The Leader’s remarks in meeting with the chairman and members of the Assembly of Experts - 22 /Sep/ 2017

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

(Arabic prayer)

You are very welcome dear brethren and esteemed gentlemen. One of the most desirable and sweetest meetings for me at certain junctures is to meet with you, gentlemen [members of the Assembly of] Experts. The impact that you make on your social environment, [and] the impact that this noble and dignified meeting has on the entire [Islamic] establishment, are all important points and I hope what you have thought, what you have mused about and said and wanted and taken steps toward, God willing, would be covered by the divine favor and divine assistance and, God willing, bear fruit.

I am very grateful for the remarks made by Mr. [Ayatollah Ahmad] Jannati [chairman of the Assembly of Experts] and Mr. [Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi] Shahroudi, [because] they made useful remarks and brought me up to speed as to the general atmosphere at the [Assembly of Experts’ recent] meeting. Of course, I had already seen a report in this regard. [These] gentlemen brought up important issues, which were really remarkable. Let us commemorate late Mr. Hajj Sheikh Ali Asghar Ma’soumi (May God bless his soul); he was among my old friends and was a member of the Assembly of Experts in a number of [the assembly’s] terms. During the latest term [of the assembly] he himself decided not to be there, [because] he was sick and dilapidated [with age], and passed away just a few days ago, and I hope, God willing, the divine mercy and favor will be bestowed upon him.

[These] gentlemen – Mr. Jannati and Mr. Shahroudi – pointed to the occasion of [the lunar month of] Moharram; this is a very important occasion. [The lunar month of] Moharram is the month of Imam Hossein (PBUH), is a month attributed to [Imam] Hossein (PBUH), [and] is the month of all those values, which were materialized and crystallized in the being of Seyyed-osh-Shohada (PBUH). It is the month of martyrdom, the month of jihad, the month of devotion, the month of loyalty, the month of forgiveness, [and] the month of endeavoring for the maintenance of the religion, the religion of God, and standing firm in the face of those powers who are opposed to religion. The blessed being of Seyyed-osh-Shohada (PBUH) and what happened on [the days of] Ashura and [during month of] Moharram and the likes of these, are symbols of such things. And really this belief is true that Islam was safeguarded through the uprising of Seyyed-osh-Shohada (PBUH); just in the same way that in the course of time, [and] through consecutive centuries, this incident has become livelier on a daily basis. At the present time, this ceremony is being held in a more heated, more attractive, more vibrant, and more widespread manner than [for example] a hundred years ago, when in apparent terms, people’s religion was not threatened by adversaries like adversaries of the present time; all these [developments] are meaningful, and all of them are indicative of a set of realities and a current, which is advancing in the world under the leadership of [Imam] Hossein ibn Ali (PBUH); and, God willing, it will continue to move ahead and will solve problems and do away with difficulties facing nations.

I want to raise three points here. One point is about this esteemed assembly, [that is,] the Assembly of Experts; one point is a statement about the country’s issues, which I have almost repeatedly said before; [and] the last point is about how we must approach [the existing] conditions in the region and the world and [how to assess] their relationship with us and with the Islamic Republic.

As for the first point, this assembly is really an exceptional and unique assembly in terms of composition, in terms of duties, [and] in terms of its performance during past years up to the present time. I believe that one can pin his hope on this assembly to do another important task in addition to these tasks, which it has done so far and keeps doing, and it is [developing] a large-scale and strategic approach to the revolution and the path of the revolution. We do not see [this approach] in our organs; [and] we have no organ to do this. Of course, this is among duties of the

Leader and as much as it has been possible – with all shortcomings, which exist in this humble one – an effort has been made to do this task, but we have no [official] organ to do this. The three branches [of the government] are responsible for managing the country's affairs and must manage the country; every one of them [has got to do this] in one section and in one way. Of course, they must use revolutionary management [methods], [and] there is no doubt [about this], but their approach, naturally, is focused on the path, which they are taking, [and] on this very path, which they are treading, and as a result, a large-scale and strategic approach to totality of the revolution has been lacking during these past 39 years and [will not be there] during scores of forthcoming years; [therefore,] a center is needed to develop this approach.

Now, what does [this] mean? Let me explain more. I mean, it is possible to imagine a think tank within the Assembly of Experts – because praise be to God, the number of thinkers among [members of] this collection of seventy [or] eighty people is not few – and the duty of this think tank would be to offer a large-scale approach to the path of the revolution from day one up to the present time. Well, this revolution pursued certain goals, [and] a movement has been started toward [achieving those] goals. [Members of this think tank] must look to see how close we have got to these goals, to which one we have got closer, with regard to which goal we have come to a halt, [and] with regard to which goal we have regressed; [this is true because] in some cases it may be like this, which for example, at the outset of the revolution, there has been a move and progress toward this goal, [and] then, not only there has been a halt [in that move], but we have regressed; these cases must be identified and if such things were observed in certain cases, this assembly [must] regulate its demands in accordance with them. Talking of demands – which was also touched upon in remarks by [these] gentlemen and speeches of [these] gentlemen [during the assembly's session and] these gentlemen also explained and mentioned it here – I have also said before that the Assembly of Experts must have demands from various organs. These demands can be regulated on the basis of this study. Now, let me bring some examples of cases that exist.

Assume that one of the important titles of this revolution was [that it is a] revolution of "neither East, nor West." At the present time, the [former superpower of the] East does not exist, [but] the [superpower of the] West does exist with all its power and strength. What is the meaning of "nor West?" It means that we should not be attracted to the West, not be influenced by the West, not to accept the Western culture, [and] to decontaminate the country and the culture of getting mixed with the depraved Western culture. [It also means that we must] not be swayed by the West in political fields, [and] not be an ally, obedient and subservient to the West. This is the [real] meaning of "nor West." Of course, "neither East" also means this, but today, there is no Eastern [bloc]. Where is the West? It is America, [and] it is Europe. [Well,] European governments have a culture, a policy, [and] a long and large-scale roadmap, and we, as the Islamic Republic, are duty-bound to save ourselves from falling on the path that is desired by the West; this is a duty. Have we fulfilled this duty up to the present time or not? [If yes,] to what extent have we fulfilled it? In what places have we done it? If it has not been done in some cases, what is the problem? [A new] demand is created for this assembly as a result of the recognition of that problem. This demand may be directed at this humble one, may be put to the administration, may be directed at the Judiciary, may be put to the IRGC (Islamic Revolution Guards Corps), [and] may [be] related to the parliament; a demand is created on this basis. This is [just] an example.

Or, for example, assume that [the Assembly can get active] in the field of economy. Well, economic might is one of the pillars of the country's [overall] might and in the economic might, one of the main components is the strength of the national currency; I mean, the national currency must have [high] purchasing power and generate wealth for citizens, [and] for those who have that money. If due to wrong executive policies, wrong decisions, [and] various kinds of oversights, we ended up in conditions when the [value of the] national currency would fall on a daily basis and decrease, this would be [some sort of] regression, [and] this is moving backward. We must specify [the reasons for] this and in accordance with this [situation], regulate [our] demands, [and] define [our] demands. These demands can, for example, be put to the administration, be put to the parliament and so forth.

Or one of the things, which has been an issue since the early [years after victory of the] revolution is the issue of justice. Justice means to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich in the country and to fight against poverty in the country and correct distribution of wealth in the country. This is different from Marxist ideas; this is different from the equality and egalitarianism that socialists or communists claim; this is the viewpoint of Islam, [and] all Islamic sources and Islamic documents confirm and put emphasis on this concept. This does not mean that we

encroach upon the wealth of the rich and want to take this wealth away from them; no, but the country must be managed in a way that the gap between the poor and the rich would be narrowed. Well, this is a very important issue and today, the world is talking about this. This “Gini coefficient,” which is talked about in the world and at the present time is among [major] economic indicators and indexes, is this; in fact, in one sense, it is [a means of measuring] the gap between the poor and the rich. We must look and see to what extent we have progressed in this regard – according to viewpoint of Islam – [how much] we have moved forward, [and] why current conditions exist. [We must] calculate these [indexes].

Or take into account [the need to] protect and safeguard [our] revolutionary motivations. The [necessary] condition for survival of the Islamic Republic is existence of revolutionary motivations and existence of a revolutionary spirit. If there is no revolutionary spirit, there will be no Islamic Republic. Yes, there will be a government in place, but that government will not be the Islamic Republic anymore. This popular movement, these bloods, which were shed, these troubles, which were taken for the revival of Islam [and] for the revival of Islamic Sharia [law], were meant for this; [in the absence of a revolutionary spirit] these factors will be lost, [and] will be downtrodden. Therefore, [having] revolutionary motivation is certainly necessary for safeguarding the Islamic Republic. [We must see] in what condition this motivation is right now; has it dampened, has it increased, has it continued, what kinds of struggles and counteractions are being made against this motivation, how we can counter them, and [then] regulate our demand in accordance with it. Assume that when I continuously say in various speeches that [we must] help the revolutionary and devout young people, this is what it means. I mean, this is a demand on the basis of the approach [that we take] to the revolutionary movement of the country. Of course, fortunately, the country has not only avoided moving backward in this regard, [but] it has [also] moved forward; this [is] both provable and certain.

Or take into account the issue of people’s adherence to religion. Well, we want people to adhere to religion. This has been sometimes said that “we do not want to forcefully take people toward Paradise.” Well, in my opinion, this is not a good viewpoint, [and] is an exaggerated viewpoint. Nobody wants to take anybody else to Paradise with force, but we must open the way of Paradise to people, [and] encourage people [to move in that direction]. Basically speaking, prophets came for this purpose; they came to take people to Paradise and do not let people go to Hell. Basically speaking, sending of prophets [by God] and sending [holy] books and all this trouble and struggle [by prophets] were aimed at not allowing people to go to Hell. This is our duty [as well], we must do this, [and] people must become committed to religion; there is no doubt about this. Of course, [this must be done] in a correct way and in a correct manner. It is not correct either for somebody to say that “there is no force in this regard in Islam;” [if this is true, then] what are the religious punishments for? What is [the meaning of] this [Quranic verse, which says:] “lash each one of them with a hundred lashes,” or “lash them with eighty lashes?” These are [examples of use of] force.

Therefore, these [kind of studies] are strategic studies; I mean, when your think tank deliberates and casts a look at the path of the revolution, [and] at this [revolutionary] complex [and its developments] over these [past] 39 years; when it takes into account every one of these cases [that I mentioned] – and ten other cases or fifteen other important cases, which one can enumerate – and sees that we have progressed, for example, in this specific case, well, this progress is a cause for encouragement. We must do something that this progress would continue and be maintained, because there is no doubt that this progress has opposites and adversaries. Or we may have come to a halt in some places, [or may] have [even] moved backward in some places. We must see what we can do in the face of every one of these cases? This [study] leads to demands; I mean those demands, which are necessary [to be put forth], are much more numerous than trivial and executive demands [about], for example, what problems that given province or that given city are faced with. Of course, those [problems] are also among [the country’s] problems and I do not want to negate them, but the status of the Assembly of Experts is to see into those kinds of problems [which are absolutely necessary]. In my opinion, this is one of those basic and important tasks that this assembly can carry out.

[As for] that second point, which I said is about the country’s problems and is something that has been frequently said and repeatedly said [in the past], I want to bring it up here one more time. In summary, I want to say that officials of the country must know and all people must [also] know that resolution of the country’s problems is not possible and practical except by all people in this country; be it economic problems, or cultural problems; all kinds of problems [can be only solved] by this very people.

Let me say a sentence about that previous point, which also holds water for this point as well, and that [sentence] is that when you reach a conclusion about a topic out of these important [and] essential topics of the revolution, you must convert this [conclusion] into a discourse. [For example,] publish it in a periodical. You are a big group; a great number of these gentlemen are Friday Prayers leaders or are among prominent personalities of [various] provinces or are [active] in the capital city, preach people, [and] can talk to people and address people; [when something is important] repeat it, [and] say it [many times] until it turns into a discourse. A discourse is the way of thinking, which is rife among people, [and] is generally demanded by people. When something is demanded by the general public and is turned into a discourse, naturally, it will be closer to practical stage. This issue [is] also like that; this issue of paying attention to domestic potentialities in order to solve the country's problems must turn into unequivocal and clear-cut intellectual facts for people. It must be said, argued for, explained, and repeated so many times that it would turn into an established discourse.

We have highly motivated youths, have specialists, have good producers, have good entrepreneurs, have good workers and good farmers, have good teachers, [and] have good professors. Problems must be solved by people of this sort; these are [the people] who must solve the country's problems; they must also do away with economic problems and various work problems. Foreigners cannot do anything.

I do not say [that we must] cut relations with the world; this is by no means my viewpoint. Since the early years of the revolution, I was among those people who insisted on having communications – communications with all corners of the world – [and] I am still of the same opinion. However, what I say is that we must not exchange our own powerful and natural foot with the walking stick of foreigners. It would be an error to lean on the foreigners' walking sticks instead of standing on our own feet and relying on our feet. [Of course,] there is no problem with [engaging in negotiations] in [our] global communications; the problem that I had and [still] have with the nuclear negotiations and have brought it up time and again in private and public meetings with officials themselves is this: I say there was no problem with us engaging in negotiation, [and] there was no problem with negotiations, but due care and accuracy should have been exercised in that negotiation, so that, it would not be like that the opposite side could take any wrong action it wants without being considered as a violation of the JCPOA (Iran's nuclear deal), [but] if we take even a small step, it would be considered as a violation of the JCPOA! This is a mistake, [and] this should not have happened. This [condition] comes about as a result of not relying on and not caring for domestic [sources of] power, [and is due to] reliance on the opposite side and the foreign elements.

I am telling you that you must not set your sights on foreigners. We must work with the world, [and] I have no objection to this, [and] working with the world has certain requirements; we accept those requirement as well and shoulder [responsibility for them], but we do not rely on foreigners, because we have many enemies outside our society and country, [and] a hostile front is before us. Well, praise be to God, we have dealt blows to this front up to the present time, have defeated [this front], have pushed it back, [and] it will be also like this from now on, but know that we are not faced with a single point of hostility, [but] there is a vast hostile front [before us].

And now [let us focus on] the situation in the world and the region, which is an extension of this latest point that I mentioned. I must say in short that, praise be to God, we are progressing with regard to global issues. We have not only avoided turning back, but have not come to a halt either, [and] we continue to progress. The Islamic Republic of Iran, unlike what some people may want to show that "our prestige is lost in the world, [and] we have been belittled in the world," no, the Islamic Republic, by Grace of God, [and] through the divine power and assistance, is dignified and has become more dignified and its might has increased on a daily basis up to the present time. It is this issue, which enrages [our] enemies.

You heard the silly speech of this American president at the United Nations – as you may have heard his remarks directly or indirectly – [and know that] he used very disrespectful and cheap literature; [his literature was nothing but] gangster literature, cowboy literature and [full of] meaningless and wrong threats as well as analyses that were one hundred percent more erroneous [that those threats]. It was a speech full of fabrication [and] full of lies! Perhaps, there were twenty clear lies in this speech; [it was] an incoherent speech, which shows that [American leaders] are both angry and helpless; they are afflicted with problems and retardation from an intellectual viewpoint, while suffering from imbecility [as well]. I mean, this speech proved all these three points; it both showed [American leaders'] anger, and showed [their] helplessness – because they do not know what they must do in the face of this reality that exists – [and] also showed their imbecility. What was said [in Donald Trump's speech] was

not a cause of pride for a nation like the American nation. In my opinion, American elites must feel ashamed – and they feel ashamed – for having such a president who makes such remarks. I do not care about what he has said and how he has said them; what I want to say is why they are angry. The [main] issue is our progress after all; this issue of [the American leaders'] anger is an important issue. In this speech, what was clearer than all other things, was anger. Why they are angry?

The anger is because America had a plan for this West Asia region, which they themselves call it the Middle East, since fifteen and sixteen years ago – and perhaps before that – [because] the plan may have dated back to before [that time, but] its emergence and revelation took place about fifteen [or] sixteen years ago. According to that plan, they talked about the "New Middle East" for a while, and talked about "the Greater Middle East" for another while. They had a plan for this [region]. The main axis of this plan and the core of this plan consisted of Syria, Lebanon, [and] Iraq; these three countries were three axes and three focal points where this plan was mainly supposed to be implemented there. How it was going to be implemented? [The American plan foresaw that] governments should take office in these three countries, which would be absolutely obedient and subservient to America, obey anything that America wants and work for it. What will be the result? The result [of that plan] is that all this region will become a foothold for the Zionist regime and the same [idea of a Greater Israel] from Nile to Euphrates, which they had talked about [before], will be realized in this region one way or another, even if not in the form of an apparent policy, at least in the form of hegemony and infiltration and spiritual and real domination. They wanted to do this. They wanted to do something that Iraq, [this] magnanimous historical country with all these honors, would come under domination of Zionists and Americans; [they wanted] Syria, a center [of civilization], which is very important and [is] the center of resistance against the Zionist regime, to actually come under the control of the Zionist regime. It is clear what they wanted to do to Lebanon as well. They wanted this and wanted to do this [in the region].

Now, you look at the reality, [and] see how distant the reality is from what these [Americans and Zionists] wanted [to achieve]. Look at Lebanon; they could not do a damn thing. Look at Iraq; what happened was exactly the opposite of what they wanted. Look at Syria. Of course, America and its allies committed many crimes in Syria and their hands are stained with blood of Syrian people; there is no doubt about this. They created Daesh, [and] created these Takfiris – [including] al-Nusra Front and the likes of these – and in one sense, they massacred people; they did this, but failed to achieve their goal. At the present time, you look at the issue of Daesh; the issue of Daesh is in fact reaching its end; Takfiris have become totally isolated, [and] the state, which they wanted to be done away with, so that, another state [of affairs] would take its place, has become more established [than before] and exactly the opposite of what America wanted has been realized. When Americans look [at these cases], they consider Iran to be effective and to blame in this regard and this is why they are angry.

Well, as put by late Mr. [Mohammad Hosseini] Beheshti [who said this addressed to America], "be angry and die of this anger!" Well, let them be angry. This is the problem, [and] this is the [main] argument. Nobody must make the mistake of thinking that now, for example, assume that a such-and-such power is standing in front of Iran. No [this is not the case, because] that reaction that they are showing is the sign of weakness, is the sign of their retardation, and is the sign of an anger stemming from their defeat. Their nose has been rubbed in dirt; this is why they are angry, make these statements, deliver these cheap speeches and do such things.

Therefore, what I want to say is that when it comes to the quality of the Islamic Republic's presence in the present world, praise be to God, the Islamic Republic has been successful. [As put by the Quran] "And to Allah belongs [all] dignity, and to His Messenger, and to the believers." Praise be to God, the faithful Islamic Republic is an example of his honorable verse [of the Quran] and enjoys this dignity; [therefore,] we thank God [and] we must maintain this [dignity]. We must preserve this dignity and, God willing, augment it through wisdom, foresight, correct thinking, good planning, [and also] by avoiding mistakes in [choosing] the type of relations, the type of decisions made [and] the type of remarks made.

And this dignity has come about as a result of [hard] struggle. When I said that the motivation for struggle is better at the present time than the past, this is one example of it. Now you see dear martyr, Mohsen Hojaji; well, this is one example. The likes of Mohsen Hojaji are not few among our youths. This example was highlighted and demonstrated by the Almighty God for certain reasons in order to be before the eyes of everybody and in order for everybody to see this and submit to this noble and dear fact that this revolutionary motivation is increasing day by day among [the Iranian] youths through God's Grace and through the divine assistance. There are people who write

letters to me and implore, they really implore, that ‘allow us [to go to Syria]’; now, these are those [people] who have access to call here by phone and write a letter, and manifold more than them are certainly people who do not have this access. They implore [and say] that ‘send us there’, so that, for example, ‘we can go and fight against the enemies, [and] struggle against the enemies’; these are the same motivations [that exist] among our young people. And this is a miracle because of those factors that exist against this [motivation]. One [of those factors] is this very cyberspace, which Mr. Jannati said here, and of course, his remarks and his warning are correct. I am also seriously following up on this issue. However, in spite of this cyberspace, in spite of these conspiracies, [and] in spite of these temptations, you see that the Islamic Republic produces this sort of youths and this sort of motivations; this is [nothing but the result of] the divine favor.
I hope that the Almighty God would keep up and continue this favor for this country, [and] for this nation and include in His favor and mercy those who have created this conditions for the country, [including] the honorable Imam [Khomeini], the dear martyrs and [other] people who struggle on the right path.

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