New Year's speech at gathering of pilgrims and neighbours of Imam Reza's shrine (a.s) - 23 /Mar/ 2023

During a large gathering of pilgrims and local residents near the Holy Razavi Shrine on New Year's Day, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasised the importance of strengthening the country's strengths and addressing its weaknesses, calling for a transformative approach. The Leader also highlighted the opposition's anti-transformational objectives and emphasised the need for determination and self-confidence to turn economic weaknesses into strengths.

Referring to the supplication of the Iranian nation when heralding in the new year to transform their state into the best of states, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei said, "For any transformation, one must strive and persevere as well as seeking intercession from Allah."

The Leader of the Revolution mentioned that the public opinion's awareness of the main issues facing the nation sets the foundation for activating the educated and intelligent youth, adding, "Just like every other issue, it is necessary to discuss the issue of transformation with the people because if the public opinion does not welcome a thought and idea, that thought will not be implemented and will gradually be forgotten."

He said, demarcating the true concept of transformation from what the enemies refer to as transformation, "The enemies of the concept of transformation have anti-transformational desires and are completely opposed to the goals of the government which, unfortunately, some within [the country] – either following and imitating them or with ulterior motives – repeat the same words in different manners, including changing the constitution or the structure of the government."

He said that the main goal of the enemies behind using concepts such as 'structural transformation,' 'change,' and 'revolution' was to change the identity of the Islamic Republic, adding, "The enemy's goal is to eliminate the strengths of the nation and government and making the masses forget issues that remind the people of the Revolution and the pure revolutionary Islam, which includes the repetition of the Imam's name, mentioning the Imam's teachings, the issue of Wilayat al-Faqih, the 22nd of Bahman [11th of February] and the passionate turnout of the people in the elections."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei dubbed the transformation of the Islamic democratic system into an individualistic obedient government, or one that appears democratic yet is submissive to the West, as the ultimate goal of the seemingly transformational words of the arrogant forces and said, "In everything they do, they seek to dominate Iran politically and economically and plunder this nation."

After this demarcation, he listed the nation's strengths and weaknesses as a necessary prerequisite for transformation and said, "Traversing the tough path of transformation requires national self-confidence."

The Leader of the Revolution considered the Iranian nation to have self-confidence and said, referring to the nation's honour, desire for independence, and courage, "The second necessary element for traversing the path of transformation is vigilance."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei deemed negligence and a lack of focus on vigilance as the cause of possible damage to the strengths. He added, "Some of those who love the government and Revolution sometimes harm the government's strength with ignorance and carelessness for the sake of a positive and reforming movement, and we

must be careful of such neglect."

The Leader of the Revolution mentioned that a prerequisite to protecting the strengths was to identify them first, and after mentioning some of the strengths of the Iranian nation, he asked the youth to ponder upon and coordinate regarding these kinds of issues.

One of the nation's obvious strong points, in his eyes, is 'the strong and solid internal foundation of the Iranian nation,' and he said, "This internal strength and solidity is owed to the people's faith because even those who do not appear to be entirely adherent to the Islamic laws still have faith in Allah, the Qur'an and the rightly guided Imams."

Explaining the clear signs of the Iranian nation's internal strength, he referred to 'the victory of the nation over the decades-long chain of successive hostilities of the arrogant global powers,' saying, "Which nation and revolution has been able to resist for years against the successive blows of the most powerful countries in the world and not fall to its knees?"

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei mentioned that coups, sanctions, political pressure, unprecedented attacks from the media, conspiracies of security and unprecedented economic sanctions were some dimensions of the enemy's continuous plots and added, "In this recent round of hostilities, the leaders of America and some European countries openly supported the riots that were started by a very small percentage, and they attempted to at the very least weaken the Islamic Republic by providing all kinds of weapons and political, financial, security and media support, but on the ground, exactly the opposite of this goal occurred; the Islamic Republic emerged victorious over this global conspiracy and displayed its strength and solidity."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution considered the 22nd of Bahman 1401 [11th of February 2023] a manifestation of the solid internal foundation of the government, which was much more passionate and crowded than similar events over previous years, adding, "The great progress of the nation in various fields are other signs of this internal solidity."

He dubbed the progress during the era of economic blockade and the most severe pressures as the brilliant performance of the nation. He said, "Despite all their lies, the Americans admitted that their economic pressures on the Iranian nation were unprecedented throughout history."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the progress in science and technology and ranking amongst the top countries in fields such as nanotechnology and biotechnology, the improvement in the areas of health, aerospace, nuclear science, defence, infrastructure, and medical and health centres and other fields, saying, "The enemies' attempts to isolate Iran on a scale of foreign relations has failed, and by strengthening its relations with Asia, the Islamic Republic will continue to expand political, economic, scientific and technical relations with the important countries of this region from now on."

He added, "Other developments in the field of foreign relations include receiving membership in some significant regional agreements and strengthening relations with Africa and Latin America. Also, we are not at war with the Europeans and are ready to work with them if they stop following America."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei listed faith, a sense of national pride and relying on internal abilities amongst the factors and fields of the Iranian nation's progress. He said, "Other strengths of the government, including republicanism and Islamism, must be strengthened."

After listing the country's strengths, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei shed light on the weaknesses that require transformation and reform, saying, "The issue of the economy and economic policies are the main weaknesses, many of which are the legacy of those before the Revolution while some are also related to the era following the

Revolution."

He deemed the most critical issue and weakness of the nation's economy to be the governmental nature of the economy and the extreme entrepreneurialism that arose from the economic policies of the 80s and added, "As a result of this extremism, the people have abstained from great wealth-creating economic activities which have caused the problems we witness in the country today."

The Leader of the Revolution said that the aim of promulgating the general policies of Article 44 was to leave economic activities to the people and said, "The important sectors of the economy and production must be in the hands of the people. As I have said many times, state and quasi-state enterprises and companies, which some refer to by the undesirable term of Khosulati [a combination of two Persian words Khususi, or private, and Dawlati, or governmental], must not compete with private enterprises."

He called the failure to achieve economic justice by leaving the economy to the government as a sign of the errant nature of this method, emphasising, "The government must come short in their administration and interference in the economy and merely supervise the affairs by leaving the work to the people themselves. Of course, I have advised several cabinet administrations to do so. Still, it was either not handed over, or it was handed over incorrectly, which resulted in the loss of the people."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei mentioned that another of the flaws of the country's economy was its dependence on crude oil and said, "We must sever the cord between the economy and the export of crude oil and focus on non-oil activities to earn more; fortunately, positive measures have been taken in this field, according to reports."

The Leader of the Revolution referred to the economy's dependency on the US Dollar as another weakness, adding, "Some nations sanctioned by the West are in a better position after severing their dependency on the US Dollar and working in local currency, and we must do the same."

He mentioned the nation's weak economic growth in the 2010s as another weakness, stating, "During some years of the 2010s, the economic growth lied under 1%, and during the tenure of the current government, too, the rate of economic growth was quite low, while to improve the country's economy, we require rapid and continuous economic growth, the prerequisite of which is an increase in production with the help and guidance of the people."

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei called on the government officials and members of parliament to encourage and guide the people to play a productive role in the nation's economy and build trust for private sector investment and entrepreneurship, saying, "If the people's abilities are utilised in the economy and production increases, the general living conditions and inflation will undoubtedly improve and this year's slogan will be realised."

He considered the neglect of the ways the people could partake in economic issues as another weakness, and he advised officials, experts and those who were interested in the country's fate to find ways to help the people participate in the economy, mentioning "We have made progress wherever the people participated, like the Sacred Defence and political affairs; therefore, we will be victorious and successful in this field too by determining how active the people will be in the economy."

Other improvements that could be made that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed out included 'an increase in mobility in foreign trade,' 'strengthening the knowledge-based companies and enterprise activities,' 'transformation in legislation according to legislative policies,' and 'avoiding the mention of definite expenses for uncertain incomes in the annual budget.'

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei deemed it necessary to inform the people of the hybrid war and the enemy's

policies in this field, saying, "In a hybrid war, there is no military offensive; rather, foreign propagandists and their followers within attack the religious and political beliefs of the people through rumours so they can weaken the will of the nation and extinguish the flame of hope in the hearts of the youths, making them despair of the future, work and progress by displaying distorted realities."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added, "In a hybrid war, the enemies seek to spread conflict, create a division in the country, and strip the people of the true software of the nation's power, which is faith and religious and patriotic values."

Referring to the use of all kinds of tools and factors in a hybrid war, such as cultural, security and economic factors as well as infiltration to create despair and neglect in one's abilities, he added, "They are striving to make the people pessimistic towards our channels of information and separate the people from them by claiming you should not listen to the radio, television and the reports of the officials because it is not true, or don't listen to the words of the Leader because his words are repetitive."

Refuting the claims of the ill-wishers, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei mentioned, "For years, the enemy front has been announcing aloud that they seek to bring the Islamic Republic to its knees, while on the other hand, the Leader has been saying, 'You can't do a damned thing.' This isn't repetition; this is perseverance and standing by the words of truth according to the commands of Allah."

Praising the continuous presence of the people on the front line, he recalled the recent awakening and stand of the people against the recent riots and stressed, "The people slapped all those who provoked or supported the rioters in the riots, and by the power and will of Allah, the Iranian nation will continue to slap its enemies in the future too."

The Leader of the Islamic Republic added, "I firmly declare that the Iranian nation is powerful, progressive and capable of eliminating its shortfalls and creating transformation."

Highlighting the system's continued support for the resistance front, he denied the false claims of Iran's participation in the war in Ukraine, saying, "I categorically and unequivocally deny our presence in the war in Ukraine; such a thing is entirely not true. America started the war in Ukraine to expand NATO to the east. Now, while the people of Ukraine are trapped and suffering, America and its weapons factories are profiting the most from the war, and for this reason, they are hindering what is required to end the war."

After listing the main flaws in the country's economy that transformational activities must solve, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed out some weaknesses amongst the people and said, "Some of the flaws and problems that must be corrected in public behaviour include extravagance in the consumption of water, electricity, gas, bread, and gasoline, extreme luxury which occasionally turns into a competition of luxury and has caused an increase in expenses, including the cost of marriage, impartiality towards domestic production which is sometimes of better quality than foreign production – however, not using them will cause unemployment for Iranian workers – and not overlooking small differences of opinion, which includes political issues, and turning them into a cause for division in society."

Giving important advice, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution also called on all who can talk to the people and media owners – whether it is social media, the press or the IRIB – to create hope, saying, "The enemy is striving to make our youths lose hope, and we, on the other hand, must create hope with various promising affairs. Everyone should take this duty seriously."

Creating hope doesn't mean hiding the weaknesses and deceiving oneself, and addressing this; he added, "The weaknesses must also be mentioned, but promising issues and the bright future on the horizon must also be put on display before everyone's eyes."

Referring to the bewilderment of the Americans in the region, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei said, "The method and policy of the government in the region are clear, and we know what we are doing, but the Americans are confused and helpless because if they stay in the region, they will be faced with the increasing hatred of nations such as Afghanistan and will [ultimately] be forced to leave the region, and even if they leave, they will lose what they desire, and this bafflement is a sign of their clear weakness."

The Leader of the Revolution also thanked Allah for being able to meet the pious people of Mashhad and the esteemed pilgrims of the shrine of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (a.s) in person once again, and he extended his gratitude and appreciation to all the scientists, researchers, doctors, nurses, public volunteers, centres for sanitary supply and vaccination production and application and others who were active in curbing the public coronavirus pandemic in recent years.

At the start of the ceremony, Hujjat al-Islam Wal-Muslimeen Marvi, Astan-e Quds Razavi's custodian, mentioned the prerequisite to adhering to one's covenant with Imam al-Rida (a.s) was to observe the Razavi lifestyle and implement the Imam's teachings in his personal and social life. Speaking about the activities of this blessed shrine, he said, "Astan-e Quds Razavi has been taking measures such as promoting pilgrimage with an understanding [of the Imam's status], caring for the needy – including those in the suburbs of Mashhad – expanding the social programmes of Astan-e Quds, facilitating an ease of pilgrimage, honouring the pilgrims, specialisation and tending to the youth."