The Leader’s New Year speech addressing pilgrims in the city of Mashhad - 22 /Mar/ 2017

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

(Arabic prayer)

One more year and one more time, I thank the Almighty God for allowing me to attend the gathering among you, brethren and sisters, under the shade of the blessed mausoleum of Ali ibn Musa al-Reza (PBUH) [the eighth Shia Imam), and while expressing empathy and sympathy with this huge and faithful and enthusiastic crowd, discuss with you matters [of importance] with regard to issues of the country, issues of the revolution, as well as [other] main and basic issues. I thank the Almighty God for this blessing. The enthusiastic [and] dense crowd, which [has gathered] in this blessed portico and around this place, including those who live in the holy [city of] Mashhad and esteemed pilgrims, who have traveled to this region and to this province and to this city for their love of [this] honorable Imam, all of them are willing and keen on listening to the words that come from the cores of the [Islamic] revolution and establishment with regard to various issues. In the opportunity, which has been offered today, I will certainly discuss part of those issues, which are needed to be discussed [here], and I hope [what I say] would be subject to the divine guidance and divine content and be accepted by the Almighty God.

Dear brethren and sisters! The current year is an important year for the country, both because the country needs an important economic impetus, about which officials will, God willing, think and pay attention, and also because of the forthcoming presidential election and City and Village Councils Elections, which are also very important in their own right.
During the [Iranian] year [13]95 (March 20, 2016-March 20, 2017) – [that is,] last year – although the country was plagued with economic problems, the Iranian nation put up a brilliant performance from two viewpoints. Firstly, from the viewpoint of commitment to issues of the revolution and values of the revolution and the Islamic establishment, the manifestation of which was enthusiasm shown in the huge demonstrations on the 22nd [day of the Iranian month] of Bahman and [in other] popular gatherings related to issues of the revolution, which proved commitment and enthusiasm and excitement and attachment of the Iranian nation when it comes to issues of the revolution. Secondly, from the viewpoint of people’s commitment to faith-based and religious issues. During this year, according to a reliable report, which has been received from across the country with regard to [people’s activities] during the holy month of Ramadan, during the month of Moharram and the month of Safar and [with regard to] the rest of religious ceremonies, people’s enthusiasm for and participation in and attachment to faith-related issues has been more than ever before.
Both with respect to issues of the revolution and with regard to those cases, which were related to religious and faith-related issues, presence of people and the clear role played by people’s great efforts were more [remarkable] than ever before. This is very important, because first of all, it flaunts to both friend and enemy the direction and orientation of the Iranian people’s movement and the identity of the Iranian nation. Neither demonstrations on the 22nd [day] of Bahman have anything to do with a political affiliation, nor [popular] sessions held in [the lunar month of] Moharram and the month of Ramadan and staying at mosques and the march on [the day of] Arba’een have anything to do with a specific political affiliation. [However,] they are related to the entire nation of Iran and related to all different [political] affiliation in the country. Therefore, this shows that the direction of the Iranian nation’s movement is a revolutionary and religious one, regardless of any political affiliation they belong to. [Therefore,] it flaunted the identity of the Iranian nation to [both] friends and enemies. This is the first [important point].
Secondly, it showed people’s general solidarity and national unity to everybody. When you look at this [past Iranian] year of [13]95 from the beginning to the end, all cases [that happened in this year] show these two important signs:

they show the solidarity among people with regard to basic issues of life despite all differences over various secondary and political issues – [and show that despite those differences] they are united and unanimous with regard to the main direction [of their movement], which is the direction of the establishment and the direction of the revolution. This is one [of those two signs], and then it shows the attachment of people to the revolution and to the establishment and to religious and faith-based issues. This [reality] has shown itself to the world [and the Iranian nation] has flaunted this to both enemies and friends. This is [about issues related to] the [Iranian] year [13]95.

Of course, there were bitter developments during past year the last of which was the case of these dear dead firefighters, who made sacrifice [to put out a major fire in downtown Tehran] and it was a bitter incident. Bitter incidents are always there, [but] the important point is that people's effort and people's determination and the direction at which people move would be promising and a sign of progress, and this, thank God, is the case [in Iran].

I tell you that this national necessity is still valid during the current year as well. The Iranian nation must show its national unity during the current year too. It must both show and prove its commitment to the revolution and establishment and religious topics and issues, and also flaunt the direction of its movement to enemies of Iran and enemies of the Islamic Republic and enemies of Iranian nation. It is for this reason that I chose [this topic as the subject of] my discussion today.

Today's discussion is about two [major] issues. One issue is related to economic problems of the country, which of course, while avoiding technical terms, I will explain in the economic discussion what our dear [and] good people must know and to which they must pay attention and in which direction they must move and request it from us, officials. God willing, in the [second] discussion [which is] about the elections – that is the second subject of my discussion today – I will also explain certain issues.

Dear brethren and sisters! The issue of economy is an issue of priority for the country. Not only in the current year, but this issue has topped the list of the country's urgent priorities for a number of years and the need for economic activity in the correct form and through correct planning has been tangible during these years and [relevant] steps have been also taken to which I will refer. The current priority of the Iranian nation is the issue of economy, and [you must] pay attention that the issue of economy is a priority for [our] enemy as well. I mean that at the present time, in order to be able to realize their goals with regard to Iran and Iranian [nation] and the Islamic Republic, the enemies of the Islamic Republic are looking for economic solutions, or in better words, seek to deal economic blows to Iranian nation. It is the enemy's goal to be able through economic pressure to make the Iranian nation discouraged and disillusioned about the Islamic establishment and the Islamic Republic, and draw a wedge between Iranian nation and the Islamic establishment and pursue [realization] of its goals in this way.

Of course, let me tell you that our ignorant [and] faithless enemy has been trying for years to separate the nation from the establishment, [but] it has not succeeded [to do this], [and] through the divine power and assistance, will not succeed hereafter. Well, the enemy will not succeed, but we are obligated to bring up this discussion due to its importance, in order to draw attention of officials to it, [and] in order to create bonds and cooperative relations between people and officials in the field of economy. [This is true] because the issue of economy, [and] the issue of people's livelihood are very important matters and I will discuss them to some extent. [Of course,] I talked to Iranian nation [about these issues] in brief in my New Year message. Today, I will explain a little more. Imam Sajjad [the fourth Shia Imam] (PBUH) says in one of his prayers to Almighty God, "And we seek refuge in you from extravagance and the blight of poverty." This shows the importance of the issue of economy, which Imam Sajjad (PBUH) asks the Almighty God and seeks refuge in God [both] from extravagance and from [conditions under which] livelihood resources would not be adequately available to people. This shows the importance of the issue of economy. Therefore, we must discuss this issue.

However, before embarking on the main discussion, there are two points, which I am willing to certainly lay emphasis on, and remind you, [both] you dear ones who are present here and those who will hear these remarks later, of these two points.

The first point [is that] the enemy is trying through its vast publicity [efforts] to blame the Islamic establishment and the Islamic Republic for livelihood [problems] and economic shortages in the country; this is the enemy's plan. They want to pretend that the Islamic establishment has not been able and is not able to solve the economic problems of Iranian nation and their basic problems and [is not able to] cut [the existing] knots. They want to exploit [the economic conditions in the country] in this way in order to deal blows to the Islamic establishment. This claim has

its root in their spite and animosity and grudge toward the Islamic establishment. This claim is at odds with the reality, [because] services that the Islamic establishment and the Islamic Republic have provided Iran and Iranian nation with during this period are prominent and extraordinary services. If you compare [the current] condition of the nation and the country to [conditions that existed] before the Islamic era, that is, under the monarchial rule, then it would become clear what great and valuable services have been provided by the Islamic establishment. Yes, there are weaknesses, [but] these weaknesses are related to our management, are related to shortcomings and incompetence of those managers, who have been working in various sectors. However, the Islamic establishment has grown certain abilities within itself and has raised managers, who have been able to take very big steps for the country during these thirty-odd years; and that [has taken place] under conditions during which the nation has been subject to the pressure of sanctions and economic woes of enemies on all sides.

I will bring a few examples here. Of course, these are just a few examples that I say; otherwise, the list of services provided by the Islamic Republic establishment is a very longer list than what is said here. Look! Since the early revolution up to the present time, the population of the country has been doubled. I mean, it has increased from about 40 million to about 80 million, but what has happened and those steps, which have been taken in different fields, have not grown only two times and three times, [but] the figures are extraordinary and very remarkable.

In infrastructural fields, measures have been taken in the country, which really [and] when one compares them with other countries in terms of scale [of what has been done], are very big and huge. For example, the country's roads have increased six-fold [in length] during this period; the capacity of the country's ports has increased twenty-fold during this period; [the capacity] of the country's reservoir dams – which supply potable water and irrigation water – has risen thirty-fold; power generation in the country has increased fourteen times; the country's non-oil exports have grown 57 times – during the pre-revolution era, [I mean,] under the monarchial rule, the country's exports were almost limited to oil and a little amount of other produced items, which in comparison with [the volume of] oil exports, amounted to nearly nothing, [but] today, non-oil exports have increased 57 times – [while] production of petrochemical [products] has increased thirty-fold and production of steel products [has risen] fifteen times. These are infrastructural measures. Any country, which wants to become [economically] active, [and] achieve economic progress would need such things; these steps were taken during the [post-]revolution period.

In the field of science and technology, since the early [years after the] revolution [up to the present time], the number of [university] students has increased 25 times. In early [years after the] revolution, all students in the country numbered two hundred and a few thousand, [but] today, about five million students are studying in the country. [The number of] scientific papers has increased 16 times and [a great spurt has come about with regard to] scientific activities and a host of other technologies.

With regard to social and human development, [our] indexes are very high. When it comes to services – providing services to people – such as electricity and [natural] gas and telephone and development of villages, [available] figures are very good and promising. With respect to military activities, figures are amazing. A country, which before the victory of the Islamic Revolution was totally dependent to foreign countries in military terms – and that to such enemies as America – today [its condition] in terms of military advances is so remarkable, that even the enemy concedes to it, [and] it makes the enemy both angry and concerned and enraged.

These [advances] are all [the result of] the [managerial] finesse of the Islamic establishment; [and] these are steps, which have been taken by the Islamic establishment. I already said that if I wanted to enumerate this list, it would be a very long list and the work [which has been done] is very bigger and superior to these [measures]. Of course, the revolution never stops, [and] progress never stops. There is a lot of work, which must be done and will be done through the divine power and assistance, and the general policies of the Islamic establishment have [also] clearly stipulated those steps, which must be taken in the future, and have mentioned what steps must be taken.

Well, we have also had weaknesses, which have not been few. I am aware of weaknesses in the activities of the country's officials – including this humble one – with regard to [plans that are related to] the general public in Iran and during the [past] years. There have been many weaknesses which are related to our management [and] not to the general movement of the Islamic establishment. Anywhere we have had a revolutionary, active, and energetic management, the work has been done; [however,] anywhere management has been weak, lethargic, desperate, non-revolutionary, and inactive, [our] works have either stopped or deviated [off the right track]. This is a problem that exists, [and] is a fault and a weakness, which is there; our managers must, God willing, be more motivated, more

efficient, and make more effort, and with the divine power and assistance, this is what will happen. I say categorically that if management in various sectors of the country is religious, is revolutionary, and is efficient, all problems in the country will be solved; [because] we have no unsolvable problem in the country. This was a point, which was [necessary to be] explained.
The second point is that potentialities of the country are very high. Capabilities and potentialities in our country are very high; I mean, if I keep expressing optimism about the future and say that these steps must be taken or say that these steps will be taken, [I say this] on the strength of the country's potentialities and potential capabilities. Our country is among rich countries in the world both from the viewpoint of manpower, and from the viewpoint of natural resources, including reserves under and above the ground, and various [other] potentialities. From the viewpoint of manpower – just as I explained – [having] five million [university] students is a huge wealth for the country. In addition, we have about ten million university graduates who can do various things. We have 33 million youths at working age – that is, between 15 years and 40 years old – in the country; I mean, we [are] a young country, which is able to do work. According to [viewpoints expressed by] experts and specialists, the best time [and most effective time] for human beings to work – both men and women – is between 15 and 40 years old and from this standpoint, we have, praise be to God, good conditions in the country and 33 million of the country's population is at this age, who can work, [and] can carry heavy loads on their backs.
We are [among] advanced [countries] in the world in terms of underground resources as well. Once I noted that the country's population is about one-hundredth of the world population, but almost [with regard to] all main resources, we are above the one-hundredth [level]; [our share of] some [resources] is two hundredth, some is three hundredth, [and our share of] some [resources] is five hundredth; I mean, in terms of resources, we have wide latitude. In this very New Year meeting a couple of years ago, I said that in terms of oil and gas resources combined, we rank first in the world; I mean, [we are] the best country and the richest country in the entire world in terms of total oil and gas reserves. I said that we rank first [in the world in this regard]. I was given figures quite recently and it became clear that in terms of [natural] gas [reserves] alone we also rank first in the world; that is, no country has as much oil and gas as we have and when it comes to gas [reserves alone], no country in the world has as much gas as we have, which today, is one of important sources of energy. Well, this country is a rich country. It is for no reason that our enemies – [that is, world's] hegemonic powers, [including] America and the likes of it – have cast a covetous look on this country and want to bring this country under their domination. Of course, this has been their perpetual wish and this wish will not come true and they will certainly take this wish to the grave.
Well, let's start the economic discussion, [because] time is limited and I must be able to say all that I want to say, even if briefly.
Look, [we must see] what we want for our country and our nation? Where are we going to take the nation and the country? We want national security, want national dignity, want public health, want public welfare; want all-out progress, want independence of global hegemonic powers, want prosperity of talents, [and] want getting rid of and being saved from such social maladies as addiction and corruption and the likes of these for Iranian nation. We want [to achieve] these [goals] for the country.
These are those things, which we pursue and want [to achieve] with regard to material issues for our country. When these material [goals] are achieved inside the country, then the nation would have welfare. Well, how these goals can be achieved? How national dignity, national security, national might, [and] all-out progress can be achieved? I tell you that these goals cannot be achieved unless the country has a strong economy. What we need is a strong economy, [and] strong production along with strong management;this is what we need: a strong and secure and self-reliant economy, so that, we would not have to ask [what we need] from others, be able to choose, be able to move, be able to take action, be able to influence the price of oil, increase the value of the national currency, [and] boost people's purchasing power. Without such a strong economy, we will neither achieve lasting dignity, nor will achieve lasting security; [therefore,] we must achieve these goals. This is why economy is important. And of course, this [goal] cannot be achieved in the absence of national unity either; these demands cannot be met in the absence of a general link between the nation and the establishment; cannot be achieved without a revolutionary culture; [and] cannot be achieved without brave and active and hardworking officials. We need all of these [factors] and we must obtain them and we can obtain them. [It follows that] one of our current major problems is the issue of economy.
Well, I brought up [the issue of] the Economy of Resistance and talked [about it]. [Our] friends and officials, who

hold positions in the executive branch and other organs of the country, followed up on this issue with interest and made certain plans, [and] steps were [also] taken. Well, such steps are good and I will refer to some [of them] as well, but what is currently evident for us and we see it before our eyes [is that] our economic voids are big voids. One [of them] is the issue of unemployment, especially unemployment among the youth and especially unemployment among the educated youth. This is a [major economic] void, [and] is a pit. This [need] must be met. The issue of the livelihood of lower [social] classes [is also important]. I follow up on [relevant] information all the time and become informed about the [economic] condition of people in various parts of the country; people are facing problem in terms of livelihood. There is the issue of unemployment, [and] the issue of having difficulty for making the ends meet. And there are various problems in cultural and social fields, which follow these [economic and livelihood problems].

Well, I said that enemy focuses on these [problems] and targets its propaganda at them. Economic experts [and] those people, who are specialized in economic issues, believe that [Iran's] major [economic] problem is recession and unemployment; [and] they are right as well. One [major problem] is the issue of unemployment; another [problem] is the issue of recession in production [sector] and reduced production inside the country. Well, these [problems] are mentioned in [the policies of] the Economy of Resistance, but the Economy of Resistance is a collection [of policies]. If we could break up this collection and at any opportunity [that we find,] put more focus on part of its important issues in the country, we would certainly be able to reach good results through it.

Good steps were taken in the [Iranian calendar] year [13]95. It would be fair to pay attention to efforts made by esteemed officials and praise them. Early last year, after I put a lot of emphasis during this very New Year meeting on [the importance of] small- and medium-sized enterprises, officials decided to help small- and medium-sized enterprises. [Therefore, they] allocated 15,000 billion tomans in order to, for example, bring to life and activate and take out of stagnation about 20,000 small-sized enterprises; they also took [necessary] measures, of course, it was a little late, but steps were taken and implemented after all. Well, this step was a good step, but what is necessary [to be observed when taking] any good step is supervision and continuity. If necessary supervision and attention [does not exist] and necessary care is not taken as the work continues, that work will not reach its goal, or will not end in a desirable result. I asked those people who were in charge of this issue , for explanation and carried out field studies through various means, [and found out that] well, the work has gone ahead, but not in proportion to the money that has been spent. The work has somehow progressed, but it has not been done in the way that was intended and [in the way it] should have gone ahead and been done. [Therefore,] we must do something, so that, plans made by officials and executive decisions of officials would reach their final results.

At the present time, our problems with regard to part of [economic] indexes are numerous. Some indexes are good; for example, the inflation index is showing decrease, which is a good development, but [at the same time] the unemployment index is rising, which means that joblessness has increased. These are official statistics presented by officials themselves. Or the economic growth is positive, but growth in investment is negative, which is one of the basic and big problems [facing the country]. Or, for example, we are progressing in certain [economic] sectors – such as the oil sector – [but] are moving backward in some other sectors, such as the mine sector, [and] like the housing sector. I mean, official figures do not convince one that the general movement [of the country] is toward resolution of economic problems.

Well, let bygones be bygones, [and] look at the future. What I keep looking at with regard to the future, as a priority and a key point, is production; domestic production, [and] national production. My recommendation, my demand, [and] my expectation is reliance on domestic production. Domestic production is a keyword. I am saying all this so that, first of all, since these statements are being made in presence of the Iranian nation, esteemed officials will pay attention to them and put emphasis on them. Secondly, people's public opinion will set its demands in this direction, [and] people's demands will be oriented in this direction, which is the subject of my attention and my comments today. I feel that at the time being, the fundament of the work [which must be done] at this juncture of the country's economy is the issue of national production and domestic production. This is a keyword, and many topics emanate from this issue. If we could bring prosperity to domestic production, [new] jobs would be created and the problem of unemployment – which of course one of the major blights currently [affecting] our country is unemployment of the youth and high unemployment rate – would be resolved or [at least] decreased [in intensity].

Here, I have [only] mentioned a few features [of the country's economy], which of course, every one of these ten

features needs to be discussed in full. I have to simply suffice to [reading] the list. One of [the important] topics is employment. One of those topics, which are derived from production, is flourishing of talents and initiatives of the youth. When production rages on and is prospering, talents of the young people will thrive and [their] initiatives will come into play.

Thirdly, the important foreign exchange [reserves] must not be consumed [for unnecessary purposes], [and we must make sure] that the country's foreign exchange, which is important, would not be spent on [and] allocated to [procurement of] consumer goods. The next step is activation of stagnant savings [for] those people who have savings. If production prospers in the country, those savings, which are stagnant, will enter the circulation and will generate wealth for the country.

Exports growth [is another result of boosting domestic production]. If there is production, exports will grow and will once again generate wealth for the country and produce wealth. Another benefit [is] taking the sizzle out of the [current] competition to rub foreign brands in each other's face. At the present time, one of our grave social and moral blights is that we rub foreign brands in each other's face; this garment, these shoes, this handbag, [and] this product is produced by that given famous foreign company. I show it off to another [person], [and in turn,] they show it off to others [as well]; [in this way,] a competition gets underway; in fact, we can tone down or totally stop this cultural blight and this cultural problem in the country by bringing prosperity to [domestic] production.

One of the benefits of production is elimination or reduction of social problems and abnormalities. Unemployment is a cause for corruption, [because] it delays marriage, [and] is a cause for addiction. If there is no unemployment, these [problems] will be eliminated [as well]. [Prosperity of domestic] production can be considered a remedy [for all these problems] as well.

[Another benefit of production is] creating national vibrancy. When production thrives in the country, some sort of public and national vibrancy will be created, which per se, is an important factor for the progress of the country. The country's mineral potentialities – of course today, unfortunately, we remarkably lag behind in this regard – will become activated and we will be able to take advantage of God-given resources, which the Almighty God has bestowed upon this nation. These are [just] a number of topics and main issues [in this regard]; if you think, you can find other topics as well; these are all the results and effects and benefits of prosperity of production in the country.

Well, we simply say production – national production, [and] domestic production – [must prosper], but well [achieving] this [goal] needs potentialities; do we have these potentialities or can we obtain them? My answer is that, yes. We have these potentialities at the present time; [of course,] we have some of them in an active way, [and] can obtain some others. These potentialities mostly include manpower, skill, capital as well as necessary and advanced work tool. These are those things, which are needed for successful production in a country. I believe that we have some of these means and potentialities in an active manner in the country right now, [and] can create some of them in the country, without facing much difficulty.

As for manpower, I noted that 33 million [people] of the country's population are at working age; I mean, they age from 15 years to 40 years. Of course, those people who can [actually] work are more [than this], that is, [people] between the ages of 15 years and 65 years – and of course 65 years is, for example, considered as the age of debility – make up 55 million of the population. However, the people, who are considered as young and can actively work, constitute a workforce of at least 33 million. We have ten million university graduates, [and] about five million students. These are a trove for the country.

Those, who were informed [of this issue], have [also] informed me that when it comes to the number of engineering specialists in the country, we stand among high ranks from the viewpoint of the number of engineers among world countries – even among advanced and big countries – which means that in terms of human resources, [our] potentialities are so high.

Capital [is also important]. One of those things, which are necessary for production, is capital. It is often said that we do not have necessary capital in order to make producers start production; [however,] I disagree with this [claim]. In addition to personal facilities – as some people have facilities of their own – the administration has been able to launch the National Development Fund. Let me give an explanation about the National Development Fund. This [fund] was part of the policies, which were included in the general policies [of the Islamic establishment] a few years ago and [various] administrations were obligated to integrate the National Development Fund in their plans.

What is the National Development Fund? The National Development Fund means that out of the country's oil

revenue – the same oil, which we extract from the wells and sell without putting any added value into it – a certain percentage would be set aside every year in order to reduce dependence of the country's economy on oil. We decided that at first 20 percent [of oil revenues must be deposited into the fund and] then a small amount, that is, three percent, would be added to this 20 percent every year. If these three-percent increments had been added so far in the way it was supposed to be, 36 percent of [the country's] oil revenues would have been deposited in the National Development Fund by this year; I mean, [this figure] should have been kept at the National Development Fund in order to save the country from so much dependence on oil. And if this [plan] had continued [as predicted], oil [revenues] would have been totally separated from the country's economy within a few years from now, which would be a big opportunity and a huge achievement for the country.

One of the miseries of our country and some other countries is that their economies are dependent on oil. The oil, [in turn] is not controlled by oil producing countries, [but] is controlled by consumers, [and] is controlled by world powers. It is them, who set the [global oil] price, increase it, [or] decrease it. In fact, when it comes to such matters, an oil producing country is passive in the face of [global] powers. If a country could wean its economy from oil and have oil as well, this country would certainly progress many times over. The National Development Fund was established for this purpose. Of course, in the [Iranian calendar] year [13]94 (2015-16), then state officials noted that oil revenues had decreased – [because] both [oil] sales had dwindled, and prices were low – demanding and highlighting the necessity to take advantage of the Leader's powers, so that, the three-percent [annual share of oil revenue] would not be deposited [to the National Development Fund and] only the [original] 20-percent be deposited. I accepted that and allowed the administration to only deposit 20-percent [of oil revenue] to the [National Development] Fund. This fund is meant to supply money to the private sector – that is, the domestic producer – and enable them to launch the production work; this is the capital [for boosting domestic production]. I mean, empowerment of the private sector through the National Development Fund is a very necessary issue. [Therefore,] the National Development Fund must be considered as an opportunity for the country; this opportunity can serve [promotion of domestic] production and must serve production. I mean, a domestic producer can take advantage of this fund through correct policies and plans of [various] administrations. [Therefore,] the manpower [for domestic production is provided in] that way, [and] capital in this way.

[Another necessity is provision of] work tools. Some people say that we do not have modern tools, [and] do not have advanced tools. I say that the Iranian youth have managed to increase uranium enrichment from 3.5 percent to 20 percent in a short period of time, which was a very big step that was taken in the country and I have said this in a public speech that the most important problem with enrichment of uranium is between the same 3 percent or 3.5 percent and 20 percent. When a country has attained the ability to enrich uranium up to 20 percent, it can easily continue [enrichment] up to 99 percent. This [phase] is the most important problem. [However,] this part of the problem was solved by our young scientists in a short period of time, which we witnessed that, and they managed to go this way and increase [uranium] enrichment from 3.5 percent to 20 percent. Those young people, who can make such a huge scientific move, or with regard to manufacturing missiles and airplanes, can do something despite the existence of very tough international sanctions that [even] a Zionist officer, [and] a Zionist military official says 'I am enemy of Iranians, but cannot stop admiring what they have done, [because] they have done a great thing' [those young people can do other things as well].

That young person, who can make missiles in that way, make airplanes in that way, produce military weapons in that way, produce advanced weaponry [and] frighten the enemy, [and] increase uranium enrichment from 3.5 percent to 20 percent, can't these young people advance [the existing] machinery for the production of automobile or [for] another given purpose and take it ahead? Why [some people think]they cannot do this? Our young people have the ability [to do this]. Our manpower, the thinking and active brain of studious, talented and educated Iranian youths are ready for taking such steps; there are many things that we can do.[Therefore, we must] give room to the youth, [because] the youth can solve and cut many of our major problems and [Gordian] knots. Our universities avidly want to cooperate with our industrial centers. Since a few years ago, I have recommended [enhanced] cooperation between industry and university. Of course, this has been partially realized. [This goal] has been achieved very well in military sectors, [and] in some other sectors, it is also like this. Our universities can help [in this regard], [because] this is good both for universities, and is good for the progress of science [inside the country], and is also good for our industries. Therefore, in terms of potentialities, we have no problem for [boosting

domestic] production; we have both manpower, and can procure advanced work tools, and can make [necessary] investment through the National Development Fund and the likes of this and [also] by [taking advantage] of the wealth of people themselves. Therefore, [boosting domestic] production is practically possible, [because] potentialities for production exist in the country.
However, there are requirements [for doing this]. There is a set of duties, which all of us must take responsibility for. Both members of the nation and state officials, and judicial officials and officials of the legislative branch have duties, [and] have requirements [in this regard]. If they live up to these requirements, [domestic] production [will prosper]. Now, I enumerate some of these requirements. I say [this] so that the public opinion would become aware and know this issue [that] we are facing no dead-end. We are facing no way, along which we cannot move and go ahead; we can go ahead, [but] we must notch up our activities [a bit]. One of those requirements is efficient and committed and religious management. High-ranking officials of the country, must appoint efficient managers to those [economic] sectors, which are related to production; [I mean,] vibrant [and] energetic mangers, [as well as] enthusiastic managers [who would be] highly motivated [and] strong. This is one of the requirements, which is [a duty] for senior officials of the country.
One step [which must be taken] is to encourage people's participation in production work; people must [be allowed to take part] in production work. When I notified the general policies of Article 44 [of the Constitution], all those who were experts with regard to economic issues said that this was a revolution in [how] the political work [is done]. Well, [officials only have to] pursue these [policies]; [and] make way for people. In managing war and defending the country – needless to say that managing war and defending the country and borders is a job for governments, it is not a job for people, [but] is a job for armies [and] is a job for governments – [but even in this case] through good management and correct choices, the Islamic Republic could mobilize people, enter them into this arena and win the war. When people entered the arena to defend [the country's] borders – which is [usually] a job for governments and a job for armies – they succeeded to go ahead. Many of our prominent military figures [during the Iraqi imposed war] came out of people and Basij [forces]. They were Basijis and fought in a Basiji manner, [and] were martyred as a Basiji as well. Well, the economic work, a priori, [is like this]. The economic job is a job for people. If we allow people into the arena with regard to economic issues and people play their role in the field of economy and production, [that work] will certainly move ahead. This is another one of the requirements [for prosperity of domestic production].
Another requirement is [development of] exports, and state officials must become active [in this regard]. I have received a report from state officials, which unfortunately [shows that] the lion's share of our country's exports, [and] even a large part of our trade transactions, including both exports and imports, is conducted with five or six countries. Well, this is a mistake, [because] this is against the Economy of Resistance. We have put emphasis on this in [various] articles of the Economy of Resistance. This is one of the policies of the Economy of Resistance; [I mean,] development of exports and increasing the number of our export partners. [It is not good for us] to suffice to five or six countries [as our export partners] and restrict ourselves [in this regard]. [Solving this problem] needs [more] activity on the part of officials, both in [the field of] foreign policy and in other fields.
Another requirement is [to make sure about] security of investment, which is a job for agents of the judicial branch and a job for security forces. They must do something to guarantee security of investment. One of the important steps [to be taken] is stability of policies. Laws [must be stable, and] laws must not frequently change, and doing this job is a responsibility of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. First of all, [legislative officials must] do away with redundant and cumbersome regulations, [and] secondly, bring stability to laws and avoid passing a new law every day, so that, investment [would become impossible].
This issue of economic security and security of investment, which I explained, is very important. Sometimes we have done less than enough in this regard. Assume that at a point in the country an investment [offer is made] and a [lot of] fuss is made over it, [and even] the IRIB [state television] gets involved and publicizes it, [as a result of which] people liquidate their gold [reserves], and their house and their money and everything they have and spend [all of it] on investment [in the project]. Then it becomes clear that cheating has been involved [in that case]! Well, this is against economic security. Security of production must be preserved. Therefore, these are those things, which are among indispensable requirements for [prosperity of] production.
One of the very important issues with regard to domestic production is a feeling of responsibility among all people.

Now, [I must say that] I am on people's side, [and] I give voice to people's demands and their requests, but our dear people must also know that the [economic] work is not simply a responsibility for officials, [but] it is incumbent on people as well. When I put [so much] emphasis on domestic production, well, [regulation of] domestic consumption is also certainly a matter of expectation. Why people pay less attention to consumption of domestic products? Of course, fortunately, some steps have been recently taken [in this regard]; [for example,] some stores only supply domestic products. An Iranian consumer must give preference to those things, which are produced inside the country and does not run after foreign names and foreign trademarks and foreign brands; this is one of expectations [for prosperity of domestic production].

One of the expectations is that our dear youths must be really after [finding a] job and there must be no laziness and irresponsibility [among them in this regard]. One of those duties, which are actually incumbent on all people, is this very issue of feeling responsibility; [everybody] must feel responsible. An example of irresponsibility is that with regard to some goods and export articles – the reports of which I receive – some exporters do something that makes that customers outside the country pessimistic toward our domestic production. For example, assume that in a box of oranges, we would put big and high-quality oranges at [the upper] row, but put rotten and small oranges at the bottom [of the box]. What is done with regard to our exports must be representative and indication of the good work and correct work of Iranians. If we do not act like this, it would amount to irresponsibility. [When] we send low-quality goods [to other countries], well, it is clear that the export market would be lost. I invite entrepreneurs in our country to enter the arena of production and work and, God willing, do [serious] work in this regard.

There are two [other] important issues with regard to [domestic] production: one is the issue of imports, [and] the other one is the issue of smuggling. I have already said this, and issued warnings [about it], [and] now, I repeat it one more time. Importation of those goods, which are sufficiently produced inside the country, must be recognized as a prohibited act both from religious and legal viewpoints; [as a result,] what is being produced inside the country, must not be imported from abroad. That we see [a large part of] our consumer goods, from foodstuff to garments to home appliances to purses and shoes for some ladies, to school stationery and exercise books and pens and the likes of these come from aboard, this is a cause for shame! One feels ashamed [about this]; both feels ashamed in the face of domestic producers and feels ashamed in the face of that person, who sends us this commodity from abroad.

In the light of all these potentialities in the country, [we must] not allow this path to continue in its current form, [and] imports must be really prevented in the real sense of the word. There are some basic commodities, which can be produced inside the country, but are nonetheless imported, while it can be produced here [in the country]. Even if we do not have them today and they are not produced at the present time, their production [inside the country] is possible. I heard a few years ago that even fodder [for livestock] is imported. I said, 'Well, fodder should not be among imported items considering all these pastures and farms and the likes of these [which exist in the country]'; they said that [producing] fodder needed that given article, which was not produced inside the country. I said, 'Well, produce it!' An agricultural article – now I have written down [its name] and its name is known, [though] I do not want to specifically mention its name now – can be produced and is producible inside the country. Well, produce it, so that, you would not have to import fodder for your sheep from abroad. [Therefore,] one issue [related to boosting domestic production] is the issue of imports, which is very important.

Another [important problem] is the issue of smuggling. Goods smuggling is very important. Some [reports] say that 15 billion dollars is spent on smuggling. This is a minimal figure, which is currently brought up. [However, the real figure on] this [smuggling problem] is a very high figure, [and] it has been reported as high as 20 billion and 25 billion dollars as well! These [measures] deal a blow to the country's economy; [and this is why] smuggling must be stopped. Of course, those people who are in charge of fighting against smuggling must not get it the wrong way! I say go and fight [big] smuggling bands. I say when smuggled goods enter [the country] through official ports of entry, that person who is responsible for doing this [check on goods entering the country] is not treacherous, [because] there is oversight [in fighting smuggling] not treachery. I have received reports that through a given port – a specific port – for example, three to five thousand containers [of goods] enter the country every day. Out of these total three or five thousand containers, only 150 containers are inspected! Well, why? The rest is not inspected and enters [the country]; when they are stocked at the warehouse, it becomes clear that [the commodity inside those containers] is smuggled commodity, which has entered the country; [and that] through official ports of entry!

Now, what [amount of smuggled goods] which enters [the country] through unofficial border crossings is another

issue; or it is the same about [goods that enter the country] through free zones. These [forms of smuggling] must be stopped and we can do this. I said this to the esteemed president as well and noted that those people who are experts and informed [of such matters] have said that we can bring in [special] devices and inspect these containers without having to stop them and [can do this] while they are moving [through the customs]. Well, [officials must] get hold of this device; if necessary buy it or import it or produce it [inside the country]. We can stop smuggling. Therefore, smuggling is one of the important problems. This is what I mean, not trivial things; [I am not saying] that [officials] go to that given retailer of silver rings in the Reza Market of Mashhad, because "you have imported smuggled commodity," or at the border, for example assume, [go to] that given family, which makes the ends meet by transferring a small amount of [smuggled] commodity from this side of the border to that side; these [people] are not the problem; the problem is that huge smuggling move. The time is passing and my talks have taken very long. I end [my discussion] on the issue of economy right here. Of course, there are many necessary things to say in this regard, but well, I have said to officials whatever should be told them and, and God willing, will continue to say more [in this regard]. And these comments, which I made, I believe can be further expanded and explained and elucidated and clarified, and those people who have the expertise must do this.

Now, [let's talk] about the issue of elections. Dear brethren and sisters! Elections are very important in our country; not only presidential election, but [also] Majlis [parliamentary] elections are like this, [and] elections for [local] councils are also like this. Elections constitute one of the two pillars of religious democracy. Religious democracy stands on two pillars; one of these two pillars is people's votes, [and is] elections. We boast to the world due to the blessing of elections. In order to pound the Iranian nation and the Islamic Republic, enemies ignore our elections and level accusations against us. This shows that elections are very important. Elections are very important. They are source of national dignity; are source of strength for Iranian nation; [and] are source of honor for Iranian nation. Of course, God willing, I will further talk about elections. What I will say today [about] the issue of elections is that this is a phenomenon, which creates might [for the nation]. People of the world, [and] experts across the world have been infatuated with the idea of religious democracy, which was brought up [by Iran] in the world.

In the face of various schools of thought like liberalism and communism and fascism and the likes of these, the honorable [Imam] Khomeini brought up [the idea of] religious democracy, which is the same as the Islamic Republic, and enticed nations and noble people at all corners of the globe, [and] in all countries of the world. This religious democracy is based on elections and Iranian nation must really shine in [the forthcoming] elections. What I say here and is important to me in the first place, is public participation in elections and [that] all people [in the country], who can vote and are eligible [to vote must] take part in elections and bring enthusiasm to elections. This is my foremost and the most important demand.

What I say about elections is that elections must be held according to the strict text of the law; [and] the strict text of the law must be implemented. Regardless of the result of the nation's election, it is creditable, [and] this is the law. I do not interfere in elections; I have never told people and will not [tell them] to choose this person, [or] do not choose that person. I only interfere in one case and it is when some people want to stand against people's vote and people's choice and rig people's votes by taking disruptive actions against people's votes. I will stand against anybody who might want to clash with the result of people's votes. It has been like this during the past years and past elections; [and it was like this during elections held] in the [Iranian calendar] year [13]76 (1997), in the year [13]84 (2005), in the year [13]88 (2009), [and] in the year [13]92 (2013). Some cases [of opposition to people's votes] have taken place before people's eyes and people have been informed of them; [while] people were not informed [of some other cases], but I knew about them.

In all these years which I enumerated, there were people who wanted to stand against [the result of] elections, [this is what] which became public in the year [13]88 (2009) and they brought their supporters into the streets, while in those other years [their opposition] was different. During all these years, I stood fast and said that the result of people's election must be realized no matter what. This is where I interfere in the issue of elections and stand against those who are against and opposed to elections; however, in other cases, no, the strict text of the law must be followed; it is for people to recognize [who is the best choice] and move [accordingly].

And my prediction is that through the divine assistance, our elections will be lively elections, [and] will be overarching elections. I hope that, God willing, the result of elections – both in [elections for] local councils, and in presidential [election] – will be a cause of divine satisfaction and bliss for Iranian nation. And I say that hold

elections in a suitable manner, [because if you do this] the nation will hold its head high. The nation will go ahead with good elections and the enemy, through the divine assistance, will not be able to do a damn thing.
O Almighty God! Make anything we said and heard for yourself and at your service and accept it from us upon your Grace. O Almighty God! Resurrect the purified souls of our martyrs and the purified soul of the honorable Imam with the purified souls of the martyrs [who lost their lives] at the advent of Islam. O Almighty God! Make these purified and illuminated souls satisfied with us. O Almighty God! Make the sacred soul of Vali Asr (May Our Souls Be Scarified For Him) satisfied with us; [and] make us soldiers on this path. O Almighty God! Make all of us, our life and our lifetime, end in good. For this humble one and for any person who is interested [in martyrdom], make martyrdom the last step of our life.

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