The Leader’s Remarks in Meeting with Officials in Charge of Organizing Elections - 20 /Jan/ 2016

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

You are very welcome dear brethren and sisters! This sincere and warm gathering, which brings together people who work hard to do a very important job, is really a blessed gathering. I hope, God willing, the Almighty God, would look upon all of you, each and every one of you, with an eye of favor and mercy and include you in his confirmation and favor in this big job that has been assigned to you and [whose importance] was to some extent evident in these heartfelt remarks by Mr. [Ayatollah Ali] Jannati [secretary of the Guardian Council].

I congratulate [you] on the birth anniversary of Hadhrat [Imam Hassan] Askari (PBUH), the honorable father of our guardian and our [last] Imam, and our master and lord (May Our Souls Be Sacrificed for Him). I also felicitate (all of you) on the occasion of the beginning of [the Iranian calendar] month of Bahman; [which is] the month of honor, the month of a huge change in history of the Iranian nation, [and] the month of major incidents, which God willing, we would make ourselves ready to deserve to take pride and take honor in this month and what happened in it.

I will briefly discuss the [forthcoming] elections. Well, the remarks made by Mr. Jannati (May God Protect Him and Prolong His Existence and Blessings) and also by Mr. Rahmani Fazli, the esteemed and hardworking minister of interior, were good remarks, [and] all their remarks were accurate and important. I will also say a few words [in this regard and] – I have already said things [and] if I stay alive, there is be more time and I will say more – [and] I will also say a few words, if time allows, about this recent issue, the issue of JCPOA [Iran's nuclear deal with the P5+1 group] and this [nuclear] agreement.

As for elections, [we must] note that elections are a competition, [they are] a national competition among all people in the country; if this competition is held in a good and healthy and strong way, any team that would become winner among these different teams [that participate in the competition], the honor would belong to the [relevant] federation. It is [actually] like this. When sports teams play well, whether Team A, or Team B, or Team C wins [the match], the federation will take honor in their strong and healthy game. Elections are like this; if the Iranian nation, enters this arena well, strong, resolute and determined, and fills the ballot boxes with its vote and its resolve, [then the entire] Iran will take pride, [and] the Islamic Republic will take pride and feel honored; now who wins [and] who loses [is not important]. In fact, there is no winning and losing for the nation; [because] the nation is winner at any rate. This is a fundamental point with regard to elections.

Well, what is a healthy competition and a healthy match? A healthy competition is one in which everybody would play fair, [and] everybody would move in a good way. The first condition, as I said before, is participation [in the competition] by all [those who can take part]; everybody must come. I had also told this to everybody in my previous speech that those people who may even have a problem with the establishment of the Islamic Republic, they [certainly] do not have any problem with [establishment of] security in the country, [and] have no problem with the power of the country. Well, today, this [Islamic] establishment has maintained the security of the country, has sped up progress of the country, [and] has given dignity to this nation; these [are issues, which] cannot be denied, [and such people certainly] like these [measures]; [therefore,] they [must] enter this arena in order to give dignity to Iran and [every] Iranian, in order for the national security to persist, and in order to guarantee the progress, which thank God, has started since the beginning of the [Islamic] Revolution and has continued incessantly up to the present day; [such people] must enter the arena for these [reasons]. Everybody must enter [elections arena]. Of course, that person who enters the arena just for the sake of God's satisfaction and in accordance with his duty, in addition to these blessings, they will have another achievement, which is very great and that achievement is the divine content, [and I emphasis, they will have] the content of God. This is the first condition: everybody must enter [elections arena] and enter vibrantly; and let me tell you that they will [certainly] enter [this arena]. This nation that we have seen and [in view of] this awareness and insight that this nation has shown of itself, with Grace of God, with permission of God, [and] with God's assistance, our dear nation will, God willing, enter [elections arena].

Some people are lying in ambush to catch the establishment of the Islamic Republic red-handed through people's non-participation in elections or through boycott of elections [by people] or through undermining elections – which I will explain later -; [be careful that] some people are lying in ambush [for this purpose]. The [Iranian] nation has proven its efficiency in the face of these wicked ambushers, [and] will show [its efficiency again] today. This has been my first word and my most important remark in all elections, and is [also my most important remark] right now: public and vibrant participation of people [in elections]. The second issue, which ensures and guarantees wholesomeness of elections and wholesomeness of this competition is that people [would] take part [in elections] with insight, [and] with thought, and elect qualified people. [They must] elect those people who when they occupy that given post – regardless of what that post is; either the post of membership at the Assembly of Experts or at the Islamic Consultative Assembly or the presidency

– they would shield the country against problems, think of nothing but public services and expediencies and interests of people, do not sell [their] country to the enemy, [and] do not ignore the expediencies of the country in order to stand on ceremony with this or that [persons]; they must elect such a person. This will be a good election.

Yes, I have said [before] and say once more that those people who even do not accept the [Islamic] establishment, [must] come and take part in elections, [and] cast their votes, but not that they send into the Majlis [Iranian parliament] a person who does not accept the establishment. Nowhere in the world such a thing exists that [when] I said 'Sir., you who do not believe in the [Islamic] establishment, come [and vote]' they would say, 'all right, so allow me to vote for somebody who does not believe in the establishment'; this has no meaning.

Nowhere in the world at decision-making centers, that person who does not believe in the essence of the country's establishment is allowed [to occupy a state post]; in some places, they put aside such a person [on the basis of even]

a small slander. This very country of America, which introduces itself as the symbol of freedom and such things today and a bunch of simplistic people also accept and promote [this notion], in that time when a leftist current existed in the world – of course, these [currents] are not an issue anymore – they categorically rejected any person on ground of the slightest expression, which was indicative of a weak tendency toward, for example, socialist economic ideas.

[That person] was not a communist, did not believe in Communism, [and] did not [even] believe in socialism, but [if] he showed a small streak [of those ideas in his remarks], they rejected him; [this happened] right in this place, which now talks about freedom and talks about democracy and things like that, and objects to us that 'why you have the Guardian Council?' [What] shameless people [they are]! Therefore, that we be committed to see somebody go into the Majlis, who would confirm the establishment, the country's expediencies, [and] the basic values of the country, [and] bolster [and] pursue [them] is a public right. This [issue] is also effective in elections and in [ensuring] the wholesomeness of elections. There are other points as well: everybody must obey the law. I liked it very much that I saw [these] respectable gentlemen, both Mr. Jannati (May God Protect Him), and Mr. Rahmani Fazli, put emphasis on the issue of law abidance; this is my unwavering recommendation. I always emphasize [in my remarks] to officials involved in the issue of elections to 'put your feet on the firm ground'. That firm ground is the point of law; law [is very important]. You must observe the spirit of law. Legal institutions must not be insulted; pay attention to this [point]. A legal institution, which shoulders some duties, must not be made subject to libel or be insulted. A legal institution is a legal institution; not that they do not make any mistake; any legal institution, [is] like any person, [and is] like this humble one who is full of shortcomings and mistakes, [and therefore,] we may make a mistake, but this cannot be taken as a ground of us to insult a legal institution, [and] humiliate it [especially] in public, in [our] publicity, [and] in our remarks; no [this is not right, because] if this becomes a common trend, there would be chaos. Well, [if] this is your choice to show disrespect for that given legal institution, another person may have another choice, [and] shows disrespect for that legal institution to which you are affiliated; is this good? Don't open this door.

Do not disturb the public opinion [by saying] that 'mister, it is no clear what would happen, [or] we don't know what will happen'. This is a very wrong thing to do; I had also given notice [about this issue] before; let the people go toward elections in the way that is right, in the way that is real, with fervor, with enthusiasm, [and] vibrantly. Disturbing the public opinion is a very wrong thing to do; [nobody should] make people suspicious of elections. Election candidates must not insult one another; well, you are a candidate, [and] you believe you are a qualified person, [and] a prominent person; very well, appreciate yourself as much as you want, but do not insult your rival, do not slander your rival, [and] do not backbite your rival; slander and libel means to attribute [something to somebody] which is not true, [but] backbiting means to attribute something [to them] which is true; you must not [even] backbite [your rival]. Therefore, this is both a duty and a criterion for the wholesomeness of elections. [Majlis] representatives must go [to all places] and tell people everything that is in their capacity, in their power, [and] in their qualification; people will look [at what they say and] if they liked it, they would vote for them, [and] if they did not like it, they would not vote; [and] this will be a healthy election.

Don’t give impractical promises; some candidates, give people promises that they themselves know are not in their power. When you know you cannot fulfil this promise, why you give [that] promise to people? Why you raise people’s hope in something that you know would not happen? Sometimes they even give illegal promises! [For example, they] say ‘we will take that action’, while they know that action is against the law; [it is] either against the Constitution, or against ordinary law; do not give such promises; do not chant illegal slogans. People should be treated with honesty; all the nation is like this that they feel honesty, [and] understand [it]. When we treat [people] dishonestly, they may make a mistake for a short time and for a moment, but the truth will show itself later; people should be treated with honesty, [and] people should be talked to with honesty. This is among undeniable components of healthy elections.

Some people have developed a habit and keep repeating “radicals, radicals;” well, yes, both radicalism and conservatism – both excess and negligence – are undesirable, this is clear, but [if you asked] what is radicalism, what is conservatism, [and] what is the middle way, these are not very clear and transparent concepts, [and] are not among evident issues, [because] they need clarification. [I say this] because many reports are given to me; you also look at these different newspapers and the press, I understand that when some people say radicalism, they mean the pious and faithful current; no, do not accuse the faithful current, the revolutionary current, and the pious youths of radicalism; these are the same people who are present in the arena with everything they have, with all their devotion, [and] when it is necessary to defend [the country’s] borders, it is necessary to defend the national identity, [and when] the issue of laying down one’s life and shedding blood is concerned, it is these very people who enter the arena. Merely because at a certain place something happens, which cannot be accepted and supported, do not point [an incriminating finger] at the pious [youths] immediately; like the issue of [the attack on] the Saudi embassy, which of course, was a very bad measure, was a wrong step and anybody who has done it has done a wrong thing.

[It is not acceptable that] we undermine the faithful people, [and] the revolutionary youths, who are both revolutionary – because I am familiar with these young people to a large extent and from afar and up-close – and in many instances, their wisdom and understanding and thinking is much more [accurate] than many elders. They

understand well, analyze well, recognize [various] issues well, and are dead loyal to the revolution, [and] are dead loyal to Islam, [therefore, it is not right to undermine them] under the pretext that a given incident has happened at a given place, which has been a bad incident! Yes, not only the Saudi embassy, but in [the case of] the British embassy, which that incident took place a few years ago, I disapproved of it; such operations are not acceptable at all; these operations are very bad operations; [because they] are against the country and against Islam and against everybody; [however,] this must not be used as an excuse to attack our revolutionary youths. This is also another issue.

Therefore, elections, as Mr. Jannati correctly said, are a great blessing and a great opportunity; this great blessing needs thanksgiving, [and] thanksgiving [for elections] is that all of us, wherever we are, must try to hold it in an appropriate way, to hold healthy [election], and do not allow through our behaviors, our words, [and] some uncalculated remarks that one hears here and there, this great action, this great movement, [and] this great honor be tarnished and marred; we must pay attention to this; [because] this is a very big incident. You are the people involved in this big job; know this, yes, there are a lot of troubles, problems are aplenty, expectations are too many, [and] sometimes slanders are thrown at you – wherever you are; either in executive boards, or in supervisory boards, or at the Ministry of Interior or at the Guardian Council – all these [problems] do exist, but know that your reward with God is very high, because the job, is a big job. Since you are doing a big job, [if] God willing, your intention is a divine intention, and is to fulfil [your] Islamic and revolutionary duty, your reward with the Almighty God is great. Therefore, do not be daunted by the difficulty of this job and by the hardship of this path and do the job in the best possible manner. This [would suffice] about elections.

As for the issue of JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action]; well, this was an incident, [and was] a big and important incident as well; to tell the truth and fairly speaking, [the Iranian negotiators] made great effort, not that now all our demands have been met; no, but to the same degree that the demands of the Islamic Republic were met, this dear brethren – the esteemed foreign minister, the negotiating team, [and] the esteemed president himself – fairly speaking [they all] endeavored a lot; I saw that they were constantly working and were anxious and were moving and thinking and following up [on the negotiations] and sitting and [holding] protracted meetings, and were sleepless and the likes of these; God will, the Almighty God will reward all of them and their efforts will be appreciated by divine praise; this is reserved in its own place; however, there is a group that is trying to pretend that as if these achievements that have now, for example, been achieved, [it is because] America has done a favor to us, because it has for example removed these sanctions; this is not true. Some people want to take advantage of this opportunity to once again make up the evil face of the arrogance; this is very dangerous. What favor?

[Assume that] you have worked hard, have amassed money and built a house; a bully in your neighborhood comes and takes the key to the house from you, [and] for example, occupies half of the house, [and] puts you under

pressure; then through [a lot of] trouble, with [great] effort, with intellectual force, with physical force, with public force, [and] through publicity do something to make him get out of the house, but he still keeps two rooms for himself; is [the fact] that he has left the house, has decreased [the degree of] his usurpation, a cause for feeling obliged [to him]? Americans are like this. We advanced the nuclear energy through our own abilities, through the ideas of our scientists, through support of [our] various governments, gave four martyrs in this path, [and] took it to this point, is this a joke? We did something that the enemy, who once was not ready to see even one centrifuge spinning in this country, has now been forced due to the exiting realities to tolerate [the fact that] a few thousands of centrifuges exist [in Iran].

This is not a favor from them; this is [the result] of the effort of the Iranian nation, [and] the [result of] the effort of [Iranian] scientists. [They] imposed sanctions [on Iran] in order to make people angry and bring them into streets. I said this a few years ago; [at that time] some people said this was an analysis; yes, perhaps it was an analysis at that time, but today, it is news; they said it themselves; various persons among them have said in their different remarks that 'our goal is to make people angry with the Islamic Republic establishment, [and] with the government of the Islamic Republic'. They wanted to bring people into streets; [but] our people resisted; this resistance by the people, this steadfastness of the people turned into a backing for the political work and diplomacy and negotiation and such things.

The enemy was forced [to retreat]; [even] this amount that it retreated, was because the [Iranian] nation demonstrated its power; the government of the Islamic Republic demonstrated its power, [and] showed dignity. Of course, I personally believe that we could have done better than this; well, after all, the ability and opportunity and potentialities were sufficient for this extent [of success], but [even] this degree of progress, which was achieved, is a remarkable job, [and] is an important job and this is due to backing of the nation, due to national power, [and] due to strong connection [that exists] between the Islamic Republic establishment and all the people and the body politic [in Iran]. Let me say that [in the] nuclear issue and the dispute with the [global] arrogance – whose main [manifestation] is America and that great idol is America, with other Western governments that entered this field being marginal and peripheral idols – [their argument] with us in the nuclear issue was not simply the nuclear issue; otherwise, one can swear that these [arrogant powers] know that the Islamic Republic is not pursuing [to build] a nuclear bomb; one can take an oath on this; [therefore,] the [main] issue is another issue.

This [nuclear issue] is part of a general move to mount pressure on the Iranian nation, to stop the revolutionary movement of the Iranian nation toward its goals, [and] to stop expansion of daily increasing influence of the establishment of the Islamic Republic across the region and the world; this is a reality. Not that we are pursuing this issue; it is the nature of the job; [because] it is a new word, is attractive, [and] pure hearts and honest intentions like it, and this is why the influence of the Islamic Republic and credit of the Islamic Republic keeps expanding, [and in parallel] they [the enemies] become afraid. Their goal is to stop this [process]; their goal is to make nations believe that even the Islamic Republic of Iran was not able to establish a government on the basis of religion and keep it up and manage it; they want to show this and this is the goal; everybody must pay attention to this [point]; officials must

also pay attention, [and] all people must pay attention. America intends to have its way with [using] force and through false propaganda; its force and false propaganda must be resisted against. Now all officials – both state officials, and that supervisory board that I recommended – must be careful that the opposite side would not play tricks; because the [opposite] side is used to trickery, and is prone to use tricks. Therefore, its smile and the mask that it wears on its face cannot be trusted.

Let me tell you that the America under [former US president, Ronald] Reagan and the America under [former president, George W] Bush were no different from the America [that exists] today, [and] there is no discrepancy among them. Just in the same way that the America in the time of Reagan once deemed it necessary and bombarded our regions in the Persian Gulf out of grudge and anger, today, they will do the same [if] they could. America has not changed; the policies of America in the face of Islam and in the face of the Islamic Republic have been unchanging policies. Of course, their methods are different; one [president] follows this method, the other one follows that method, however, their goal is the same; everybody must pay attention to this [fact]. Therefore, they are used to trickery and play tricks. Be careful about their trickery; take care that whatever they are doing would conform to what they have promised in true sense of the world. [Iranian officials] must not ignore this trickery of the opposite side. And if they see any trickery from the [opposite] side, then in response, they must answer in kind; that is, if the [opposite] side breaches its promise, this side must also breach its promise, [and] must show resistance.

This move that our dear youths of the [Islamic Revolution] Guards Corps (IRGC) made at sea and showed their identity and power in the face of the enemy's trespassing – which up to now, I have had no opportunity to thank these [youths]; and I really thank these [young guards] – was a very correct move; the enemy trespassed on our waters, these [young revolutionary guards] went [there and] surrounded the enemy. Those people who are in charge of policy[making], must act like this in all global arenas; [they must] be watchful of the enemy's trespassing and see where it wants to trespass, where it is crossing the lines, and [then] stop it with power. Another point that I have frequently mentioned is this: now that sanctions have been lifted will the problem of the country's economy and people's livelihood and people's everyday life be solved through removal of sanctions? [The answer is] no, [because] management is needed, [and] planning is needed [to achieve this goal]. I, both in the time of this administration, and in the time of the previous administration, when part of important sanctions had just begun and another part was expected to get started at a later time, said that the country's economic problems may be 20 percent, 30 percent, or 40 percent related to sanctions, [but] the rest [of those problems] are related to our management; we must manage [the economy], we must act correctly and the [best] way to act is [implementation] of the Economy of Resistance. the Economy of Resistance has been endorsed by everybody, [and] confirmed by everybody, [and they have] made planning for it – fortunately, state-run bodies, [and] our friends in the administration have plans to follow up on it – [therefore,] they must follow up on it diligently and they must make the country resistant from an economic standpoint; otherwise, if we set our sights on foreigners' decision, [and] on foreigner's hand, we would get nowhere.

[They] have brought [the price] of our oil [down] to about one-fifth [of its past price] now. The oil, which is the main asset of our economy, unfortunately, [they have reduced its price] to about one-fifth of the [previous] price. Even that [past price of] $100 or $110 or $120 [per barrel] was not the real price of oil; the real price of all is higher than that – I have said this before – however, even the same [price] that was [the price of oil on global markets] [they] have reduced it to almost one-fourth or one-fifth. if one sets his sights on the enemy's hand, such things happen a lot. These are inevitable impulses against which one has no power; we must make our economy such [resistant] that it could stand fast against these impulses and would not be affected [by them]. Now that [foreign] delegations come and go, administration officials must be vigilant; it should not be like that signing contracts with foreign trade and industrial and economic delegation that come and go would damage domestic industry, domestic labor, [and] domestic agriculture. I have, of course, said this to esteemed officials in private meetings as well that they must be watchful. I mean, the country must stand on its own feet.

We are a powerful nation with a high number [of people] – we have a population of about 80 million; this is not a small population – there are tens of millions of educated youths in our country; we have capable and knowledgeable youths in all sectors and in all sections; [and in addition,] such is the situation of our underground resources, [and] such is the strange seasonal and climatic diversity of our country; all these are potentialities; [and] all these are opportunities. We must stand on our own feet, [and] must not rely on others. Well, the enemy is the enemy and its plots are to detriment of nations; it is like this in this region. You remember that a few years ago, Americans said [they wanted to create] "the new Middle East;" at that time, we did not understand correctly what they were going to do that they called it the new Middle East; now we understand what the new Middle East is: the Middle East of war, the Middle East of terrorist(s), the Middle East of prejudice and petrifaction [of thought], [and] the Middle East [where all countries are] occupied with one another; there is war in Syria, there is war in Iraq, there is war in Libya, terrorism has spread to all these countries, there is terrorism in Turkey, [and] there is terrorism in other places; this is the new Middle East [that Americans purported]; [and] this is what they were looking for. Yes, they deny this, but one can see, one can think, [and] one looks and sees. [They wanted to] wage war between Shia and Sunni, to arm domestic elements in countries and let them loose on nations and governments. This is that new Middle East of these [Americans]. [Look at this situation and] know the America.

Our country, thank God [and] due to the blessing of people's faith [in religion], people's revolutionary spirit and people's insight, has largely remained immune to encroachments and trespassing by sworn enemies of people. Yes, they have dealt blows [to us], [and] have done certain things, but [they have] not been able to deal a drastic blow and with God's assistance, they will not be able to deal a drastic blow [to our nation]. And with God's assistance, the

Iranian nation will, God willing, see the day when it will overcome all the arrogant [powers'] policies and when its wishes will come true, and the Iranian nation will, God willing, experience all those lofty goals and ideals of the Islamic Revolution. [However, to achieve this goal] our public effort is a necessity, our devoted effort is a necessity, our cooperation is a necessity, [and] our kindnesses toward one another are a necessity. [We must] stick together, get along with one another, work with one another, do not forget the goals, do not forget the lofty ideals, [and] step in all arenas with sincerity. God is with the Iranian nation and, God willing, victory belongs to the Iranian nation. [I pray that] God, God willing, would make all of you successful and achieving. May God resurrect our dear martyrs and our honorable Imam [Khomeini] with Prophet [of Islam] (PBUH).

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