The Leader In a Meeting with Hundreds of People from Isfahan - 19 /Sep/ 2022

This morning (Saturday), in a meeting with hundreds of people from Isfahan, Ayatollah Khamenei described Isfahan as a city of science, faith, art, and Jihad. He said the nation's main challenge today is progress and advancement versus "inertia, decline, and reaction."He added that arrogant powers, who are fundamentally opposed to the Iranian people, have intensified their anti-Iranian campaign. They have mobilized all the means at their disposal to make people, especially the youth, despair as though the country had reached a dead-end. Today, the primary index proving someone's love for Iran is "avoidance of saying or doing anything that creates feelings of hopelessness and discouragement" and "fostering a spirit of hard work and keeping up hope."

Stressing government officials' efforts to overcome economic problems, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that "the chief ringleaders of recent disturbances, having failed at drawing people into the streets, now seek to exhaust state officials by continuing their evil deeds. However, disturbances will be brought to an end, and people, who are increasingly disgusted with them, will keep on working and going forward with greater strength and a renewed spirit.

In his speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution analyzed why the world of arrogance had problems with Islamic Iran. He stated that their main concern with the Islamic Republic is that if this system of government advances and draws attention to itself, liberal democracy, which the West propagates as a model, will lose its attraction.

Referring to the West's domination of some countries using liberal democracy as a paradigm, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that "during the last three centuries, in the absence of freedom and democracy, the West had plundered the wealth of other countries. Hence Europe, which was poor, became wealthy at the expense of impoverishing many rich nations.

Referring to West's technique of undermining freedom and democracy under the guise of promoting freedom and democracy, he cited Afghanistan as a good example because it was close to Iran. He said Americans had attacked it, arguing that the government there was undemocratic. Then, after twenty years of loot and plunder, the same government they had deposed returned to power, and they had to leave in humiliation.

The Leader of the Revolution stated that "Now a political system built on religion and true democracy in Iran has given identity to its people and has brought them back to life. In doing so, it has proven Western liberal democracy invalid."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that "driven by Western propaganda, some people within Iran have declared that there is no freedom and democracy to be found in an Islamic political system when airing that very view is a sign that freedom exists and the election of governments to office, which is not politically alike, points to people's right to choose and the popular nature of the Islamic political system."

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that if the Islamic Republic had backed down when faced with pressure from America and other arrogant powers and if it had yielded when bullied by them, then harassment and intimidation would have eased. But he said that they would have taken over the country if that were the case. He went on to add that "in the years past, whenever the Islamic Republic has been stronger, the enemy has intensified its efforts against the Islamic system."

His Excellency Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that the main challenge facing us today is that of "progress versus inertia, decline, and reaction." Because we are progressing, arrogant powers are concerned, uneasy, and fuming about Islamic Iran's development. He added that for this very reason, Americans and Europeans had entered the fray with whatever strength they could muster. But, as in the past, they cannot do a damn thing, not now nor in future.

Referring to the fact that in the faithful confrontation between Iran and arrogant powers, the Americans are at the forefront while the Europeans support them from behind, Ayatollah Khamenei said that "in the years since the Islamic Revolution, all US presidents, including Carter, Clinton, and Obama from the Democratic Party and Reagan, Bush, and that crackpot [Trump] from the Republican Party as well as the incumbent president, who has lost his senses but claims that he wants to save the Iranian people, have opposed the Islamic Republic. In doing so, they have sought help from any quarter they can, including the Zionist regime, which acts as their rabid but obedient dog, plus some other regional countries."

Ayatollah Khamenei added that "despite their best efforts, the enemies of our people have, on the whole, got nowhere. Of course, they have caused problems such as sanctions, the assassination of nuclear scientists, using all kinds of political and security tactics, and bribing some in Iran to speak against the Islamic Republic. But they have been unable to stop the Iranian people in their tracks."

He stressed that "under the present circumstance when we are faced with battles and challenges, it is the responsibility of the Iranian people, government officials, intellectuals, elites as well as the scientific community in universities and religious seminaries to work towards the development of the country in the fields of science, arts, economics, politics, ethics, and spirituality."

Stating that advancements lay the foundations for the resilience and strength of the political system, the Leader of the Revolution stated that "the goal of the enemy is to weaken the pillars of the strength of the system. Therefore, we all have to pursue the question of development with all seriousness."

Ayatollah Khamenei then posed the question, "How can we advance?" He responded by saying that "advancement requires multiple means, but the most significant of all is hope which is why the enemy has concentrated its efforts on instilling despair in public minds and the belief that the country is at a dead-end.

Referring to the enemy's plentiful access to mass media such as satellite networks, cyberspace, and television channels which bid their command to kill hope, the Leader of the Revolution said, "despite all their efforts, fortunately, hope and growth are well and alive in the country."

Ayatollah Khamenei added that we have economic problems which will be solved, but in other sectors, we are making progress. Of course, all their efforts aim to keep the young generation ignorant of the progress made. That is why the enemy and their fifth column cover up our advancements or minimize their significance.

He pointed out some examples of the progress made in recent weeks. He said, "Iranian scientists have invented new ways to treat blood cancer and mastered the technique to build some oil and gas extraction equipment. Other examples he referred to were the inauguration of railroads in the Province of Sistan and Baluchistan, which constitutes a segment of the north-south railways, and several industrial plants as well as the first oil refinery overseas. He also referred to the inauguration of six power plants and the commissioning of one of the world's largest observatories, plus a new satellite-carrying rocket and a new missile, as other examples of the country's progress. All this was achieved when the enemy tried to use riots to slow down this trend. The Leader of the Revolution stressed that Iranian youth are active and motivated on the very days that the enemy is up to villainy. One of the signs of one's love for Iran is creating hope. Therefore, those who kill hope and preach that the country has hit a dead-end are the enemies of Iran and cannot lay claim to loving their country."

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined the need for the people not to allow those who are the enemy of Iran to sow despair in the guise of defending national interests. He encouraged all writers, poets, scientists, and influential social figures to show others the signs of hope and development in society.

In another part of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the primary goal of the ringleaders of recent riots was to mobilize people against the government. He added that now that they have failed, they are trying to exhaust state officials by committing villainy acts. Obviously, they are mistaken because these evil acts only make people fed up with them, increasing public resentment and disgust for them.

He added that these criminal and destructive acts are a nuisance for business people and the public in general, but those behind these riots, whether openly or behind the scenes, are too weak to hurt the system.

The Leader of the Revolution emphasized that "without a doubt, the riots will be quelled, and the people of the country will participate in developing their country with renewed vigour and greater spirit."

Ayatollah Khamenei said it is in the nature of faithful people that they turn threats into opportunities and cited Prophet Mohammad's (SAWA) Battle of Trench and the Iran-Iraq War as cases in point. He reminded his audience that even though in the Battle of Trench, all pagan Arab tribes entered the fray, the believers did not waver. Instead, their faith grew stronger by remembering God's promise to them. They turned this threat into an opportunity, as did our people in the Iran-Iraq War when the whole world joined hands to support the aggressor [Iraq]. The Iranian people turned that threat into an opportunity, showing everyone that they could not be defeated. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added that "the Iranian people's record of creating opportunities made our enemies remember whenever they considered the use of military force that the Iranian people are invincible. The Iranian people have told their enemies, Americans or otherwise, that "you can start a war, but you will not be the one to end it." If you commit aggression, you will find yourself in a dilemma, facing inevitable defeat and destruction.

Referring to the epic of 16th November 1982 when the brave youth of Isfahan were dispatched to the front line full of passion and motivation as another example of turning threats into opportunities, he said that "in the recent riots, the people of Iran turned this so-called threat into an opportunity and showed its true self and orientation in the great march of 4th November, which was different from the marches held in the previous years, in which they chanted slogans against the US."

Referring to the funeral processions for those martyred in the recent riots, whether they were civilians, members of Basij, or the police force, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that "an unknown young man such as Ruhollah Ajamian was martyred. Contrary to the enemy's expectations, the masses turned up for his funeral to pay their respects, saying you martyred our youth, but every one of us will follow in their footsteps.

Another threat turned into an opportunity was that the true face of the ringleaders of the riots, who claimed to support the people of Iran, was exposed. He added that "hostility towards the desires of the nation and what they hold as sacred, that is to say, Islam, and setting fire to the Holy Quran and mosques, burning the national flag, disrespecting the national anthem, has exposed the true nature of the ringleaders."

The Leader of the Revolution added that "they claim to support the Iranian people, but the Iranian people are the 'people of Islam' and 'the people of the Holy Quran and Imam Hussein (a.s).'" The question is: "Are those who insult Imam Hussein (a.s), Arbaeen (the ceremonies held annually to commemorate the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s)), and the millions who march on that day Muslims?"

With respect to answering the question of how to deal with those involved in the riots, he stressed that it was necessary to differentiate between the ringleaders, those who were deceived, common criminals, and others who were paid to riot. He added that "They should not all be treated equally. Those who have cooperated with the enemy

unaware of its true intentions, that is to say, they were duped but did not commit any crimes, regardless of whether they were students or otherwise, should be admonished, preached to, and enlightened. They must be asked if their actions will contribute to the country's development or not. They should be made to think again and made alert so that they do not join hands with the enemy or, as our great Imam said, they should direct all their protests at the United States."

He said the sentence passed against the culprits behind recent crimes should match their offences. Those guilty of a crime, murder, destruction of property, threatening to set fire to businesses and vehicles, and those who have been made to do such things by propaganda should all be punished according to the severity of their offences. In this regard, he added that "punishments should be meted out by the judiciary, which is strong, upright, and well-motivated. No one has the right to take the law into their own hands, doing as they please."

Referring to Imam Ali's (a.s) description of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) as a physician who both cauterized wounds and applied ointments on them depending on the nature of the injury, he advised that punishment and preaching should each be used as the situation requires. He added, "Thank God, the enemy has so far been defeated, but they resort to all kinds of trickery and treachery. Though, defeated today, tomorrow they might go after other strata of society such as the working class people or women, despite the fact that they are more honourable than to yield to enemies and fall for their tricks."

Referring to such ploys as exaggeration and hyperbole in mass media opposed to Iran with the goal of influencing ignorant people, he said that "what has actually happened is that people have come out everywhere in support of the revolution and rejected the enemy."

In another speech, he called economic problems a fact of life, adding that "choosing economic slogans to name various years and pressing government officials to deal with these problems were because the importance of economic issues was understood. But the 2010s were not good years in terms of economic performance. If they had acted on my advice and done what was necessary, the country and its people would have been in a different situation today than they actually are. Needless to say, economic sanctions imposed on the country are also to blame."

Referring to the severe and sometimes effective efforts of the state officials to handle economic problems, the Leader of the Revolution said that "greater efforts by government officials and the synergy that results from cooperation between the state and the people will pave the way for the resolution of the problems. God willing, in this regard also, we will slap the enemy in the face."

At the beginning of his speech, the Leader of the Revolution stated that the people of Isfahan are genuinely worthy of praise. He added that Isfahan is a city with a wholly Iranian and Islamic identity, which has come to life with science, faith, art, and Jihad.

He called Isfahan a city which has raised many learnt people. Praising them, he said, "Isfahan is a city known for its love of the family of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), a city of invaluable historical legacy, and unrivalled in the richness of its pleasing Iranian artworks.

Discussing some signs of the depth of the revolutionary identity of the people of Isfahan, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Isfahan was the first city where the Shah's oppressive regime declared martial law."

Referring to the epical role of Imam Hussein (a.s) and Najaf Divisions during the war as two gallant military units from the Province of Isfahan, he stated that the people of this province had offered 24,000 martyrs, tens of thousands of maimed soldiers, thousands of POWs, and there are families in the province that have lost anywhere from 2 to 7 members for the sake of Islam, Revolution, and Iran. These sacrifices are a source of pride and signs of the revolutionary and jihadi spirit of the province. Guarding this great legacy is the responsibility of each and

everyone with a conscience.

Referring to the funeral ceremonies held for 360 martyrs on 16th November 1982 in Isfahan, he stated that "so many young people with bodies covered in blood could have saved a city from its pain and sorrow if they had not lost their lives. But on the same day that funerals were held, the people of this city, with a stronger spirit, motivation, and faith, sent more of their young men to the front. In addition, they shipped large amounts of goods to the war front in aid.

Ayatollah Khomeini stated that fighting sedition is another characteristic of people from Isfahan. He pointed out that, "In the last four decades, whenever necessary, the people of Isfahan have entered the field to defend Islam."

Referring to their complaints and grievances, despite their revolutionary and religious qualifications, he observed that "the question of providing water for the people of Isfahan is important, and state officials have put together plans to solve this issue. It is incumbent on them to work round the clock."

The Leader of the Revolution stated that the jihadi efforts and sacrifices made by people elsewhere in the country, plus those in Isfahan, have resulted in Iran's absolute and shining victory in sacred defence. He went on to say that "they do not know the truth about that unique test where the people of Iran, deprived of any outside help, stood up to the world and achieved victory when all the while Saddam Hussein's regime was receiving assistance from NATO countries, Warsaw Pact members, and European states.

At the beginning of this meeting, the representative of Ayatollah Khamenei in the Province of Isfahan, who is also the Friday prayer leader of the city, said that the people of Isfahan were at the forefront when it came to making sacrifices for the Revolution and in the provision of social services. Conversely, he said, the government of the Islamic Republic has provided extensive services to them in terms of building infrastructure such as roads and provision of water, electricity, and gas to cities and villages in the province. The people of Isfahan still do not have access to sufficient water, particularly for agricultural use. Still, we hope that through the efforts of the new government, this problem will be taken care of.