Leader of the Revolution Meets Thousands of Students from Across the Country - 12 /Mar/ 2025

This evening, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution met with thousands of students from across the country, activists from political, social, and cultural organisations and student-led jihadist groups. He gave important recommendations on critiquing and evaluating issues and strengthening student identity. He elaborated on two distinct experiences of Iranian youth in their encounter with the West, stating, "The first experience led to self-alienation. The second experience, however, which aligns with the current movement of the student body, recognised the realities of the West, strove for independence, and distanced themselves from the problems of Western civilisation. These have now become guiding principles."

Ayatollah Khamenei also deemed negotiations with the current U.S. administration as futile and as something that would further tighten the knot of sanctions. Referring to the U.S. government's claims to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons, he said, "We are not pursuing nuclear weapons; if we were, we would have produced them by now. However, we will respond decisively to any potential strike."

The Leader of the Revolution described the remarks by the representatives of student organisations as signs of progress, maturity, intellectual advancement, analysis, and perception, and considered this development as promising and uplifting.

He added, "Of course, I do not agree with everything the students expressed in this session. For example, one student claimed that security and military officials, in critical moments, have merely resorted to issuing statements against the Zionist regime. However, if we make a proper investigation and inquiry, it will become clear that this is untrue, and those who were supposed to act did so at the appropriate time."

Responding to one student's remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei added, "I continue to rely on the youth, and my hope rests solely in them. However, the essential condition is that young people remain steadfast in their correct positions, persevere in them, and not succumb to doubt, passivity, or deviation from the right path when faced with obstacles."

The Leader of the Revolution strongly advised officials from the Ministries of Science and Health to pay full attention to and actively follow up on the issues raised in the students' speeches.

Recalling the various events of the past year, he added, "Around this time last year, Martyrs Raisi, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Haniyeh, Safi al-Din, Sinwar, Deif, and several other prominent revolutionary figures were among us, but they are no longer here. Because of this, the enemy assumes that we have become weaker. However, I assure you with confidence that, although the loss of these dear brothers is a great hardship for us, we have grown stronger in many areas compared to last year, and in certain matters, we have not become weaker."

In explaining the reason for the continued strength of the Resistance Front, Ayatollah Khamenei added, "If two factors: ideals and effort, exist within a nation or an organisation, their overall movement will not be hindered."

In another part of his speech, citing Quranic verses, the Leader of the Revolution said that the purpose of fasting is to attain piety (taqwa). He said, "Taqwa protects someone from evil, temptations, negative thinking, malice, wickedness, corruption, hedonism, neglect of duty, and the abandonment of obligatory actions."

He described worldly ease and divine guidance as two significant effects of taqwa and added, "Taqwa brings relief

in this world across various domains, including economic and security matters."

Ayatollah Khamenei regarded receiving divine guidance as the highest aspiration for every human being. He said, "Attaining success, happiness, and salvation are only possible under the guidance of the Almighty God, and this guidance is one of the fruits of taqwa."

The Leader of the Revolution emphasised that individual determination and willpower are essential for attaining taqwa, saying, "The late Imam recommended that to walk the path of taqwa, one must make a firm and resolute decision like a true man."

In the main part of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei elaborated on the identity of Iranian students, discussing two distinct experiences of Iranian youth in modern times when confronting the West and Western civilisation. He said, "The first encounter resulted in infatuation and self-alienation, while the second led to an understanding of Western civilisation, a selective approach to its realities, a sense of independence, and, in some cases, a profound sense of distinction and complete separation."

He depicted the first encounter of Iranian youth with the West, approximately a hundred years ago, as causing a perceived dichotomy of "a progressive West versus a weak and backward Iran" in their minds. He said, "This dichotomy was indeed a reality at that time, but it did not have to lead to defeatism and the blind following of the West. Observing the strengths of the opposite side should have inspired someone to seek solutions and address their weaknesses rather than prescribing submission and imitation."

The Leader of the Revolution described passivity in the face of Western advancements as causing the Iranian nation and country to neglect their strengths. He said, "That experience could have led to self-discovery, but unfortunately, it resulted in self-alienation. Moreover, some individuals within the country intensified this self-alienation and surrender, encouraging the people to imitate Western appearances completely. Ironically, they did not do so in areas such as science and diligence, which are the foundations of Western progress, but rather in moral and cultural matters."

He described Reza Khan as the epitome of destructive and ruinous Westernization. He said, "The British brought that bully to power, and when their interests required it, they removed him. However, during his rule, the circle of deviation he established ingrained the idea that submission and assimilation into the West were necessary in all matters and affairs of the country into the public mind. This hollowed out the country from within, leaving nothing truly national for Iranians; not a national economy, not an independent domestic or foreign policy, and not even traditional national dress."

The Leader of the Revolution described the second experience of the Western presence in Iran as stemming from bitter events such as the occupation of parts of the country by the British and Tsarist Russia, famine that claimed the lives of thousands, the suppression of internal movements, and the imposition of humiliating agreements like the D'Arcy Oil Contract during Reza Khan's rule. He said, "These events exposed the true nature of the West to the people, especially the youth, revealing that behind their polished appearance and smiles lay a malicious and treacherous core. This realisation led to a decline in enthusiasm and infatuation with Western civilisation in the country."

He said that the Oil Nationalization Movement was a historic turning point in exposing the true nature of the West and stated, "While Mosaddeq relied on and placed his hopes in the United States to counter Britain, he was ultimately betrayed by the same United States. The coup against his government was orchestrated with American money and resources."

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasised that the result of the August 19, 1953 (28 Mordad 1332) coup was the realisation

that reliance on the West is an obstacle to progress, not a catalyst for it. He added, "It also became clear that Western powers ruthlessly oppose anything that threatens their interests and excessive avarice."

The Leader of the Revolution regarded the beginning of student resistance against the United States, such as the December 7, 1953 (16 Azar 1332) uprising by Tehran University students against Nixon's visit, which led to the killing of three students by the regime, as a consequence of the exposure of true nature of the West.

He noted that although the trend of Western infatuation had weakened, it persisted until the victory of the Islamic Revolution. He added, "Had the Revolution not taken place in 1979 (1357), the country would have gone on a path where increasing foreign dependency would have stripped it of all its spiritual advantages and wealth."

He described the late Imam's great and unparalleled skill as his ability to connect and communicate with the entire nation rather than with just a particular class or party. He said, "The Imam (ra) awakened the people from heedlessness by reminding them of their capabilities and cultural and historical identity. He brought them into the arena by placing trust in the people and calling upon them to take responsibility. In response, the nation stood firm, did not succumb to intimidation, and ultimately dismantled the enemies' system of imposition and plunder."

Referring to the relentless efforts of global intimidators in their struggle and conspiracies against the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "They say, 'Us first,' meaning that the entire world must prioritise their interests over its own. This self-serving avarice is evident to everyone today. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands as the only nation that has firmly declared that it will never place the interests of others above its own."

He stated that the enemy's goal, particularly through modern communication methods, is to restore Western influence and dominance over Iran and revive the spirit of passivity, obedience, and dependence among Iranian university students that was prevalent before the Revolution. He said, "The way to confront this plan is to maintain a strong spirit, an example of which was evident in the students' remarks today. Moreover, despite the adversaries' efforts, significant progress has been made in religious, moral, and spiritual matters, and valuable intellectual figures, fluent in contemporary language, are articulating Islamic concepts."

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "Today's universities are more advanced and insightful than those before the Revolution and even those of twenty years ago. Contrary to certain propaganda, Iranian students and youth today, with greater resilience and a deeper understanding of issues, are ready to stand at the forefront of confronting the enemy."

The Leader of the Revolution reiterated his earlier recommendation on the importance of content production, including in social media, and said, "The role of the student, like that of the teacher, is to be a warning voice and a guiding light. They must make extra efforts in producing content and explaining issues."

In another part of his speech, he reiterated his recommendations to students from the previous year, again emphasising the importance of student organisations focusing on university affairs. He stated, "The young audience the university harbours is not hostile or antagonistic; they are ready to listen and accept. Therefore, student organisations are expected to influence the university environment with sound ideas and correct thinking."

In another recommendation, using reliable intellectual figures, Ayatollah Khamenei urged students to hold brainstorming sessions on key national issues related to the broader movement of the Revolution and society. He said, "In various matters, be careful not to become confused or doubtful due to the different analyses presented by the media. Overcome false narratives through proper research."

He attributed some of the criticisms and objections students had made of officials to a lack of awareness of the various dimensions regarding issues of concern. Referring to one such criticism concerning the timing of Operation True Promise 2, he stated, "Saying why the operation was not carried out at a specific time, and if it had been so,

certain incidents could have been prevented, is not a valid argument. The dedication and commitment of those responsible for these matters to the Revolution are no less than yours or mine, and they cannot be accused unfairly."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution continued, "They act based on careful calculations, and if you were in their position, you would have done the same. Therefore, instead of accusing others, consider the possibility that their decision-making is based on sound reasoning."

He outlined the framework for criticism, saying, "Criticism is not an issue, but it is different to accusation. Raising questions and citing ambiguities is acceptable, provided there is also an opportunity for a response. However, sometimes it is impossible to answer certain questions, and in such cases, even ambiguities should not be raised, nor should hypothetical assumptions be treated as established facts."

Ayatollah Khamenei identified "avoiding discord, not spreading despair, not creating polarization, not fostering distrust toward decision-makers, and not depicting issues as dead-end situations" as the essential principles of constructive criticism. He added, "Sometimes, issues are presented in a way that makes the listener feel there is no way forward. This is wrong, because it leads to public despair and must be strictly avoided."

In response to a criticism raised on social media questioning why the Leader expressed satisfaction with all the ministers receiving approval despite some not fully meeting the required standards and criteria, he emphasised that students should focus on the country's main issues rather than such matters. He said, "The approval of all ministers and the timely formation of a complete government, which enables effective governance, is a desirable development. If a minister does not receive approval, that ministry would remain without a minister for an extended period, which is far worse than approving an individual who may lack some criteria or whose performance and certain traits may not be entirely satisfactory."

In the final part of his speech, the Leader of the Revolution addressed several points regarding negotiations with the United States.

In his first point, he described the U.S. President's remarks about being ready for negotiations, for reaching an agreement, and sending a letter to Iran as attempts to deceive global public opinion. He said, "This letter has not yet reached me, but the U.S. is trying to spread the false notion that Iran, unlike them, is unwilling to negotiate or reach an agreement. However, the same person making these statements was the same one who tore up the results of our previous negotiations with the U.S. So how can we negotiate with him, knowing that he will not honour any agreements?"

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to a newspaper article stating, "The lack of trust between two parties in a state of conflict should not prevent negotiations." He rejected this notion as incorrect. He said, "This claim is false because if two negotiating parties do not trust the other side's commitment to the outcome, they will not engage in negotiations. In such a case, negotiations become meaningless and futile."

In his third point, he said, "From the very beginning, our goal in negotiations was to have the sanctions lifted. Fortunately, as sanctions drag on, they gradually become less effective."

The Leader of the Revolution added: "Some American officials also acknowledge that the prolongation of sanctions reduces their impact. Additionally, a sanctioned country eventually finds ways to circumvent them, and we, too, have discovered various methods to do so."

He attributed existing problems primarily to internal negligence rather than external pressure. He said, "If the economic situation is bad, it is not only because of sanctions; the failure to take certain necessary actions has played a role in causing the current state."

Ayatollah Khamenei also responded to statements by American officials who claimed that they would not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons. He said, "If we had intended to produce nuclear weapons, the U.S. would not have been able to stop us. The reason we do not have nuclear weapons and are not pursuing them is that for reasons we have previously explained, we ourselves, do not seek such weapons."

In another point, the Leader of the Revolution described America's threat of military action as unintelligent. He said, "Threatening to strike and start a war is not one-sided. Iran is capable of delivering a counterstrike and will certainly do so."

He added, "If the U.S. and its agents make a wrong move, they themselves will suffer a greater blow. Of course, we are not seeking war, as war is not good. However, we will respond decisively if anyone takes action against us."

The Leader of the Revolution described the U.S. as being on a path of decline, stating, "Economically, in its foreign policy, in its domestic affairs, in its social issues, and other areas, the U.S. is declining and can no longer wield the same power it had twenty to thirty years ago."

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to those in the country who repeatedly ask why we don't sit at the negotiation table. He said, "Negotiating with this U.S. administration will not only fail to lift sanctions but will further tighten the knot of sanctions and increase the pressure. It will also create an opportunity for them to make new demands and impose more excessive expectations."

In the final point of his speech, he described the Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance as stronger and more determined than ever. He said, "Iranian officials, including the government and the President, unanimously agree that we must fully support the Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance. God willing, the Iranian nation will continue to be the standard bearer of the Resistance against intimidation, just as it has in the past."

At the beginning of the meeting, six representatives from student organisations across the country expressed their views on key student and national issues. They included:

Mojtaba Mangali – Office for Strengthening Unity (Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat)

Mohammad Asadian – Islamic Association of Azad University Students

Mahdi Bazmeh – Student Basij Organization (Basij-e Daneshjuyi)

Mohammadreza Marimi – Justice-Seeking Movement (Jonbesh-e Edalatkhah)

Abulfazl Mohammadi – Islamic Student Community (Jame'eh-ye Eslami-ye Daneshjuyan)

Reyhaneh Hasanqorban – Student Jihadi Groups

Each of them presented their perspectives on significant student and national issues.

Among the key points and proposals presented by the representatives of student organisations in today's meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution were:

National political unity across different factions and perspectives is necessary under the system's general policies and vision of a "Strong Iran."

The need to avoid repeating the past mistake of making national issues dependent upon negotiations with the U.S.

Prioritising the underprivileged and workers in the government's economic and livelihood policies.

Providing trust-building responses to address societal divisions and dichotomies.

Criticism of the spread of despair and powerlessness in universities.

Objections to rising tuition fees in the medical sciences at Islamic Azad University.

The need for genuine privatisation and for the government to avoid competing with the private sector.

Ensuring the Judiciary prevents the politicisation of legal cases.

Facilitating the activities of student jihadi groups as a key driver of student solidarity in serving the underprivileged.

Easing the legal framework for public participation in political and economic affairs.

Encouraging political factions to transform to allow for the emergence of new ideas in governance.

Emphasising efficiency and productivity in utilising the country's resources.