Ayatollah Khamenei meeting with Italy's Prime Minister Matteo Renzi - 13 /Apr/ 2016

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with Mr. Matteo Renzi, the Prime Minister of Italy, on Tuesday, referred to good relations between the two countries in the past and welcomed further enhancement of bilateral cooperation. Ayatollah Khamenei added that the main problem and the most important weakness with the recent travels by European delegations to Iran was lack of tangible practical results after bilateral negotiations, noting: "Our view to cooperation with Italy and your government is a different and positive one, and we hope that this visit would serve to bolster this view."

Ayatollah Khamenei described Italy's behavior during years of imposed sanctions against Iran as more logical than certain Western governments, saying: "The Islamic Republic [of Iran] welcomes development of relations with Europe in different fields, particularly with regard to economic cooperation."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also stated that the important issue with respect to visits paid to Iran by foreign officials and negotiations with them was the implementation of agreements that are concluded, adding: "Some European governments and companies have been visiting Iran and have been in talks [with Iran], but the product of these negotiations has not been tangible yet.

"Some shift the blame for this issue onto the Americans, which such an assessment seems acceptable given their (Americans') track records and behavior, because even now they are not fulfilling the obligations [they undertook] through the nuclear talks [with Iran] as they should, and are intimidating other parties into not cooperating with Iran with their remarks and actions," noted the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's first European visit to Italy in January, saying that Iran holds a positive and optimistic view of Italy. Ayatollah Khamenei added: "Of course, we do not have this positive view with regard to certain European countries, because they only look at America to act as it dictates to them."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the fight on terrorism as another ground for cooperation between the two countries, saying: "A number of European countries used to support certain violent terrorist groups for a long time, and today, the dangerous and overarching wave of terrorism has reached Europe as well."

Ayatollah Khamenei cited the United States' financial and arms support for terrorist groups as an obstacle to the resolution of the problem of terrorism, adding: "There is authentic and accurate information about America's assistance to Daesh and certain other terrorist groups, and even now that they have formed a [so-called] anti-Daesh coalition, certain American organs are helping Daesh in a different way."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution reaffirmed the Italian prime minister's remarks about "cultural fight on terrorism along with military and financial fight," noting: "Huge propaganda machines in the world, which are dominated by Western politicians, are spreading Islamophobia under the pretext of [countering] actions taken by a bunch of wicked and terrorist [elements], and political conspiracies behind the scenes make the job difficult in cultural campaign [against terrorism]."

During the meeting, which was also attended by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Mr. Matteo Renzi, the Italian prime minister said: "In today's meetings, we talked about important issues, particularly economic issues, and we

have to reform and strengthen economic and financial mechanisms."

"Italy is fully determined to respect agreements [signed with Iran] and on this basis, we believe that following the nuclear agreement the sanctions against Iran must be lifted, and we are not worried and are determined to act on the basis of our promise," Renzi said.

Renzi went on to highlight the spillover of terrorism to Europe, saying that the only way to counter this phenomenon is to uproot terrorist organizations through military means and to cut off their financial resources through selling oil and antiquities. He added: "Eradication of Daesh is a priority for us and we are happy that we share views with Iran in this regard."

The Italian prime minister expressed regret over attempts, which aim to tarnish the image of Islam under the pretext of terrorism, saying: "Today, when a terrorist act is committed in Europe, some officials condemn Islam instead of condemning terrorism, and for instance, America's presidential hopeful claims in his election campaign that Islam is to blame for the issue of terrorism!"

Mr. Renzi described cultural work as another part of the fight against terrorism, adding: "We have to show that [divine] religions are after peace, dialogue and peaceful coexistence among human beings, and His Excellency's authority and role as the top leader of the Muslim world is of very high significance in promoting this view."