The Leader’s remarks in meeting with Rahian-e Nour Officials - 6 /Mar/ 2017

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

(Arabic prayer)

You are very welcome, dear brethren, dear sisters, commanders, reminders of the Sacred Defense, combatants, lively youths, [and] examples of prominence of the Iranian nation, which Iranian nation must appreciate your value – both the value of those young people, who set foot on this path and made their hearts familiar with facts, and the value of those, who hold a long record and suffered bone-crushing difficulties on this path, have gone through [all] arenas, done great things, and [even] today continue to provide their services and most of them are awaiting martyrdom. [These people] are children of the nation and the nation knows their value; officials, [and] those in charge of the country’s affairs must [also] appreciate these [people] and appreciate these statements.
First of all, I thank the organ that is in charge and oversees the affairs of Rahian-e Nour [tours to former war zones,] and Major General [Mohammad] Baqeri [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces] noted that a group of managers and involved officials and activists and tour guides are present here; I thank all of you. This is a great task, is an important task, [and] is a very effective task.
One point is that we must not allow the memory of great days to slip into oblivion. Great days in any country and among any nation are those days in which a divine event has taken place there by the means of people and at the hands of people. [As the Quran tells Prophet Mohammad (PBUH):] “Remind them of the days of Allah.” The Almighty God orders the Prophet (PBUH) in the Quran to remind people of the “days of Allah.” The days of Allah are these very great historic days. Well, [every day during] the eight years of Sacred Defense [the Iraqi imposed war against Iran] – in one sense, if we take every day of it into account – [that day] is among these days of Allah. We must not allow these events to be forgotten. The Quran teaches us [in this regard]; [just look at] these remembrances, which have been mentioned in the Quran: “And mention in the Book [the story of] Abraham;” “And mention in the Book [the story of] Moses;” “And mention in the Book [the story of] Idrees;” “And mention in the Book [the story of] Mary.” We must not allow [these important events] to be forgotten. The Quran teaches us to remember these [events], [and] repeat these events. Just see how many times the story of Moses and the story of Abraham and other stories have been repeated in the Quran; [these stories] must be remembered, [and] must not be allowed to be forgotten. Of course, we see efforts are being made in this regard. I am very optimistic toward Major General Baqeri and trust him very much and he said ‘we are taking these steps’ or have taken them.
Such tasks are of two types; some of these tasks are organized and organizational tasks; very well, you form an organization, [or] an organ, [and] this is a good step. One part of such tasks is ongoing tasks [and] executive tasks. Executive tasks do not end with forming and launching [organizations], [because] they must be continuously monitored, [and] care must be taken that, firstly, the task is being done, secondly, it is done correctly without deviation, [and] thirdly, it must be improved in quality and not be monotonous. The hadith [which says] “he who two days of his life are the same is a loser,” totally applies to this case. It means that [if] what we do today is similar to what we did yesterday, we are certainly a loser. Today, we must be one step ahead and move better than yesterday. So, it is for this reason that I frequently emphasize [in my meetings with] various managers – in military sectors, in state-run sectors, in judicial sectors and so forth – and keep repeating that you must extend your gaze to the end of that human line, which has been formed behind you, look, [and] take care. Firstly, the work must continue, because we [usually] start to do a work, then in the middle of [that work], we forget about the work, which we have undertaken, or whose order we have given, or we are expected to do; [there are many cases that] the work is [totally] forgotten.

Sometimes, the work is not forgotten, [and] it continues, but in a deviated form. We have seen instances in which a work has begun “in a correct way,” but has ended “in a deviated form.” Both cultural works, and political works, and economic works and various managerial works in the country, they start well, but deviation begins at an angle at a point. When that angle opens, at first, you do not feel it seriously, because its degree is low; then, the more it continues, this angle continues to become opener and opener. There are some tasks, which do not deviate [from their correct path], [and] continue, [but] in a monotonous way. When you look at it today, it looks like [what it was] five years ago, [or] like ten years ago, [and] like 20 years ago; you see no progress and promotion in it. Promotion and progress cannot be achieved by talking and presenting statistics, [but] the product of [any work] must be seen on the ground; we must see what is being done. I ask the group [of officials], which is in charge of this issue, to pay attention that this task is a great task, which I will briefly explain it.

Look dear brethren, [and] dear sisters! Any country has riches [of its own]: some have climatic riches, some have geographical riches, some have underground riches, some have human riches, and have smart and prominent people, some have oil; some have intellect, but no money, [and finally] some have money, but no intellect. We have nations of all these kinds in the world. The strength of any country must be dear and respected by it, [and that country] must guard it. We have many strengths. Now, we have many natural strengths – but this meeting is not a right place to discuss them; we have land, we have [resources] underground, we have [resources] on the ground, we have manpower, we have [high] intelligence, we have everything – but one of the most important of our riches is our cultural wealth. We have a cultural wealth. What is the cultural wealth? For example, the willingness toward jihad and believing in jihad is a cultural wealth; I mean, when you move and go around among the Iranian nation, apart from a small group, there is a motivation to move on the path of religion among the rest of our country’s people; now, its degree is different; there is a low degree, [and] there is a high degree [of this motivation]. The motivation in one person is just enough that when they stand in front of the television camera, they chant slogans in favor of the country and in favor of the ideals of the revolution and Islam; very well, this is very good, [and] this motivation does exist. Another person has a motivation stronger than this, [and] another person is so motivated that he is ready to lay down his life and sacrifice it. This sense of seeking struggle [on the path of God] and accepting [to engage in such] struggle and believing in [this form of] struggle is a cultural wealth; this [wealth] exists in our country, [but] it does not exist in many countries.

Before the revolution, when a group of our revolutionary figures came face to face with, for example, a group of Marxist revolutionaries of that time – both in public debates, and in personal debates, both in prison, and outside the prison – I always said this to our own people that the difference between us and them is that ‘we have God and they do not have God; [and therefore,] I pity them’. At the corner of [a prison] cell, under torture, [and] under very difficult conditions, we had a haven, we had a God, in whom we took refuge, [and] whom we asked for help. Even if His will did not deem it expedient to help us there, at least, we were happy that He was seeing that we were being tormented for His sake. [However,] that wretched Marxist did not have this. I said that a person who has no God, well, he would move as long as he is under the influence of [his own] fervor and emotions and sentiments, and the likes of these. [But] if this fervor and these emotions and these sentiments are taken from him from a single moment and [he] thinks about himself for a moment, he would see what a futile effort he is making. [Then he would say why] I must get killed in order for another person to live? Should I get killed so that another given person becomes rich or lives comfortably? Why? It is the characteristic of faith, which keeps the sense of struggle and willingness toward struggle alive in a person. This, by itself, is a cultural value; [and] is a big cultural value. This [is] one [point]. Believing in resistance against a bully is [also] a cultural value. Believing that if we resist, we will finally overcome the enemy without a doubt, is a cultural value and a cultural wealth. If we want to count our own cultural riches, we [will have] a long list of cultural values and riches, which belong to us and give us power, and if we keep these alive, or bring out of the oblivion those [values that] we have forgotten and bring them into the arena – just as this happened during the revolution, which forgotten [values] came into play – then big things will be done; just in the same way that big things have been done in our country during these thirty-odd years. You, the youth of the revolution period, have not seen the period before the revolution and the era of monarchy; [but] we have seen that time. If at that time somebody said it was possible that a move would be made in Iran, [as a result of] which religion would rule and a person like the honorable Imam [Khomeini] would take the helm of [the country’s] affairs, without a doubt, any average, ordinary, [and] wise person would had said such a thing was not possible, [and] was

impossible. I mean, he would have no doubt [about this], because conditions [in Iranian society] were like this, but this is what happened [in practice].

The [eight-year Iraqi] imposed war [against Iran] is another example, [and] the issue of the Sacred Defense is another example. Let me explain a marginal issue here: the imposed war took place because the enemy felt weakness in us. If the Baathist enemy and those, who incited it, were not confident that they would reach Tehran in a few days – [this is true,] they thought like that – this war would not have taken place; [however,] they felt weakness in us. Sensing weakness in you encouraged the enemy to attack you; this is a general rule. If you want to dissuade the enemy of attacking you, try not to appear weak. I am not saying that we [must] falsely claim that we are strong, [but] I say, we must make our strength evident. We have many points of strength, [and we must] clearly show these points of strength. It is the same in the field of economy as well, and is the same in the field of culture as well.

The big mistake committed by some of us with regard to the great economic challenge with which the country is currently plagued – and in fact we are currently plagued with an economic challenge – was that, weakness was expressed in the field of economy. [Therefore,] the enemy saw this was the place where it could exert pressure, [and this is why] they increased pressure; [they became so outrageous that] when one [of Western officials] was asked in an interview that 'this [military] maneuver, which you are conducting in that given place and at the same time are negotiating with Iranians, [don't you think that] Iranians may become upset with this maneuver and it may damage these economic negotiations?', he was rude enough and shamelessly said, 'No sir. These [maneuvers] have no effect; [because] Iranians need these negotiations so much that the likes of these maneuvers will not harm our economic negotiations!" This expression of weakness in the face of enemy should not take place.

Well, [in time of Iraq war], the enemy sensed weakness in us, [and] therefore, launched the attack. Now, were we really weak or not? In fact, yes, we were weak. Our armed forces were scattered, were in disarray, lacked a regular management, a large part of our equipment was useless, [and] most of it was [even] unknown [to us]. A couple of years after the [beginning of] war, we just discovered some of the things that were in our warehouses, [and it was then that we realized] we had these [equipment] and could take advantage of them. We had no experience of war [either]. During the monarchial era, only a few theatrical [military] assaults had taken place, in which they [enemies] would enter [Iran's soil] from this side of the Iraqi border [and] get out a few kilometers away. We had no experience of war. Our war experiences were limited to experiences at the time of World War II. At that time, the tyrant of time asked his commander that 'how long our armed forces can withstand the enemy' [and the commander] said, 'Sir, they can resist [only] for two hours'. Then the king became angry; he was Reza Khan after all, and became angry. When they moved aside, one person told [that commander that] it would be better if you said that in a way, which would not make him angry, [and] you could have spoken [to the king] in a better way, [and] with more sycophancy'. He said, 'I spoke with more sycophancy; [because] the two hours that I said was sycophancy, [and the reality is that our forces] can resist [the enemy only] for ten minutes, [while] I said two hours!' This was our war experience.

The war [with Iraq] started in this way. Look, the enemy advanced as far as ten [or] twelve kilometers of [the southwestern Iranian city of] Ahvaz in his first steps; I mean, the enemy's 60-mm mortar shells could hit the suburbs of Ahvaz; the situation was like this. They came and crossed the Naderi Bridge – in the city of Dezful – and entered part of Dezful on the other side of the river; that is, both Dezful and Ahvaz and other important cities of Khuzestan [province] were at risk; the enemy entered [our soil] like this in its first assault, [and] our situation was like this. Then our Muslim forces and revolutionary forces, following the outcry of the honorable Imam – who himself was one of the miracles of time, who himself was among great divine signs, and was one of the really grand signs of Allah – plucked up their courage; the army one way, the IRGC [Islamic Revolution Guards Corps] one way, [and] the Basij [force] another way. [All Iranian] forces plucked up their courage, took advantage of their potentialities, [and] took advantage of the power, which was hidden in them and they had not discovered before. This power was not just the power to fight and bravery and going to the [battle] field, [because] this was just one of them; [there was also] the power of management, organization, innovation, initiative and such things, [and this is why] the war theater was totally changed. The war started in [the Iranian calendar year 13]59 (1980) – with all those losses, which I explained – [but] in the [Iranian month of] Farvardin of [the Iranian] year [13]61 (April 1982), in Operation Fath-ol-Mobin, several thousand captives from the enemy [forces] fell into the hands of our forces; I mean, just see the difference! Through a period of one and a half years, the progressive movement of the faithful and revolutionary

forces was such that [early] withdrawal [of Iranian forces] to the vicinity of Ahvaz and [their] withdrawal to the vicinity of Dezful turned into an operation like Operation Fath-ol-Mobin in which they took about 10,000 [or] 12,000 captives from the enemy alone. In reality, the days of the imposed war and the Sacred Defense were among the days of Allah; [therefore,] this must be kept alive, [because] this is a wealth.

Those people, who think that we must either avoid talking about war, or if we talk about it, we must oppose it, are [totally] mistaken. They hold a session about the works and literature of war, but they read anti-war poems in that session; these people are making an error and a mistake. These people are like those who set on fire and destroy precious manuscripts – [that are] unique copies [of ancient books] – which are [considered as cultural] heritage of a nation; they are like those who extract a country's oil and then pour it into the sea and annihilate it; they are destroying a national wealth, which can make history, make future [of a nation], and whose commemoration will form a basis to make the present and future of a country just like [what the Quran recommended the Prophet to] "remind people of the days of Allah." They make films, [but] make anti-war films. They [also] write [anti-war] books; we must be watchful. [These people] confuse two [totally different] issues. One issue is whether war is per se a good thing or a bad thing? Well, it is clear that war is a violent thing; war has killings, has annihilations, has injuries, [and] this is clear; [but] this is one issue. Another issue is that when a nation is exposed to aggression from different directions, what would happen if it does not bring into the arena its power [and] its force and does not stand against the enemy? They confuse this issue with that [former] issue. The Sacred Defense was a vital move, [and] was like taking a [fresh] breath for this nation; if we did not breathe, we would die; [therefore,] this [national wealth] must be kept alive.

Well, [therefore,] the memory of eight years of Sacred Defense is a huge and national wealth. [And] these memories [of war] are also so numerous and diverse and rich in meaning and expressive that no eloquent words – [and I do] not [mean] my words, which [certainly] fall short of doing this – are able to relate all of them. The reason is this: about 30 years have passed since the end of war. Today, they write books [about the war], [which when] this humble one – who was present [at the war fronts] and observed [the realities of war] and know many things [about it] – [when] I read that book, I learn a lot of things from it. [By reading those books] people, personalities, [their] words, [and] the words of advice [can be learned]. What was quoted from me [in this meeting] is not [actually] my words; it is what a combatant from [the city of] Hamedan said that if you want to cross a barbed-wire [obstacle], you must first cross the barbed wire of your ego. As long as we are entangled within ourselves, we cannot do anything; they taught us this; this was taught to us by that 20- or 25-year-old young combatant, [and] we learned [it] from them; this is a huge wealth.

Well, If you want to take advantage of a wealth, you must know its technology. I say that this Rahian-e Nour [initiative] is a technology. This is a technology for taking advantage of this huge wealth. This is an enormous gold mine, at our disposal, this [mine] can be either mothballed without technology, or it can be passed on to others like many of our mines – which unfortunately, [officials] give [their control] to this or that person without creating any added value for it – or technology can be used to give added value to it. This Rahian-e Nour is a technology, [and] is such a huge move. [Therefore,] this must be greatly appreciated; [because] this Rahian-e Nour [initiative] is a very big and important step; try to do this in the correct way.

Praise be to God, it has been done well up to the present time, but this is not enough. As I said before, continuation of this path and persistence of this move is not enough on its own. Persistence of this move must be made possible through fresh advances [in the course] of this move. It must entail more benefits every time and every year, compared to the year before it. At the present time, we are faced with enemies, who are using their most advanced equipment and their big money against us; we may not have that much money or that number of weapons – well, yes, they have nuclear weapons, [and] we don't have it – but we have something they do not. And that's our culture; it is our faith; it is our efficient and seasoned manpower; we have all these; [and] must take advantage of them. Who must take advantage? All organs in the country must take advantage [of this wealth]. When I say that Rahian-e Nour is a new technology for taking advantage of the unending mine of [experiences gained through many] years of the Sacred Defense, it means that the entire country must take advantage of this and know its value. It must be mentioned in our books, must be mentioned in our art, must be mentioned in our high schools and elementary schools, [and] must find its way into our universities. University officials and authorities of various executive sectors are present here; they must consider themselves duty-bound to do this. It is not merely like that we consider a corner

[and a center] that whoever – [for example] a student – wants [to join this move] can go there and enroll and get going; [no,] this is not how it is done, [because] we need [to do] more work in this regard. You look at this development as a treasure, [and] as a hugely beneficial and profitable mine; see what must be done in this regard. We must work, must think, must make plans, [and] must come up with a map.
Those people, who take part in these Rahian-e Nour tours [of former war zones], when they return [to their homes], something must have certainly been added to them; a form of unbreakable link and connection must be created between them and the important Event of the Sacred Defense; [they must] obtain new knowledge, [and must] attain new information. Of course, in my opinion, we have not worked sufficiently in these fields during these [past] years; [and] we have not worked adequately. Now, many books have been written, [and] a few movies have been made; these are good [steps]; those steps, which have been taken, are good and valuable; however, in my opinion, they are limited in comparison to what must be done. These books that I read and benefit from, well, they are good, but their scope is limited. The scope of the effectiveness of these [books] is limited. Now, for example, assume that they say five hundred thousand [or] six hundred thousand [copies] of that given best-selling and highly-circulating book has been printed; well, now, even six hundred thousand copies of a book in a country this big [is not enough]. [Even] if we assume that every copy of that book has been read by ten people, [the total count] would be five million people, [or] six million people; is it enough that out of our 80-million-strong society, five million [people] would read a book and become familiar with the knowledge it provides? [Therefore,] we must do promotion work. Both the books and the concepts contained in them must be promoted, [and] it must be promoted in the form of art, and the best part of [concepts contained in] it must be included in textbooks, while a chapter must be opened in universities for issues related to the Sacred Defense.Let's not allow this issue to be wasted easily. Any war veteran, who has remained from [the period of] the Sacred Defense, is a reminder; [we must] venerate these reminders of the Sacred Defense, [and must] venerate the commanders of the Sacred Defense. Of course, they must also know their value and preserve themselves and maintain those values within themselves. This path will be paved through resistance and will go ahead.
If we do cultural works with regard to the Sacred Defense, [and] produce cultural products, this production will enrich the country, will enrich and strengthen our manpower and will make them strong in the face of the enemies' plots. If we want manpower for the economy, it must be strong; if we want manpower for cultural purposes, it must be strong, [and] if we want good manpower for [handling] the country's managerial issues, it must be strong; it is this culture that strengthens humans and creates strong human beings. Among sources of cultural strength, one is this bountiful fountain of the Sacred Defense forces. If we manage to take advantage of this, the country's culture will become stronger; this is [a form of] cultural production. In [the field of] culture – just like economic matters, – if we do not produce, we will need imports. It is like economic issues that if you do not have domestic production, imported goods will replace it. When imported goods replace [domestic production], the result is that domestic production will not be able to stand on its feet anymore; this is one of our problems today: abundant imports – perhaps [even] excessive to a large extent – in various sectors, in return for lowered [domestic] production. The same is true about culture. If you cease cultural production, cultural imports enter the country either through official channels, or through smuggling. At the present time, [the amount of] cultural imports is high; I have a lot of information in this regard and sometimes warn officials; God willing, they would pay attention [to my warning]; some [of them] do.

[Enemies] are thinking. In these very groups, which they themselves call think tanks, they have sat down and are deliberating to see how they can infiltrate into the culture of the Iranian nation, [and] how they can change our youths. This is their aspiration and they wish that you, the young people who are currently breathing with the love of the Imam and with the love of the revolution and with the love of the lofty religious and Islamic and revolutionary values, would become devoid [and] be stripped of all these values, [and] turn into an element dependent on the Western culture and the Western way of thinking, [and also turn into] an inefficacious and useless element for the country and for yourselves and for your future; this [is] their aspiration. They are concocting plans for [making] this [wish come true], [and] are working and making an effort to this effect. This is apart from their security works, apart from their security plots, [and] apart from threatening [Iran] with military measures; in my opinion, this [cultural onslaught] is more dangerous than all of them. If a military move is made by the enemy, it will make the

nation more motivated, [and] will make the nation's fist stronger against them; this is [the nature of any] military move. However, cultural onslaught is quite the opposite. If the enemy manages to carry out its cultural assault, [it will make one] lethargic, renders him unable to make decisions, weakens resolves, takes the country's youths from the country, [and] renders useful forces ineffective. This is [the nature] of the cultural onslaught. The [best] way to counter this is to engage in cultural production. One of the cultural productions is this very issue, which is related to you and is related to Rahian-e Nour, which to speak fairly, was an innovation, [and] was a praiseworthy tradition that our brethren in the IRGC and in various [other] sectors initiated and started; it is very good. At any rate, I hope that this task will be fulfilled in the best way possible.

By the way, pay attention [to the point] that those reporters, who join these [Rahian-e Nour] groups and guide people, they must know what they must say in their reports. This reporting is [totally] different from what is conventionally known as reporting for foreign travelers or tourists, who come to, for example, visit a given building. This is something else, [and] this must not be mistaken for that [reporting for visitors to war zones]. One type of reporting is desirable there, while another type of reporting is desirable here [for Rahian-e Nour tours]. Here, the contents of the reports must be full of elucidation [about what happened in war fronts], full of knowledge, full of expression of facts, [and also] full of prominent and positive points of the Sacred Defense period and the values of the Sacred Defense; [reporting for Rahian-e Nour] must be like this. Of course, I am not saying that you must exaggerate. I by no means support exaggeration and overemphasis and the likes of these. On the opposite, [you must tell the truth because] in offensives [which were carried out] during this eight-year period [of Sacred Defense], we had both successful offensives [and] unsuccessful offensives.

Assume that in Operation Ramezan, for example, or in Operation Karbala 4, we [had] unsuccessful offensives; we have [also] had successful offensives, for example, in Operation Valfajir 8 in which our youths crossed the Arvand River. However, [even] in those successful offensives, there were offensives, which were faced with hundreds of difficulties. Human beings are not alike, [and] there were many difficulties; some pulled back in the middle [of the operation], some changed their mind, some refused to go ahead, [and] some people, more than thinking about their duty, thought about what others would say about them. We had these [cases] as well;

[we must] also say these [realities], [and] there is no problem with that. It is through [retelling] of all this collection, which that extraordinary glitter shows [itself], [and] those pure human beings, those dear [and] venerable martyrs show themselves, [as well as] their value [and] their sublime status. Therefore, there is no need for us to exaggerate, use overstatements or talk in such a way that as if they were different human beings; no, they were quite like us, but they came to know the way better than us, understood life better than us, were luckier, had more recourse [in spiritual values], [and] the Almighty God paid more attention to them and satiated them from the fountain of His favor and grace.

Every one of these five provinces of Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Kordestan and West Azarbaijan – [which form] this western border of the country – has an issue, has a value, [and] has a [specific] position. People living there must receive [special] attention, [and] must be treated kindly, [because] all of them supported [the war fronts]. In all these sectors that you see, if it were not for people's support, nothing could be done. It was through people's support that combatants could do their work. Of course, during the same short period when I was present in those arenas, I saw with my own eyes people's assistance, people's support and people's special attention to combatants, which enabled them to do great things and make these [great] moves. I hope that, God willing, the Almighty God would make you successful, assist you, and God willing, bless this work [that you do], so that, blessings of this work would, God willing, cover the country, both the present and the future of the country.

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