarchies, dictatorial regimes and those individual regimes which rely on the will of a single individual are condemned. Imam used to say these things in an outspoken way and he did not veil his viewpoints. Imam openly said that an Islamic government, one that is based on Islamic thoughts and values, should handle affairs and he did not draw a veil over this. Imam did not show any consideration on the issue of confronting the dangerous Zionist network which wants to rule over the entire world. He did not hide anything on this issue and he openly adopted an anti-Zionist position.

Imam openly adopted a position against the Zionist regime which is a fake and usurping regime and which wants to rule over the oppressed people of Palestine. He did not show any consideration and he did not draw a veil over any of these. Notice that these are the principles and the foundations. Imam did not conceal the fact that we are opposed to arrogance. Arrogance means the international system which is reliant on dividing the world into the oppressed and the oppressor. Imam decisively rejected this.

This arrogant system is completely manifested and represented by the current regime and government of the United States of America. Imam openly adopted a position against America. Our position against America is not based on the people of America or on racist outlooks. The issue is not this. The issue is that the behavior, nature and conduct of the government of the United States of America is based on interference and imperialism.

Imam adopted an open and clear position against this. This is the reason why the Revolution continues to move forward on its true rail of principles and guidelines even after the passage of 35 years. The Revolution did not change, it did not change its principles, it did not change its path and it did not change its slogans. This is very important.

The resistance of other revolutions crumbles in the face of the storms which strikes them. Many of these revolutions

either change their principles and path or they will be completely destroyed and annihilated. From the first day it emerged, the Islamic Revolution has preserved and moved towards its goals, it has made astonishing achievements in different areas and it is changing [Iran] from being an abandoned and ineffectual country in the world to becoming a great and influential regional power in international policies. It is showing this to the entire world.

All nations throughout the world know the people of Iran to be a brave, honest, intelligent and resisting people despite the fact that many efforts have been made and many propaganda tools have been used against the Islamic Republic. For a while, the propaganda and political networks of the enemies of the people of Iran focused all their efforts on creating Iranophobia. Some of them focused their efforts on creating Islamophobia and some of them on Iranophobia. Nevertheless, the popularity of the people of Iran increased among nations throughout the world.

Today, not only the masses of the people but also those outstanding personalities who do not have malicious motives have such a viewpoint about the people of Iran. If you take a look at their statements, you will see that this is their opinion about the people of Iran: a resisting, intelligent and patient people. This is the way they look at the people of Iran. This is the result of their Iranophobia policies.

Nations are not anxious about the Islamic Republic and the people of Iran. Rather, they are anxious about the domination of America. It is America that is known for bullying, interfering in the affairs of other countries and waging wars. Peoples throughout the world know America to be a warmongering and belligerent government which interferes in the affairs of other countries. It is America which nations are intimidated by and which they hate.

By Allah's favor, the Islamic Republic has become more enlightened and the people of Iran have become more dignified on a daily basis. And this will continue in the future. The secret to the survival of the Islamic Republic on the rail of the Revolution and the guidelines of our magnanimous Imam, has been this outspokenness.

This candor and outspokenness should not be lost at all. The positions of the Islamic Republic in the face of its opponents, friends and enemies should be clear positions. Tactics can be changed, methods can be changed, but principles should remain strong and solid. This is the secret to the solidity of the Revolution and the progress of the country.

Who are the enemies of our Revolution today? The enemies of the Revolution are a few corrupt powers which are notorious in the world. These powers are the enemies of the people of Iran. And the friends of the people of Iran are those nations who have heard the message of the Revolution and the Islamic Republic.

Of course, it is possible that some people have not heard these messages, but anyone who has heard the slogans of the Islamic Republic, who has witnessed its resistance and who has experienced and understood the issue of showing resistance and being oppressed, is the supporter of the Islamic Republic. The Islamic Republic means the people of Iran and the Iranian nation. The people are not separate from the Islamic Republic. This is the secret to the solidity and power of the Islamic Republic.

One of the things which American politicians say in their speeches to our officials is that they do not intend to change the regime of Iran. First, they are lying. If they could, they would not hesitate even for a moment to destroy the foundation of the Islamic Republic. Second, they cannot. Arrogant regimes can only topple those governments which are not reliant on the masses of the people.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is reliant on the faith, kindness and willpower of the people. Which country do you know that holds commemoration ceremonies for its revolution with the presence of the people on the streets and with powerful slogans even after the passage of tens of years? By Allah's favor, you will witness that on the 22nd of Bahman, the people of Iran will once more show their presence, their great strength and national power in all cities.

What is important is that the people of Iran know the secret to their success is resistance, and thankfully, they know this. What is important is that they know the way to achieve security is showing national power and national strength. National power is manifested by certain things and the people will show this power in their great demonstrations, their orientations and their rallies such as the 22nd of Bahman rallies and other such rallies in different elections. They will show this presence through scientific achievements and through their support of the Islamic Republic. This is the important point. What preserves the security of the country is showing national power. When the people show off their national power to the enemy, he cannot do anything.

Unfortunately, today the enemies make certain statements at different stages. This is a lesson for our people. The people of Iran should follow up the negotiations which are conducted in these days. They should listen to and follow up the rude statements of American politicians and they should know these politicians.

Some individuals want to change the people's opinion about the enmity of the enemy. The people should not listen to these individuals and they should see the enmity and hypocritical behavior of the enemy. In private meetings with the officials of the country, the American officials say certain things, but as soon as they leave, they say certain other things. The people of Iran should see and pay attention to the hypocritical behavior of our enemy and his evil and malevolent motives. They should realize that a country should always preserve its domestic power.

This is a piece of advice which we have always offered to officials. Only one thing can solve the problems of the country which is paying attention to domestic capacities - thankfully, these capacities are many and countless - and utilizing these capacities in a wise way. Fortunately, the executive officials in charge of economic issues have paid attention to this issue and they have reached the conclusion that this is the only way.

The way to solve the economic problems of the country - this set of problems - is not to turn our attention to the outside, to do something to make sanctions be lifted and to adopt other such measures. Fortunately, the officials in charge of economic affairs of the country have paid attention to this issue. The way to solve problems is to turn our attention to the inside and to strengthen the domestic infrastructures of the economy. Our officials want to do this and by Allah's favor, they will move forward and achieve success on this path.

Our hopes cannot be pinned on the enemy. The enemy cannot be expected to help us. The Americans say in some of their statements and sophistries that they are the friends of the people of Iran. They are lying and this can be understood from their actions. They threaten Iran and then they expect the Islamic Republic to decrease its defense capabilities. Is this not ridiculous? Is this not silly? While they issue threats, they say that we should decrease our defense capabilities. But this is not what we will do. By Allah's favor, different officials, different sectors and the armed forces will increase their defense capabilities on a daily basis.

What saves the country is reliance on domestic power and attention to the inside both in economical areas and in different social, political and cultural areas. By Allah's favor, the policies on economy of resistance will be announced in the near future. By Allah's favor, when this is done, the necessary infrastructures will be built and the necessary tasks and efforts for creating an economy of resistance - which is based on the resistance of the people - will be carried out and the people will continue their path.

What is important is that all of our people should preserve their unity and that officials and outstanding personalities should not let different peripheral issues sideline the main goal. Today, the main goal of the movement of the people of Iran is achieving inborn power and resistance in the face of opposing and hostile storms. During the past 35 years, there have been many storms, but thankfully, the people have stood firm and have counteracted the moves of the enemies over the course of these many years. From now on too, the people should and will be able to - by Allah's favor - counteract these moves.

All the people should preserve their unity. Unity, unanimity and solidarity should increase among the people and

officials. All the officials and managers of the country should trust the people and the people should trust the officials.

A number of people may like to make criticisms. Well, they can make criticisms, but their criticisms should be fair. Considering the fact that it is only a few months the administration has taken charge of the country, we should give executive officials time so that, by Allah's favor, they can move things forward in a firm and powerful way. Critics should pay attention to this point and they should behave towards the administration with equanimity and executive officials should do the same. Everyone should respect one another and everyone should behave in a polite way towards one another.

We have certain enemies and these enemies have certain agents inside the country. This should not be ignored. We should not allow the enemies' agents inside the country to take advantage of weak points and to create disorder. By Allah's favor, all of us together should move forward on the path of our magnanimous Imam and on the path of the power of our country.

Allah the Exalted will bestow success on our people. By Allah's favor, things will move forward in the best way possible. By Allah's favor and grace, the people of Iran will achieve victory over their enemies whether on the nuclear issue or on different other issues.

I hope that Allah the Exalted bestows success on all of you so that you can carry out your responsibilities wherever you are - whether in the Air Force, in the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, in the Armed Forces in general or among the masses of the people. I hope that, God willing, all of us can carry out our responsibilities and build a desirable future for the country, the Islamic Republic and our dear people.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings