Leader's Statements at the Tehran Friday Prayers - 21 /Oct/ 2005

August 19, 2005

What follows is an excerpt from the two sermons delivered by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei at the Tehran Friday prayers on Rajab 13, 1426 (August 19, 2005). The day marked the birth anniversary of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali-ibn-Abitaleb (peace and greetings be upon him).

First Sermon

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Whom we praise, from Whom we seek help and in Whom we trust, and peace and greetings be upon our Master and Prophet, Ab-al-Qassem Al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his immaculate and infallible household, especially what remains with Allah on earth.

First, I would like to advise all the dear brothers and sisters and also myself to observe piety and virtue and to be watchful of ourselves in our words, deeds, thoughts and intentions.

The holy month of Rajab is the month of refreshing and revitalizing the souls. It is the month of supplication, remembrance of the Almighty, self-amelioration, repentance and return to the right path and removal of moral stains and blemishes from the hearts.

The prayers and supplications of this month are all aimed at purifying the hearts and refreshing the souls. The holy month of Rajab provides us with a favorable opportunity to free ourselves from faults, sins and moral blemishes.

Today, which is the 13th of Rajab, marks the auspicious birth anniversary of the Commander of the Faithful and Master of the Pious, Imam Ali-ibn-Abitaleb (peace and greetings be upon him). He is the peak of human dignity and an eternal model for the faithful and the virtuous and all upright and high-minded people in the world to follow at all times.

Piety is the eternal lesson that His Holiness Ali-ibn-Abitaleb (peace and greetings be upon him) taught to all human generations in words and in practice. Piety means constant watchfulness of one's words, deeds, thoughts and intentions.

Many of our faults and flaws are due to the lack of watchfulness. We commit many sins inadvertently and without prior intention just because of negligence. Therefore, if we heed our words and deeds, we can prevent many of our flaws and sins. If we remain careful of our thoughts and intentions, we will not be afflicted with jealousy, malevolence, spite, greed, covetousness and baseless fears.

Salvation is for those who are pious and watchful of themselves. Fairness and honesty also stems from watchfulness. The perseverance of human beings and nations, their pursuit of truth and justice and their progress and development also originate from this quality, which is the source of all virtues.

Thus, our worldly progress and welfare and also our salvation in the hereafter are all contingent on piety. This is the lesson taught to us by the Commander of the Faithful (peace and greetings be upon him).

Today, the Iranian nation and the great Muslim Ummah are in need of paying attention to this lesson. Of course we should always heed this lesson. But at the present juncture, it is more important to us than at any other time.

We are a Muslim nation. The Iranian nation through its strong will and determination managed to bring a system in conformity with its religious faith and belief to power in this country. What was the goal of our nation and what is the objective of this system?

The goal of our nation was to benefit from an Islamic system and all the blessings promised by Almighty Allah to faithful nations, and the objective of our Islamic system is to lay the foundations of an Islamic country.

An Islamic country is the one in which an enlivening, motivating and invigorating Islam with no reactionary or deviationist tendencies prevails. It is ruled by a religion which infuses human beings with valor and dignity and which guides them on the path to scientific and technological progress and development.

Islam, in the first century after its advent, helped a small community of Muslims to reach the peak of world civilization, so much so that Islamic knowledge and civilization shone and prevailed in the world. Scientific domination will be followed by political power and dignity, economic welfare and moral virtues, provided that the country is Islamic in its real sense.

In order for this goal to be accomplished, the Iranian nation first of all needed a revolutionary movement to topple the decadent and corrupted despotic regimes in this country. The Iranian nation did this with great power and success.

The second move was to establish an Islamic system in Iran in order to run the country in conformity with Islam. This was also done successfully by our nation. The constitution was drawn up and prepared the ground for religious democracy in this country.

Today, the Iranian officials from the Leader to the President and other officials are elected by the direct or indirect vote of the people. Today, religion forms the basis for the enactment and implementation of laws in the country, and the people are pursuing Islamic goals and ideals. This is the meaning of an Islamic system. This kind of system has been established in our county, but it is not enough.

In order for the goal of the Iranian nation, namely the creation of an Islamic country, to be fully realized, all government organs should act in a totally Islamic manner in all their functions. This is the stage which I described a few years ago as the formation of an Islamic government following the establishment of an Islamic system.

We have taken strides in this direction. Faithful and committed officials, including efficient ministers, devoted parliamentarians and dedicated presidents, have taken office one after another. But an Islamic government capable of fulfilling the noble objectives and ideals of the Iranian nation and their great revolution is the one in which there is no bribery, administrative corruption, enjoyment of undeserved privileges, waste of working time, disregard for the people, desire to make a fortune and live a luxurious life and no embezzlement of public funds.

If by divine grace and assistance, we manage to build on the measures that have already been taken and make greater strides in this direction, we will be able to create an Islamic country characterized by the above qualities. In other words, it is an Islamic government that will be able to lay the foundations of an Islamic country.

When an Islamic country is created, Islamic civilization will emerge and prosper, and Islamic culture will enlighten

the entire humanity. But this will happen only through piety and watchfulness both on the part of individuals and on the part of the whole Muslim community.

If the Muslim Ummah is characterized by piety, it will be able to tread difficult paths. Problems and difficulties will succumb to it, not the other way round.

The Commander of the Faithful (peace and greetings be upon him) stated: “If an individual” – and I would say if a nation – “treads the path of piety and is characterized by this quality, the hardships and afflictions of life will get away from him, even if they have approached him closely, and the bitter affairs of life distressing him will turn sweet, and the stormy waves of tribulations closing in on him will subside, and the problems of life worrying him will become easy, after they have become the most difficult."

Indeed, this is the case. Today, Muslim nations have nothing to say in the face of bullying and intimidation on the part of the world's arrogant powers. The reason is that they are neither scientifically advanced nor technologically developed. They are not dexterous in political affairs either.

Why we, Muslim nations, have lagged behind? The reason is that we have lost our piety. If we were pious, we would be able to overcome the hardships and afflictions of life.

You, the Iranian nation, observed piety in your revolution. You also observed piety in defending your country, revolution and religious and national principles. This is why today, by the favor of Allah, you are dignified and held in high regard in the world.

Today, the honor, dignity and power of the Iranian nation in the eyes of world public and governments and even its enemies are incomparable in the Islamic world. This is due to the piety of our nation. Also, whatever shortcoming we have is due to the lack of piety.

Determination, perseverance and resolution also stem from piety. One of the epithets of the Commander of the Faithful bestowed on him by the holy prophet (peace be upon him and his infallible household) was "the one who advances vigorously without retreating". This epithet did not relate only to the battlefield.

In all the spheres of life, the Commander of the Faithful was the one who advanced vigorously without retreating. This means that he always held a firm, logical and strong stance on principles and never backed off, and that he persevered in promoting values and firmly dealt with injustice, oppression, deviation, evil and wrongdoing.

If you study the life of the Commander of the Faithful, you will notice that he was characterized by this feature during his whole life. This is also the only remedy for our present condition.

The late Muhammad Iqbal, in a poem, says:

“Do you know what 'the one who advances vigorously' means?

It is one of the attributes of the Commander of the Faithful Ali.

For human communities in an unstable and capricious world,

Survival is not possible, unless they are characterized by this quality.”

Do you want to survive? Are you eager to be held in high regard? Do you wish to advance in science and technology? Do you want your youngsters to feel proud and dignified? Do you wish to have a bright future? Then,

you should be firm and perseverant and vigorously pursue your objectives.

Any nation that is characterized by this quality will have a bright future. Fortunately, the Iranian people began treading this path following the revolution, and they have since been continuing this path with strong resolve and determination. However, more vigorous efforts and perseverance are needed.

My dear youngsters! Today, it is your turn. The young people before you made every effort to help us reach the present stage. Now it is your turn. You should become characterized by piety, devotion and commitment, and you should enter the different areas of science, technology and politics and any other area in which you will be able to serve your country and nation.

I pray to Almighty Allah to bestow His grace and favor on our hearts, save us from the darkness of our ill thoughts and wrongdoings, help us become pious and virtuous in its real sense and confer the kind of honor and dignity on our nation that it deserves.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him." (112: 1-4)

Second Sermon

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon our Master and Prophet, Ab-al-Qassem Al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his immaculate and infallible household.

In the second sermon, I am going to talk about several issues. The first topic relates to the government and the new Cabinet. Thank God, the glorious and spectacular 9th presidential election in the Islamic Republic brought further honor and dignity to the country and increased the national strength of the Iranian people.

The meaningful move of the Iranian people at the present juncture had a strong effect on the whole world. The Iranian nation displayed its power, determination, firmness of purpose as well as political inclination and course of action to the world.

Today, by the favor of Allah, the new Cabinet is about to be formed. The Majlis deputies are entrusted with certain legal responsibilities. Also, the president has some legal duties to perform. Both sides should carry out their duties and exercise their rights. However, they are expected to do so in an atmosphere of cooperation and harmony, so that the new Cabinet will be formed as soon as possible.

After the new Cabinet is formed, legislative and executive government branches should continue to perform their duties in a cordial atmosphere characterized by cooperation and harmony. The Majlis is expected to perform its supervisory role in a friendly way. Supervision, which is among the duties of the Majlis, is beneficial to the executive.

The government is expected to make every effort to perform its duties in an optimal manner. The Majlis, for its

part, should pass necessary legislation so that the government may be able to fulfill its promises to the public and solve existing problems to the greatest possible extent during its term of office. Besides, the president and the Cabinet will, as always, benefit from my support.

However, I would like to advise the new president to avoid rashness and premature decisions in his government's performance. What is expected of the new government is to try to fulfill its promises and meet public expectations at a reasonable pace and based on prudence and tactfulness. Fortunately, there are bright prospects today before the eyes of the Iranian nation.

Elections in the Islamic Republic are held in their real sense. Even in many so-called democratic countries elections are influenced by capitalists and those possessing great wealth. It rarely happens in other parts of the world that a presidential candidate emerges from among the general public without being nominated or supported by any political groups or parties, that he is provided with an opportunity to talk to the people, and that they vote for him based on their right to choose. Fortunately, this has happened in our country.

It is true that the Iranian people are facing certain problems, and they expect the new government to solve those problems. However, I am sure the sensible and discerning Iranian people do not expect the new government to resolve existing problems and remove present shortcomings in a very short span of time.

Fortunately, the president enjoys vast power and authority. The country's budget is also at the president's disposal. It is hoped that a competent Cabinet will be formed, a Cabinet whose members are characterized by deep faith, strong motivation, piety and self-discipline.

Also, with due supervision on the part of the Majlis and other supervisory organs, with advanced and effective laws and also with the Judiciary prepared to firmly deal with violations, it is hoped that the new government will be able to fulfill its promises to the public to the extent that it is possible to do so during its term of office and also lay the foundations of the country's long-term projects.

The next point I would like to talk about is the issue of Iraq. We support the government of Iraq, which is a popular government. We also have cordial ties with the Iraqi people, who have always been our brothers.

The present Iraqi government, which has taken office as a result of the Iraqi people’s vote, is unprecedented in the history of Iraq. Never in the past did the Iraqi people bring a government to power based on their freedom of choice. The present government is the first popular government in Iraq.

The United States did not wish this to happen. However, the Iraqi nation and its progressive clergymen wished so, and the senior Ulema entered the scene and paved the way for the establishment of a popular government in their country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is desirous of the welfare of the Iraqi people and prosperity and security of Iraq. We are deeply upset by the present insecurity and daily massacres in that country. The killing of innocent people is a heinous crime, no matter who commits it. U.S. forces killing the Iraqi people with their machine guns and those planting bombs in public gatherings and killing men, women and children are both perpetrating atrocious crimes.

However, we believe that the main culprit with regard to the recent incidents in Iraq is the United States. The reason is that thousands of American military, intelligence and security forces are present all over Iraq, and the terrorists are under the eyes of U.S. forces.

Thus, if U.S. forces wanted to deal with and put an end to insecurity in that country, they would be able to do so.

Some believe – and there is certain evidence supporting their belief - that the present assassinations in Iraq are carried out by U.S. and Zionist intelligence services, since insecurity provides a pretext for the continued occupation of Iraq.

The popular government in Iraq is not what U.S. officials had wished for. They were hoping for a puppet regime in that country, but this did not happen because of the vigilance and perseverance of the Iraqi nation and its senior Ulema and political elites.

Today, U.S. officials are openly meddling with the drawing up of the Iraqi constitution, saying such-and-such a thing should be added to or such-and-such a thing should be omitted from the constitution draft, although the Iraqi constitution is none of their business.

However, it is quite clear that the United States has faced defeat in Iraq and failed to achieve its objectives in that country, despite all the expenses that it has incurred. Public hatred toward U.S. government has greatly increased in Iraq. Perhaps today there is nobody more hated than George W. Bush in that country.

Besides Iraq, the hated of U.S. government is also on the rise in the whole Islamic world and in other countries as well. Even in the United States itself American political elites are raising strong objections to U.S. administration for its military intervention in Iraq.

An opinion poll conducted in the United States last week indicated that the majority of American citizens are opposed to U.S. intervention in Iraq and its continued occupation of that country, as they have rightly realized that the occupation of Iraq has negative repercussions for them. The United States has faced defeat in Iraq.

Presently, in order to cover up their failure and defeat in Iraq and avoid the realities, U.S. officials are leveling baseless accusations against Iran and Syria, claiming that terrorists are entering Iraq through Iranian and Syrian borders. It is quite clear that these allegations are absurd and nonsensical, because terrorist groups are operating in Iraq under the eyes of U.S. forces. We have information that at some Iraqi borders, terrorists are transferred from place to place under the eyes of and perhaps with the help of U.S. forces.

Who in the world dos not know that some of the terrorist groups to whom the acts of terrorism in Iraq are attributed have been fostered and nourished by the United States and that a number of other terrorist groups are under U.S. influence? Who does not know that the United States is fomenting discord between the Shia and the Sunni in Iraq? Who is unable to guess that the United States wants insecurity in Iraq in order to continue its illegitimate occupation of that country? It is U.S. officials who are culpable and accountable for the present situation in Iraq.

Iran has a 1300-kilometer common border with Iraq, and we are carefully guarding this border. But even in carefully-guarded borders, illegal entries and exits are not impossible. The United States has not yet been able to seal its border with Mexico, and it is still facing frequent illegal entries and exits. Therefore, illegal crossing of the Iran-Iraq border is likely, but we are making every effort to prevent it. Iraq's security is our security. Iraq's progress and prosperity is a great achievement for us. This is what we want.

I hope the Iraqi nation will soon be relieved from the afflictions that it is currently suffering from, and Iraq, which is a country rich in natural resources, will attain a high level of progress and prosperity that it deserves.

The next point is the issue of Palestine. The Zionists' retreat from the Gaza Strip after some 38 years of keeping that region under occupation is a very important event. It is worthy of mention that the Zionist regime did not leave that region at will, but was forced to do so, and the retreat was a defeat for the Zionists.

Presently, the psychological pressure resulting from this defeat is shaking the foundations of the Zionist regime.

Some are insinuating that the Zionist regime's retreat was a result of negotiations. This is a very childish claim. Over the past seventy years of their occupation of Palestine, the Zionists have not pulled out of even a single square meter of occupied territories as a result of negotiations.

The retreat from the Gaza Strip was a result of the pressure exerted on the Zionist regime by the resistance of the Palestinian nation. Previously, the Zionist regime retreated from South Lebanon because of the resistance of the Lebanese people. Now it has been forced to pull out of the Gaza Strip on account of the resistance of the Palestinian nation.

The Palestinian people and Palestinian jihadi groups should not be deceived into believing that the Gaza Strip was liberated owing to negotiations. The fact of the matter is that negotiations have never resulted in the liberation of occupied territories and will never do so in the future either.

What liberated the Gaza Strip was the pressure exerted on the Zionist regime by the Palestinian nation's resistance. The Zionists were forced to retreat.

Another important point is that the issue of Palestine will not be solved through such pullouts. This is what the United States and the Zionist regime should bear in mind. The issue of Palestine will not be solved through the Zionist regime's retreating from a small part of the occupied territories.

Suppose someone occupies your house by force and then, after a while, decides to give you back a small room and appropriate the rest of your house!

The Zionists occupied Palestinian territories, and now they have been forced to retreat from a corner of those territories. Probably they now intend to appropriate the rest of the occupied territories! The issue of Palestine will not be solved in this manner.

There is only one solution to the issue of Palestine, the solution which we suggested a few years ago. This solution is to hold a referendum with the participation of all native Palestinians, including Muslims, Jews and Christians, the Palestinians who live both inside and outside the occupied territories. Any government that takes power as a result of this referendum and based on the Palestinian people's vote, whether it is a Muslim, Christian or Jewish government or a coalition government, will be an acceptable government, and it will resolve the issue of Palestine. Without this, the Palestinian issue would not be settled.

The last point that I am going to talk about is the nuclear issue. But before that I would like to expound on the negative propaganda campaign launched by Western countries, especially the United States, against the Islamic Republic with regard to the nuclear issue.

First of all, in their negative propaganda, Western countries are claiming that they are opposed to the pursuit of nuclear weapons by the Islamic Republic. They are making such claims as if the Islamic Republic were seeking to build nuclear weapons!

It was the United States that first made such claims against Iran, and later some European countries also began to echo U.S. claims. This is a propaganda trick, which is aimed at deceiving Western public opinion.

The officials of the Islamic Republic have often announced that Iran is by no means pursuing nuclear weapons. The uranium in our fuel cycle is enriched to between three and four percent. In order to build nuclear weapons and atomic bombs, uranium should be enriched to over ninety percent. This low-level enrichment of uranium in our fuel cycle shows that we are not seeking to build nuclear weapons.

What we intend to do is to obtain uranium from our mines and enrich it to between three and four percent with our own apparatus operated by our own young specialists in order to use it as fuel for our nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

We want to produce fuel for our nuclear power plant rather than import it from other countries. What Western countries are saying is that we should not produce nuclear fuel for our Bushehr power plant. They are saying that more nuclear power plants can be built in Iran, provided that we buy the needed nuclear fuel from those countries!

It is quite clear from what Western countries are saying that they intend to keep the Iranian nation dependent on the countries producing nuclear fuel, so that they may be able to use this dependence as a tool for imposing their demands on the Iranian nation and government. They want to keep the Iranian nation dependent so as to further their own interests.

We consider the nuclear issue to be of a scientific and economic nature. The progress we have already made in the field of nuclear technology is a great scientific achievement for our country. Our young scientists have displayed their great talent and potential and scientific capabilities in this area. This is of great value to our nation.

As far as the economic nature of the issue is concerned, generating electricity by using nuclear fuel is very economical. But Western countries are saying that we should use fossil fuel to generate electricity, despite the fact that fossil fuel resources are exhaustible and will soon be depleted.

We want some of our unrenewable resources to remain for the coming generations. We do not want our country to run out of oil over the next 20 or 25 years, in which case we will have to buy oil from the United States or its agents. We want to have a substitute for fossil fuel, and this substitute is nuclear energy.

Western countries are saying that we should continue using our oil resources until they are exhausted, and that even if we want to have nuclear power plants, we should buy their needed fuel from them. This is a coercive demand on the part of these Western countries, and it is the United States that is mostly behind this coercive demand.

We have not violated any international treaties or conventions or any bilateral or multilateral agreements. We have often said and once again repeat that the Iranian nation would not accept imposition, bullying and blackmail from any other country.

Our policy on the nuclear issue is characterized by moderation, logic, negotiation, understanding and confidence-building. However, confidence-building measures should be taken by both sides. The three European countries are calling on us to take such measures so that they can have confidence in us. We also want them to reciprocate and take similar measures in order to evoke the Islamic Republic's confidence.

The European countries should realize that the 19th-century colonial era is over, and they should change their arrogant tone of voice. Today, the Islamic Republic system relies on a seventy million-strong population. Today, the Iranian nation and government and Iranian officials feel as firm and as strong as a mountain.

We have no fear. We have always had enough power and capability to defend our rights, and we would not forego our rights. Nobody is entitled to compromise the rights of the Iranian nation. Fortunately, the issue of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is a national issue in our country, and all the political groups and factions in the Islamic Republic hold a similar stance on this issue.

Our recommendation to the European countries is to ponder more over the different aspects of the issue and try not to be influenced by the United States and Zionists. Europe had better listen to our recommendation, since the United States and Zionists are seeking to promote their own interests and would not care about the interests of Europe or

those of the Iranian nation.

The United States is a monopolist power. It wants the entire world under its hegemony and domination. The Europeans should refuse to submit to the United States.

We are pursuing scientific and economic objectives, which are in conformity with our national interests. This is what our nation wants. We are also maintaining a firm position on this issue.

In their negative propaganda against the Islamic Republic, Some European officials and their media are claiming that there is a world consensus against Iran. These claims, which are merely a propaganda trick, are false because there is no such consensus against our country. Even in Europe itself there are some countries that are opposed to the current bullying and extortion policy.

In fact, the only consensus that exists in the world is against nuclear weapons. Today, the main stockpiles of nuclear weapons are in the United States and some European countries, and the Zionist regime is the most dangerous regime possessing nuclear arms.

Indeed, the nations and governments of all countries that are aspiring to possess independent nuclear technology support our stance on this issue. There is no world consensus against Iran. Even if there were such a consensus, still the Iranian nation would not forego its right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In conclusion, Western countries should know that in a not too far future, by the favor of Allah, our nation and young scientists will also construct nuclear power plants in this country themselves.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings