Commander-in-Chief in a meeting with hundreds of commanders and employees of the Air Force and Air Defence of the Military Forces of Iran - 8 /Feb/ 2023

On Wednesday, coinciding with the anniversary of the 19th of Bahman, 1357 (the 11th of February 1979) and the historic pledge of allegiance by a group of Homafaran officers to Imam Khomeini (r.a), hundreds of commanders and employees of the Air Force and Air Defence of the Military forces of Iran met with the Commander-in-Chief.

In this meeting, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, by honouring the faithful, revolutionary, dear, people-driven Military forces and the promoter of great and amazing works, called the incident of 19 Bahman 1357 a critical and wave-creating factor in the victory of the Islamic Revolution on 22nd of Bahman of that year. They were also proactive and encouraging in the 22nd of Bahman of the years after the revolution. By explaining the enemy's main goal to bring the Islamic Republic to its knees and destroy it by creating discord and mistrust, he emphasized: The most crucial task in the face of this evil plan is to maintain the strategy of unity, and by the grace of Allah, the 22nd of Bahman this year will be the manifestation of unity and national trust, And the people will clearly convey this message to all the ill-wishers that their efforts to create mistrust and destroy national unity have been foiled.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the 19th of Bahman incident as an effective and morale-boosting prelude to the 22nd of Bahman, signifying the greatness and dignity of the Iranian nation. He declared: the 22nd of Bahman is the peak of the proud movement of the Iranian nation and is a reminder of the most glorious day in the history of the Iranian nation because the people gained their dignity, greatness and power on this day.

He emphasized that the 22nd of Bahman should continue to be kept alive in the future, just as it has been so far. He added, "A living revolution is one that keeps its changes and formations alive and relevant in each era, recognizing the needs and dangers and addressing them accordingly."

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the failure or return of harsh and bitter dictatorships in major world revolutions, such as the French and Soviet revolutions, to be the neglect of the primary needs and dangers and preoccupation with personal issues and disputes. He noted: "The Islamic Revolution protected itself from these pests. Of course, we also had problems and efforts and diagnoses were not the same in different governments. Still, the general movement was towards the top, and there was both material and spiritual progress."

He referred to the initiative, progress, hard work, and strong logic of the Iranian nation in various fields and noted the prominent presence of the youth of the 2000s in this year's I'tikaf ceremony as an example of national growth. He said, "You saw how many ridiculous jokes they made about the 2000s generation, but in the statistics and reports of this year's I'tikaf, it was stated that a large number of participants for this ceremony were from the 2000s generation."

The Leader of the revolution considered the life and dynamism of the revolution dependent on paying attention to meeting the needs, and by focusing and emphasizing a basic and important need, namely "national unity", he said: The national unity played a very important role in the victory and progress of the revolution, and it is a strong and towering barrier against the enemy, and that today this unity must increase as much as possible.

He considered the enemy's clear plan and goal of undermining the Islamic system to be bringing the revolution to its

knees and said: Of course, they say the opposite, as about 15 years ago, the president of the United States wrote to me explicitly in a letter that we do not intend to change your system, but at the same time, we had reports that they were planning to destroy the Islamic Republic in their centres.

Ayatollah Khamenei stated the reason for the ill-wishers' efforts to destroy the Islamic Republic: The Islamic Republic has taken this important, strategic and beneficial region out of their hands, and in addition, it has raised the call for independence and against paying ransom not only as a political issue but also as a religious belief.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added: Some other countries may also desire a policy of independence from America, but this policy will be replaced by trade, dialogue, sitting at the negotiating table, and possibly bribing influential people as you can see its examples in the world but, the Islamic Republic does not believe in paying ransom or succumbing to outside interests due to its emphasis on faith and the Quran's emphasis on not trusting the arrogant, and cannot be bought or sold, and anyone who is willing to cross this boundary will lose the qualification to work in the Islamic Republic system.

After expressing the enemy's goal, which is bringing the Islamic Republic to its knees, and explaining the reason for the hostilities, he described their strategy for achieving this goal and said: Their strategy is to "create discord" so that any hope for the future will be lost.

Ayatollah Khamenei added: Creating pessimism among political groups, people's mistrust towards each other and towards the government, and creating pessimism between organizations are among the strategies to achieve the goals of Iran's ill-wishers.

He pointed out that there are some differences, but they should not be blown out of proportion. Once, they raise the issue of women, one time, the issue of Shia and Sunni, and another time the issue of generational difference.

The Leader of the revolution considered the most important tactic for spreading discord to be lying and spreading rumours and emphasized: When the enemy makes national unity the target of his attacks, we must not let them win in their evil desire by maintaining this unity.

Ayatollah Khamenei called this year's 22nd of Bahman a manifestation of national unity and said: By Allah's grace, this year's 22nd of Bahman is a manifestation of the presence, dignity, and trust of people in each other and in national unity.

He emphasized: My advice to our beloved people is to try to make this march and grand day a manifestation of national unity and trust and to convey this message clearly to the enemy that his attempt to destroy the national unity has been thwarted and they cannot separate the people from each other and the system and make the system pessimistic about the people or drag different groups of people to war with each other.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed that there is nothing wrong with differences of opinion and political differences and added: But these differences should not lead to clashes, slandering of each other, and against the enemy's strategy; we should all adopt the strategy of unity.

In another part of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei considered the incident of 19th Bahman, 1357 (the 11th of February 1979) as a compelling introduction to the victory of the revolution and said: The publication of the image of Homafaran's pledge of allegiance to the great Imam (r.a) on that day brought about a fundamental change in the situation because the only tool of the despicable and cruel Pahlavi regime to suppress the people was the army, but the people and the revolutionaries, seeing the army's alignment with the revolution, strengthened their morale and on the other hand, the heads of the regime and its American supporters suffered an important moral defeat.

He considered the most important message of 19th of Bahman 1357 to highlighting the composition of the future army of the revolution and said: The presence of Homafaran in the Alavi school, where thousands of people came every day to pledge allegiance to the Imam [Khomeini] (r.a), showed that the future army is driven by people, revolutionary, faithful, bound by order and risk-taking.

Ayatollah Khamenei added: The risk-taking of the youths in the military forces against the aggressors of that day, meaning the American regime and the Pahlavi agents, even in the condition that the fate of the revolution was still unknown, continued for many years after the revolution, and the Military firmly stood against all the aggressors.

They considered the image of the Imam [Khomeini] (r.a), on the 19th of Bahman as the image and manifestation of strength, honour, and unshakable faith, as strong as the Damavand peak, and at the same time with a kind and paternal look at the young men belonging to the military of the kingdom era and noted: The army stood by the people and remained revolutionary, which is an important issue because some people become revolutionaries but do not remain revolutionaries, but today, the Islamic Republic Military is far more revolutionary, more faithful and purer than the first days, and wherever it was necessary, it has played a role alongside the people with chivalry and selflessness and has stood up to defend the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei called the comparison of today's Military with the Military of the Pahlavi era as an indication of the power and ability of the revolution to accomplish great things, and by listing examples such as the disintegration of Reza Khan's ambitious and demanding army in a few hours, against the invasion of Shahrivar of 1320 (September of 1941), or the collaboration of Mohammad Reza's Military with American and British spies on 28th of Mordad, 1332 (19th of August, 1953) against the national government and the people, he said: At that time, the military was so obscure, tyrannical and dominated by foreigners that an army commander did not dare to speak in front of an American officer.

He called today's Military a symbol of independence and strength, and trusted and loved by the people and officials and added: Today, the military is with the people, alongside the people and among the people and even if in the past it didn't even have the right to touch a plane bought from the Americans, today, despite the sanctions, the Military itself is now capable of creating and innovating its own aircraft and undertakes fantastic, fabulous and honourable works for the people, the example of which was shown yesterday.

The Leader of the revolution considered the spiritual result of these efforts to be achieving the highest value, which is to be loved by Allah, and addressed the soldiers: Be proud, dear ones, that you are part of the Military of the Islamic Republic. Both the nation and the authorities appreciate the army, and you should also appreciate yourself by strengthening the strengths and eliminating the weaknesses of the organization.

At the end of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his sympathy with the people affected by the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey and asked for mercy from Allah for the deceased, and said: The authorities of our country have also helped to some degree with the help of Allah and will continue to do so.

At the beginning of this meeting, Amir, Brigadier General, pilot Vahedi, commander of the Air Force, gave a report on the promising productions and effective actions of this force in various scientific and knowledge-based sectors, equipment manufacturing, combat preparations, training, construction and relief.