The Leader’s remarks in ceremony held to recount memories of the Sacred Defense on the occasion of the liberation of Khorramshahr - 25 /May/ 2017

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

(Arabic prayer)

This is a meeting, which is very sweet and eloquent and rich in meaning and beneficial; I do not mean this meeting per se [is like this], [but] I say this about the process, which has led to this meeting, [during] which you made effort and set up the “night of memories” sessions as a lasting move and, well, praise be to God, today, this humble one succeeded to sit down [with you] and listen to and take advantage [of what you say]. It was very good, [and] I took great advantage [of this meeting and] was greatly benefitted [by it]. Of course, memories of the likes of this humble one are not important memories, because just in the same way that he [film director, Masha’allah Shahmoradi] said, when [the southwestern Iranian city of] Khorramshahr was liberated [from occupation of the Iraqi forces], he heard the news in [city of] Kermanshah, [and] I heard the news in Tehran. Of course, it would be appropriate to say that – now, I don’t remember whether the news was aired on the radio or not – [but] Martyr [Ali] Sayyad Shirazi contacted me at the president’s office and told [me about this development] and explained some details as well. Among other things, he said, “Now that I am talking to you, Iraqis have formed a line in order to be taken into captivity.” It was a very interesting interpretation [of what was happening]. I got into the car and went to meet the late Imam [Khomeini] at the afternoon on the same day, and of course, other people were on the streets in throngs and expressed kind remarks and expressed happiness [when they saw me]. I met with the Imam and told the same to the Imam. I said, “Mr. Sayyad says that Iraqis are in line to come and be taken into captivity;” it was a long line, [including] ten [or] fifteen thousand people! My memories are not important memories, [but] the memories of [those] brethren and sisters, who were at war for long periods of time and saw [different] developments, those [memories] are important.

I believe that this war [with Iraq] – [and] this Sacred Defense – apart from losses, which it entailed for us, had big benefits and gains as well; these gains are much bigger and higher than those losses. Our losses there included human and material losses; I mean, we lost young people, families lost their loved ones, all of us became mournful for the young persons [who were killed at war], and material damage was inflicted [on the country as a result of which] the country somehow lagged behind in terms of the apparent reconstruction work at that juncture; these were losses of war. All wars entail losses like this. However, the benefits of war were long-term benefits, [and] were lasting benefits. Of course, [the war] had short-term and near benefits as well.

One of the biggest benefits of the eight-year war [with the Iraqi aggressors] and the eight-year defense was maintenance and strengthening of the spirit of revolution and movement among our young generation and in our society. If this jihadi and sacrificing movement had not come about, the revolutionary spirit, which had not run its roots deep in those early days [after victory of the Islamic Revolution] would have been damaged. Yes, the honorable Imam was there and his personality was the one that guaranteed many things, but dangers [posed to the revolution] were grave; [if there was no war] the revolutionary spirit would have been certainly exposed to [various kinds of] threats. Through presence in the arena of the Sacred Defense, the revolution become lasting.

Another benefit [of the war] was that once again, we experienced this idea and concept of defending the national identity as well as religious and revolutionary identity, and we have frequently said and heard and quoted [others as saying] that the Almighty God helps and makes humans victorious in the face of obstacles and barriers that exist on the right path; this is very important. A society, which is moving in the direction of [achieving] lofty goals, will

naturally face many obstacles, especially in the materialistic world of today; and if those ideals are spiritual ideals and opposed to power seeking and opposed to seeking [mundane pleasures of] the world and the likes of these, obstacles will be naturally faced. [The fact] that a nation will feel that it can overcome obstacles is a very important thing. Yes, in [Islamic] traditions and verses [of the Holy Quran] we read about putting one's trust in God and that "whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him," and say them and believe in them; however, it is a totally different thing that one would observe "whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him" in practice. [According to the Quran,] Prophet Abraham, despite all his grandeur, tells the Almighty God that "I want to see how dead people come back to life [on the day of Resurrection]." The Almighty says, "Have you not believed?" [Abraham] answers, "Yes, I believe. But [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied." This satisfaction of one's heart [and] this acceptance of a truth from the depth of one's belief and heart is a very important thing; this was shown to us by the war [and by] the eight-year defense [of the country]. At the present time, we can claim with all our power that despite all challenges that [enemies] pose to it, the Islamic Republic can fight off [those challenges] and can overcome all of them, because we have experienced this. [As put by the Quran,] "So, do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers." If faith exists in one's heart and action, mountains will be turned to dust in the face of a society, a [human] complex, [and] a powerful person, and will not be able to resist. This was one of the benefits of war for us. Well, these are true statements.

Of course, the benefits of war are more than these; now, these are analytical remarks and the likes of these [and] I don't want the time [of this meeting] to be spent on such things. This auspicious incident, [and] this huge incident, and at the normal level of us, simple and superficial people, [this] really unbelievable [incident], took place in our country; I mean, we had nothing at the start of the war; let me tell you this; we had nothing; we were empty-handed, [and] our weapons were both few and faulty, and out of reach; some of the existing items, which were stocked in our warehouses, did not come into use until long after the beginning of the war. I was here at the General Staff [of the Armed Forces] at the advisory bureau and was in touch with the military personnel. Well, there were committed and faithful youths in the Army who came [to the General Staff and] reported to me; I also followed up [on developments] as the Imam's representative. They told me that "we have some canons known as 203-mm cannon, which are our heaviest artillery and this had not been used [in the war] so far, and [its use] had not been proposed at all." Now, in such a war [and] with all these tools that are available to the enemy, we have a means [of defending our country] that we can use and we have not.

In our meeting, a meeting that I had with these gentlemen – [including then Iranian president, Abolhassan] Banisadr and others – I brought this up; Banisadr basically did not know anything about it [and] some others [in that meeting] did not like such issues to be discussed; then one of the [military] commanders, who was martyred [in the war later] – May God Bless His Soul – said, "Yes, we have this, [and] this is a very important thing." I said, "Alright, why we do not use it?" I mean, there were things, which were available and we did not use [them in the war]. [When I was] in [city of] Ahvaz, a young army officer informed me that at a garrison manned by the Division 92, we had [a number of these] new personnel carriers – which are called BMP-2, [and] which were made available later. I repeatedly said that we needed that given [military] equipment, [and] they said we didn't have it. One morning, I woke up and along with the same person – the same Army brother – entered the garrison from another way and through another place, because you could not enter the garrison through the normal gate – and went toward the middle of the garrison; I saw that yes, there were perhaps, for example, nine [or] ten of these brand-new BMP-2 [personnel carriers] – I mean, they were still in boarded packaging – [at that garrison]. Of course, some of them had been exposed to weather and wind and rain; [and] they were left derelict beneath the sky! We were in such conditions at the beginning of the war. We did not have equipment of war, [and] did not have a disciplined and regular force ready to work, or we had very small of that [force]; we also had certain things of this type of which we did not take advantage, because the person or persons, who were in charge, did not care; we advanced under such conditions. This [memory] that I recounted here is related to the second half of the [Iranian calendar year, 13]59 (second half of 1980); that is, during the first six months after the start of the war.

Well, how long is the interval between the first six months of the war, that is, the second half of [Iranian calendar year, 13]59 to the first six months of [the Iranian calendar year, 13]61 (1982)? In this interval, the movement of the Iranian nation and our armed forces become so [energetic] that two big and important operations were carried out during the first couple of months of the year 1361; I mean, Operation Fat-hol-Mobin at the beginning [of that year]

in April, and Operation Beit-ol-Moqaddas and the liberation of Khorramshahr in May; I mean, we went ahead like this, [and our] movement was so rapid! That is, during the same month that [the Iraqi forces] pounded Ahvaz with mortar shells from a distance of 10 kilometers – I mean from Dob Hardan, which I think is about 10 kilometers from Ahvaz, they fired mortar shells at Ahvaz – we progressed from that position [of weakness] to this position [of strength] in which [we took into captivity] several thousand prisoners of war in [Operation] Fat-hol-Mobin and several thousand [more] prisoners of war in [Operation] Beit-ol-Moqaddas, and recaptured large swathes of land and recaptured Khorramshahr and strengthened our forces and other issues. This state of affairs continued right to the end of the war; I mean, we could get the grasp of and become knowledgeable of our identity, [and] our power day by day, and move ahead and know ourselves [better]; and this happened [in practice].

For eight years, the entire world joined hands against us and fought us; this is a reality, the entire world! I mean, the United States was against us in practice, NATO was against us in practice, then Soviet Union was against us in practice, [and] reactionaries of the region – these very Saudi [Arabia] and Kuwait and the rest of them – were all against us in practice! I mean, all of them took part [in the Iraqi imposed war] against us. [However, although] we were a newly grown sapling with limited experiences, we could overcome all of these [adversaries]; this is our experience. Isn't this enough [evidence so] that "my heart may be satisfied?"This example is [similar] to the example of birds that came to life, when Prophet Abraham (PBUH) asked the Almighty God, [and] God said, "Act in this way so that your heart would be satisfied." We must have this heartfelt satisfaction; anybody who does not have it, is faulty; I mean, a better description [for such a person] is to say that he is faulty, [because] if we look optimistically, we must say that he is faulty; [however, if] we look pessimistically, well, we must pass a different judgment.

We can overcome all hardships and all challenges like a faithful person [does]; this is the result of keeping and safeguarding memories. I want you to pay attention to the importance of this task; do not let the memory of these eight years of the Sacred Defense be forgotten. These very details, [and] these very things that [our] friends said [in this meeting] all of these are important. These books, which are being written [on this subject], are important, [and] these [books] are valuable; [because] they are not merely a work of art. Of course, a good artistic work is also being done [in this regard]. Both in writing and literature, and in movies and similar fields, good steps, fortunately, are being taken. Of course, in some fields we have advanced more, [and] in some fields we lag behind [and] must move ahead. In terms of arts and from the viewpoint of literary aspects, good works exist; but the issue of these [memories] stands at a higher level than this artistic work. This movie that this gentleman makes, [and] this book, which that gentleman writes are, in fact, like injecting cement into these pillars, when we want to make them stronger, [and] want to make them more lasting. [The issue here] is strengthening the pillars of the revolution, strengthening the pillars of the country's progress, [and] strengthening national identity; [therefore,] it is very valuable.

And let me tell [you] that these memories are, indeed, a national wealth; these memories are national wealth, [because] they do not belong to the person who retells and recounts these memories, [but] belong to us; [and] everybody must say, [and] must write [them]. Of course, it is evident – [and] I have frequently said, which is also apparently the case – that exaggeration and overstatement and the likes of these must be totally avoided. The [main] context of the incident [that pertains to the war] – just in the same way that it has happened – is so excellent and so beautiful and so miraculous that needs no exaggeration; that incident, which has taken place, is like this. The same thing that has happened, [narrators] must say [exactly] the same, must bring it to life, [and] must employ artistic methods in order to give better expression to it.

And [all] such measures are considered as good deeds, [and all] these [measures] are considered as alms [handed out for the sake of God]. These people who do such things, these brethren who are present here, both those who are [active] in the field of writing and literature and the likes of these, and those who are [active] in the field of movies and cinema and the likes of these, [they must] know that this step that they take is a good deed, [and] great spiritual alms. [By taking this step,] you are providing this nation, this population, [and] this country with their means of sustenance, [and] you are a medium through which the divine sustenance and the spiritual sustenance [reaches] them. Appreciate this [state, because] this is very good. [Taking people to see former war zones by organizing] Rahiyan-e Nour [tours] is among these measures; Rahiyan-e Nour is among these [spiritual]alms and good deeds. Writing memories [is] also like this, [and even] this meeting is like this.

Do not let this miraculous development be weakened. My dear ones! There exists [strong] motivation for weakening

this truth in the reality of our lives and in the reality of our minds. Some people have [this] motivation. There are people who make plans for Islamic countries and notify those plans [to them] and they [Islamic countries] accept to take out and erase the issue of jihad or the issue of martyrdom from the religious books of schools and universities and other books. This [issue] has been notified to some [Islamic] countries; they have been told to remove the issue of jihad and the issue of martyrdom and the likes of these [from their books] and they have accepted and removed [them from their books]. These motivations [which I referred to] are like this [and] the same motivations continue into [the country], persist and are seen in the form of some secondary cultural policies here and there; [therefore,] we must not be negligent. [We must] keep the war, the Sacred Defense, the martyrdom, [and] the jihad alive; [and to do this, we] must appreciate these memories, [because] these [memories] are very valuable.

Of course, we still have many things to say in this regard – [when I say] "we," I mean you and those who were present in the war – and these [things] in the real sense of the word can connect and attach the current generation to the same generation, which created that climax of the Sacred Defense and created this historical climax of ours.

People frequently, and very numerous times, come [or] write letters to me [and] insist, implore, [and] cry so that they would be allowed to go [to Syria] and defend the [holy] shrine [over there] and become one of the Defenders of the Shrine [volunteers, who are active in Syria]. I mean, [this is just like] the same things that we saw in those days [during the Iranian calendar years] of the 1360s (1980s) – when young people, small kids, [and] those who could not be sent [to war fronts] on some ground and for some reason, came [to us], [and] implored in order to be dispatched. Right now, the same conditions can be seen in many of these people; [as the Quran says:] [O God!] "Join me with the righteous." This is how you join with the righteous. This is a result of this effort and this endeavor that you are making. God willing, the Almighty would bless this effort of yours, [and] this step that you take and, God willing, boost its effects on a daily basis.

I really thank the arts bureau of the Islamic Development Organization and our dear brother, Mr. [Morteza] Sarhangi and other brethren who are in charge; their work is a very valuable work. [They must] pursue [this line of work]; both this step, that is, [holding] the "night of memory," and compilation of these memories and these notes; [you must know] how valuable this is. And they are everywhere. I knew a limited number of [high-profile] personalities of war, [and] had heard memories from them; then they gradually went to [such provinces as] Azarbaijan, Hamedan, Lorestan, Khorasan, Isfahan, here and there, and found [former] combatants there, wrote down their memories, [and those memories] came to life. [It was then that] I saw what a world it is, [and] what a sea of sayings, of logic, of morale, and of inspiration it is. This step is a very valuable step and [I advise you to] continue doing this in this way. I have repeatedly said that if we keep talking about and working on these eight years of the Sacred Defense for another fifty years to come and do new works [in this regard], it would not be too much. And I suppose that we would not reach the end of it in fifty years from now. Of course, good methods must be taken advantage of, [and] artistic methods must be taken advantage of.

Thank you very much. Today was a very good meeting; I availed myself of the remarks [made by these] gentlemen and met with some dear friends whom I had not met for a long time. God willing, the Allah God would make you successful.

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