On the occasion of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army Day - 20 /Apr/ 2015

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I welcome you, all my dear brethren and sisters, [and] everybody that is present here, especially the families of our dear martyrs, and I hope that, God willing, the great and valuable achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army during long years, have been always a cause of pride for this faithful and patient and hard-working organ. I also congratulate the Army Day to all esteemed attendants and to all members of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army and to their respectable families. And I commend and thank [you] for your gathering here today. I also thank you for this good ballad, which was different both in terms of poem and performance, and was very good.

Without a doubt, announcement of the “Army Day” was one of the most prominent and most useful measures and innovations of the Great Imam [Khomeini]. If we looked at the motivations that existed at that time across the country, and toward all aspects of the country, in the minds of the enemies of Iran and revolution, we would understand that announcement of a day as the Army Day was a great step; was a useful step; [and] a necessary and imperative step. Some of you young people don’t remember those days, [and] some of you were not even born at that time. There was a very powerful and dangerous motivation, even within the Army itself, to destroy the Iranian Army. They made efforts [to this end]; and offered logic and philosophy for this purpose. There were elements within the Army itself, who wanted to destroy and to annihilate the army under the pretext of [replacing it with] a religious army and monotheistic army. Such motivations existed. Imam stood up against these motivations. Imam recognized that the Army should remain with power and force, and play a role, and [he maintained that] those issues, which had been able in the era of the tyrant [former Shah of Iran] to detach the Army from people, should be done away with; and [he] did away with them. The army, stayed in all arenas as a revolutionary entity, and not only revolutionary in words and claims, but also revolutionary in deeds; [it] stayed in the middle of the arena and played its role.

There were also incidents [related to this issue] before the eight-year defense [against Iraq] that was imposed on us. However, during the eight-year defense, the entire truth was unveiled. In various fields to which I have frequently referred in this meeting and in other meetings, to memories of those days and what [happened] in the arenas of war and the battlefield, especially at the beginning of war in September 1980, and then in later years when I was the president and did not attend the battlefront, and on the basis of reports and [what was presented] in decision-making sessions, we witnessed what the army was doing. This day should be commemorated; this memory should be preserved and the meaning of 29th of [the Iranian calendar month of] Farvardin [April 18, the Army Day] should be correctly understood. The 29th of Farvardin signifies that the army belongs to Iran, to revolution, to people, and is at the service of people’s goals and at the service of the revolution’s goals. Just like what these dear youth of us sang in their ballad, the army stood by the revolution. This is the meaning of the 29th of Farvardin. This was among big steps and had lasting effects. [It] will continue to have more effects after this. And God willing, you young people are growing in this atmosphere, in this environment and with this orientation and, God willing, will be cause of pride for your country.

One of the characteristics of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army is revolutionary and religious insight. [Another characteristic] is abiding by religion and religious commitment. This is a very important issue. The meaning of religious commitment is that the Army is committed to all the norms that Islam has specified for the armed forces and for military activities. When armies of the world feel victorious in an arena, they enter that arena without bridle, do things that are shameful and examples of those things we have seen in various places. This is the time when they

feel victorious – that they do not show mercy to anybody. When they feel threatened, they do other things and take other measures, which are considered a crime by the divine Sharia [law] of Islam and are even crime from the viewpoint of international law. Of course, those with power neither show respect for international law, nor for human laws. They take advantage of prohibited weapons and target civilians [and] examples of such crimes have been frequently observed in those wars in which America has been directly or indirectly involved. This is the situation of the world armies.

The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the armed forces affiliated with the Islamic Republic abide by Islamic obligations. [They] neither get out of control in time of victory, nor take prohibited measures and use prohibited tools when they are in danger. For a long time, our cities – both border cities and later on, even Tehran and Isfahan and many other cities – were subject to brutal and blind aggression of Saddam's missiles. Various neighborhoods of this city of Tehran, were hit by Saddam's missiles; missiles that had been equipped and sold [to Saddam Hussein] by European countries [and] were guided by the Americans. The targets were shown to them. [Coordinates of] the targets were given to the enemy through aerial photos. These missiles came [and] hit our cities and routed defenseless people, civilian people; [and] ruined [their] houses. After a while, we were able to respond in kind. We were able to obtain missiles; [and] we were able to respond in kind. We could hit those cities that were in range of our missiles – including Baghdad itself. Imam [Khomeini] told us if we wanted to hit a nonmilitary spot – apart from garrisons and similar places – we should announce on radio beforehand that we wanted to hit a specific place, so that, people could leave. You see, such commitment is not usual in the world.

The armed forces of many countries – or as far as we know, almost all countries – do not have such commitment. You are observing an instance of this today in Yemen. A while ago, you saw it in Palestine, in Gaza, in Lebanon. [You have also] observed this in other places. They don't care about such concerns. However, armed forces that are committed to Islamic laws, observe these concerns. If we said – and we have frequently said – that we do not use nuclear weapons, it is for the sake of these concerns. [It is] for the sake of this commitment to Islamic obedience and Islamic regulations and Islamic laws. This is one of the most prominent characteristics of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Today, our enemies accuse the Islamic Republic of interference in this and that [country], which is not true. There is no such thing. We interfere in nowhere. Of course, if we are exposed to aggression, we will defend ourselves, [and] defend with all our might. But we don't interfere. We abhor those people and agents that attack defenseless people, [attack] the civilians, kill children, kill women, [and] ruin houses. We declare our abhorrence [toward them] and declare our hatred. They have understood nothing about Islam, about human conscience. The characteristic of our armed forces is that they adhere to the fundaments of Islam and divine laws because the divine law applies to all circumstances – even in war or in peace. This is one of the characteristics of our armed forces. This is the reason why today, our army, our Revolutionary Guards, [and] our armed forces are so popular among people. People see that these [armed forces] think like them, act like them, have convictions similar to their own, [and] care about the same things that people care for. This [situation] strengthens the liaison between people and the armed forces. This is one characteristic [of the armed forces].

Another characteristic to which our armed forces should pay attention, and have fortunately paid attention and this is quite evident, is the issue of acting upon the holy [Quranic] verse [which says]: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into [the hearts of] the enemies of Allah and your enemies." This verse means you should not be taken by surprise. It means that if an enemy attacks you, you should not suffer losses as a result of shortage of equipment, shortage of arms and ammunition, [and] insufficient preparedness, because your loss is the nation's loss, your loss is Islam's loss. Therefore, as I said before, the progress that our armed forces have made in this field up to the present day, has been exemplary. That is, not only on country level, our country fortunately stands on an acceptable and prominent level in the world in terms of scientific and technological advances, but our army is also among progressive armies in terms of weaponry advances and military advances. The degree to which we have been able during past years to advance the country's equipment

and potentials, in this time interval, at this juncture, despite these pressures, these sanctions, [and in view of] this shortage of resources, has been an extraordinary achievement; really extraordinary.

Fortunately, the armed forces have been able to take great steps in various sections, by themselves or in cooperation [with one another], or through planning, and by taking advantage of scientific and technological organs, and this process should continue. What I emphasize is that the country's breakthroughs in the fields of weaponry and in the fields of combat readiness must continue in a progressive manner; [though] our enemies don't want this. Today, this issue – the issue of missiles, the issue of drones, the issue of military equipment and these things that have come into being through the skill of our youth inside the country and without asking for this one's or that one's help – is one of the tools they use to mount propaganda pressure on the Islamic Republic. They don't want this to exist, they want to stop this. [However,] sound rational logic, which is backed by the [aforesaid] verse of Quran, tells us that we must continue on this path.

The opposite side threatens us with complete shamelessness; [and] is outrageously posing military threat to us. They were silent for a while, yet again, a few days ago, one of them opened his mouth and talked about the options on the table and the military option. Well, they brag about this, they utter this nonsense [and] then they say the Islamic Republic must strip itself of defense capability. Isn't what they say quite foolish? Even if they did not threaten us so explicitly, we had to think about it according to [the Quranic] order of "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war." Even if they did not threaten us, we must have been careful about this, must have increased this preparations. At present, they are openly threatening [us]. On the one hand, they threaten [us], on the other hand, they say 'you must not build missiles, must not do this, you must not do that'. They incessantly issue orders, which lack [logical] basis and are foolish, through their propaganda outlets or in international meetings. No, the Islamic Republic, firstly has proven that, and has shown that it will act quite powerfully and with its maximum strength in defending itself. The entire nation will come together like a strong fist and stand against the aggressor, against aggression, [and] against [any] irrational invader. In defense, our nation is totally consolidated and nothing else affects it. This is the first [point]. And the Islamic Republic keeps itself ready and maintains its readiness. This is the second point.

All organs in the Islamic Republic – from Defense Ministry to various organs of the Army and Revolutionary Guards and various other organs – should consider this as a directive and boost their preparedness day by day; both in terms of weapons and organization, and in terms of that factor which has the greatest influence on the armed forces, that is, spiritual readiness and morale. Fortunately in our country, our forces, our youth, [and] our valiant men, have no shortage in such things; [they] have no shortage. From the viewpoint of morale, fortunately, we feel no shortage. The same thing that was the goal of the revolution, the same thing that was the goal of the 29th of Farvardin, the same thing that was the goal of the Revolutionary Guards – all of which were created by the Great Imam [Khomeini] – has been realized: high morale and high preparedness. Even now, many young people, who have neither seen the revolution, nor the Imam, nor were there in the time of war, nor have any memory of those days and are currently young, from within the army, [they] send me messages through various means [saying] that they are ready for sacrifice. The pilot of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force sends his own message, the pilot of the Army's air division, sends his own message, [and] a person, who is affiliated with the Navy or the Army sends his own message; all of them are ready. Any army and any armed organization, which has this high morale will certainly move ahead in confrontations, in [all kinds of] tests, [and] in hardships. You should move ahead with this morale. Therefore, maintaining your insight, maintaining correct direction, necessary preparedness, [and] good morale [in addition to] daily boost in equipment and potentials and combat readiness must be one of the basic tasks of the armed forces.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is not a threat to any country. We have never been a threat to our neighbors let alone more remote places. Our contemporary history clearly shows this. Even at the time that some of our neighbors were at odds with us, [in a way] which was not becoming of neighborhood, we showed self-restraint. The Islamic Republic has never invaded any country and will never do [this in future]. Now, the Americans, and following them,

the Europeans and some of their proxies have come up with the fake tale of [Iran's] nuclear issue and nuclear weapons to say that the Islamic Republic is a source of threat. No, the source of threat is America itself. Today, the American regime is the greatest source of threat in the world, which without any bridle, [and] without any conscience-based or religious commitment, embarks on groundless interventions in any part [of the world] that it deems necessary, and embarks on interventions that sow insecurity [in other countries]. The United States has made the world insecure. In our region, the Zionist regime [of Israel], which is chained dog of America, is source of insecurity. These are [the main parties] that have made the world insecure.

The Islamic Republic of Iran does not make the world insecure, nor does it make the region insecure. [It] does not even make the environment of its neighbors insecure. Even in many instances, it has graciously put up with misconduct of some of its neighbors. Insecurity is stoked by unbridled powers that conquer all places. Today, these pitiful incidents are going on in Yemen and the Americans support the oppressor. Westerners support tyranny; they are the source of insecurity. It is them that make countries insecure, it is them that make the living environment insecure for humans; insecurity emanates from them. The Islamic Republic considers security as the greatest divine bounty both for itself and others, and stands firm to protect its security and to defend it. The officials of the armed forces must bear this [point] in mind at all times. Protecting the country’s security, protecting security of borders, protecting general security of people’s life; [these] are things [whose protection] in responsibility of officials that are active in this field.

I ask Almighty God to increase the achievements of the armed forces day by day and, God willing, help you young people play your role. The role is not just fighting. Getting prepared, facilitating progress, building one’s own personality as well as building organization and things like that are also among great deeds. Of course, if some day a conflict breaks out, being present at the warfront is also a form of preparation and a form of test and so forth. I hope, God willing, the Almighty will make you successful in all fields.

Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings.