The Leader’s remarks in meeting with people of East Azarbaijan Province - 19 /Feb/ 2018

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
(Arabic prayer)

You are very welcome dear brethren and sisters. One of the most prominent days and ceremonies, which is commemorated at this Hosseiniyeh, is the day on which you dear ones come here from [East] Azarbaijan [Province] [and] from [the city of] Tabriz; [I mean,] the 29th day of [the Iranian month of] Bahman every year (February 18). Azarbaijan is prominent, its people are prominent, its developments are prominent, [and] the way and method of the dear people of Tabriz and Azarbaijan has always been to create innovations and new ways and amazing developments. May God’s mercy be upon you, [and] may God’s favor always cover you.
Let me say a word about the coincidence of these days with the days that mark the martyrdom of [Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)’s daughter] Hadhrat Fatemeh Zahra, the Seddiqeh Kobra (Peace Be upon Her). Of course, the ceremony that they performed [here] was a very good and effective and useful ceremony. I only say a word and it is that all Muslims are unanimous in virtues of Hadhrat Seddiqeh Kobra (Peace Be upon Her), [and there is] no difference between Shias and Sunnis [in this regard]. This hadith has been mentioned in the books of both Sunnis and Shias that [Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said:] “Fatemeh is the Mistress of Women of Paradise;” this is [a rank which is even] higher than “the Mistress of Women of the World;” [that is, she is] the Mistress of women of Paradise. What kind of people are in Paradise? The topmost women, the most prominent women, the most faithful women, the most struggling women [on the path of God], the martyred women, [and] those who have been commemorated by the Almighty God in the Quran with grandeur. All these [women] are there in Paradise; [and] then Fatemeh Zahra (PBUH) [is] “the Mistress of Women of Paradise;” this is a very sublime and high position. The lesson of bravery, the lesson of sacrifice, the lesson of asceticism in the world, the lesson of acquiring and transferring knowledge to the minds of the audience and others, [and] playing the role of the knowledgeable teacher of humanity are all the lessons of Fatemeh Zahra (PBUH) for the entire humanity. I hope that all of you, all dear people of Azarbaijan and the entire Iranian nation and all Muslims would be benefitted by the blessings of this Lady of the Two Worlds.
In fact, the grandeur of the 29th day of Bahman cannot be expressed with these inadequate terms that we use; the 29th [day] of Bahman is very grand. Although the struggles [against the former Shah’s regime] started in the [Iranian] year [13]56 (1977) in [the city of] Qom and after [they were repeated in] Tabriz, they happened in other places as well, but I daresay that if it was not for the incident of the 29th of Bahman in Tabriz in the year [13]56, the incident of the 19th of Dei in [the city of] Qom would have been most probably forgotten and after that those other developments would not have taken place in a cascade. I mean, the path of the country’s history would have changed. The people of Tabriz succeeded through developments [that took place] on the 29th of Bahman, through their uprising, through their correct understanding, [and] through their justified and timely measure to create this huge movement, which ended in [the victory of the Islamic Revolution on] the 22nd [day] of Bahman [in the Iranian year] of [13]57 (February 11, 1979); this is how grand this story is.
Let me say a word about this year’s 22nd of Bahman demonstrations. [This year’s] 22nd of Bahman both in Tabriz and in other cities and in Tehran – [I mean,] across the country – was really different. After 39 years and on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the victory of the revolution, this huge popular movement is like a miracle. Nowhere in the world has such a thing existed. [The fact] that after all these years – about four decades – not governmental organs, [but] people themselves enter the arena for [the commemoration of] the revolution’s victory day, fill the streets, shout slogans on their own, show their presence and defend their revolution, this [phenomenon] has not existed in any revolution out of these revolutions that we know and have taken place in the past two [or] three centuries. Before that, it did not exist, a priori; [and] at our time, there is no such thing anywhere in the world. This

[phenomenon] is special to Iran, [and] this is special to you. And this year, various cases of hostilities and measures taken by enemies outside [the country], inside [the country], by America, [and] by some of our mischievous [and] untrustworthy neighbors caused people to have more motivation, enter the arena and create a different 22nd of Bahman this year. All these [developments] are lessons for us.

This sentence that you brought up here [and read out loud] that “the clean flag of revolution has been my safe haven for forty years,” is a reality. For forty years, the safe haven of people has been the outstanding and high flag of the revolution. This comment by you is the heartfelt belief of the Iranian nation; you are right. And this comes at a time that people are critical of some issues that are going on in the country, [and] it is not like that they have no criticism. I am totally abreast of people’s criticism, people’s grievances, [and] people’s complaints. They tell me [about people’s criticism], and tell others too, [and that criticism] is transferred to me. However, when it comes to the revolution and when it comes to the [Islamic] establishment, people enter the arena and move like this. Through the divine assistance, some sort of revolutionary awareness, [and] political maturity has come to exist in the Iranian nation, which enables them to differentiate between the revolutionary system of “Ummah and Imamate” [on the one hand,] and the bureaucratic system [on the other hand]. [Therefore, although] they have criticism at one place, they defend the essence of the establishment, which has come into being through the revolution, with all their power. When I say that people must criticize, it is not just about criticism of the administration or the Judiciary or the parliament; no, they may criticize this humble one as well. This criticism is by no means incompatible with standing fast by the Islamic establishment, the revolutionary establishment, [and] the “Ummah and Imamate” establishment; an establishment, which has come into being through the revolution of this nation and through sacrifice of this nation and hundreds of thousands of martyrs, have been scarified during these [past] forty years for this establishment.

On this occasion, when I am facing you, dear ones, who have come hear from a long distance, I am going to discuss with you a few points as much as the time would allow. You are dear ones, towards whom somebody like me feels devotion and love and pure [respect] from the bottom of my heart. I mean, this purity of soul that is in you, this passion that is in you, this evident revolutionary move that exists among you and is felt, not only in words, [but] one can [also] see it in action, will engross everybody. Since the first time after the revolution that I visited Tabriz or visited Azarbaijan [Province] and returned [to Tehran] – and I have made many trips there – I have felt this in the real sense of the word. At that time, I met with the Imam and said – I visited Tabriz when I was president [and] I met with the Imam and said this – that Tabriz is [made] of a different fabric. The people of Tabriz show one some sort of differently vibrant and powerful and tornado-like revolutionary truth. Although the entire nation of Iran had the same revolutionary vibrancy at that time, but Tabriz was something else. Today, I am here face to face with you dear ones from Tabriz and Azarbaijan, [and] from different cities of Azarbaijan. [Therefore,] I mentioned a number of points. Of course, the Iranian nation [and] everybody is my addressee.

One point is about the revolution and the main function of the revolution; one point is about pathology of the revolution; one point – now if there is time – is about priorities and preferences that the revolution dictates to us at this juncture and which we must observe; [and] one point is [also] about the future of the revolution. These are important points, are necessary points, [and] bringing them up in the meeting with you dear ones – who are revolutionary and supporters of revolution in the real sense of the word – seems to be the best place for their discussion. I mean, in reality, this is the best thing to do here and bring up such [important] points with people like you.

[The first point is] about the issue of the revolution and its functions. The revolution was a very big move and I believe that after the lapse of about forty years since the victory of the revolution, we have not correctly understood this revolution and its grandeur. In later times, when they look at the geometry of the revolution from afar, it would become more clear what this revolution was and what it did and what happened [as a result]. The revolution has many functions. Those services that the revolution has provided Iran with are very numerous and there is a long list in this regard. Now enemies want to deny [these services,] but well, these are clear facts. However, the most important and basic step that the revolution has taken was to convert a tyrannical system to a democratic one. This is the most important step that the revolution has taken; [and] it has been taken on the basis of the Islamic teachings, not based on [those] schools [of thought introduced by] this theoretician and that theoretician and [with all] shortcomings and conflicts that exist in their remarks. Now, [the revolution did this] as a result of being inspired by Islam and being inspired by the Quran. [The Quran says,] “Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those

who disbelieve fight in the cause of the Tyrant." The divine system is opposed to the tyrant system and the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Revolution translated the divine system into the system of religious democracy. This is the meaning of the Islamic Republic; [that is,] to convert a tyrannical system into a democratic one. This is the most important step [taken by the revolution].

Democracy means that people are the main source; people are the main source; not only for determining the ruler, because as soon as I say democracy, everybody's mind focuses on ballot boxes – which well, is true as well, [because] election of the president, election of [members of] the Leader's Assembly of Experts and in fact [indirect] election of the Leader, [and] election of [officials running] various organs, all of these are, in fact, done by people. This is [why people's vote is] determining, [and] this is correct, but [democracy] is not just this. The important point is that democracy means that people should have a vote and have a voice and have a right to make a decision on all affairs of [social] life. [This is] quite the opposite of what existed before the revolution in this country through long centuries. For long centuries, this country suffered from authoritarianism of tyrants and kings, [and] people played no role. The [main] tyrant and [smaller] tyrants around the main one made [all] decisions. This was absolute despotism; people were just a means in order for him to be able to rule with force – after all, that person who wants to rule with force must have somebody to force them; they were people. They kept people in order to forcefully rule on them. From the middle of the Qajar period another ailment was added and it was foreign domination and foreign infiltration and foreign colonialism.

This problem did not exist before that. Assume that under the Safavid [dynasty] or in the time of Nader Shah and other [Iranian kings], there was dictatorship, but there was no foreign infiltration. However, from the middle of the Qajar era – from later years of Nassereddin Shah's rule onward – foreign infiltration was added [to previous problems]; I mean, to be exact, infiltration by the British in Iran started from 1800 AD. The representative of the Indian government – who was [actually] the British government – arrived in the country and I have said this in some of [my previous] speeches and have given details in this regard, [and] I don't want to discuss it [once more]. [From that time on,] foreign infiltration was added to dictatorship, [and] foreign domination was added to domination of the tyrant [ruler] to the extent that the Qajar dynasty, who were themselves influenced by the British, were [finally] removed by the British and a new dynasty rose to power. Reza Khan was brought [to power] by the British, then [they] took him away for a reason and replaced him with his son, [and] then Americans entered [the country] in the middle [of the second Pahlavi rule] and took control of everything. Thousands of American advisors [poured into the country]. Democracy is the opposite of this process; I mean, it does not allow dictatorship to exist, [and] does not allow foreign domination to exist; this is [the true meaning of] democracy.

As I said before, this democracy is not just about political management of the country, [because] it is [also true] about services provided in both cities and villages; [and] it is about reviving the spirit of taking big steps in the country –true examples of which you observe in the formation of the IRGC (Islamic Revolution Guards Corps), in the formation of the Reconstruction Jihad [and] in the formation of the Basij [force]. All of a sudden, a reality like the Reconstruction Jihad comes into being in the country and does all those big jobs in the course of a few years; [the same is true about] the IRGC or the Basij force. This is the result of people's presence [and their role] in development and activation of people's potentialities; [that is, development of] human potentialities of the country. You young people have not seen that time, [but] the older ones [know this]; doctors came to our country from the Philippines and India and the likes of these [countries]. Not just in villages and remote places, [but] sometimes in cities very close [to the capital], for example, physicians from the Philippines visited us. A country, which was so incapacitated in terms of manpower, achieves such a level of success that, for example assume, in this very field of healthcare, it becomes an attractive hub in the region and [people] from all corners of the region currently refer to us for the treatment of difficult diseases and are being treated in our hospitals by our physicians. [Under a democratic system] human potentialities come to the surface; all of a sudden, you see that with regard to that given science, which is rare [and] nascent in the world, the country ranks the fourth and fifth in the world [and] among two hundred-odd countries; this is the same democracy. The effect of democracy is bringing to life of potentialities as well. When people enter the arena, when people are trusted, [and when] people are taken into account, it becomes like this. The sense of national self-confidence comes to life among people; then they progress in [various] scientific fields, progress in industrial fields, progress in the field of new sciences, [and] progress with regard to the political impact [that they have] in the region. All these [effects] are the result of people's presence and the effect that people

have on the country's developments; [this is how] the country and the nation acquire grandeur.
At the present time, you see that, for example, that given country, which is dependent on America, is selling 10 million barrels per day of oil [and] has a lot of money in its treasury, but the country is poor, the country is underdeveloped, [and] there is no name and mention of that country's nation. The only thing that is important in that country is a few tyrants who are at the top [of the power hierarchy] and there is no effect and sign of the nation of that country anywhere in the world [and nobody says] that this nation has done that given job or made that given move. However, when there is a religious democracy – like the Islamic Republic [and] like our dear country – in the general view [of the world] to this country, people stand out; therefore, enemies are being hostile toward [our] people. Now that Americans are hostile to us, they are not hostile to this humble one or to a few statesmen, [but] are hostile to the nation, because here, the nation is in control. All those things, which make them angry and make them show anger and wrath are the things, which are done by the nation, [and] is the grandeur of the nation. In democracy, importance of the nation increases; that is, the nation develops a character, finds general and global prestige, [and] becomes dignified and respected. None of these existed in time of tyrannical regime [of Iran], [but all of] these came about under the Islamic Republic [and] due to the blessings of the revolution.
Well, the result of democracy is the progress of the country; [and our] advances have been really extraordinary. We have named the fourth decade of the revolution as the decade of the progress and justice, and progress in the real sense of the word has taken place in the country; I do not say this about justice. As for [the administration of] justice, we lag behind; there is no doubt about this; I own up [and] admit to this. In the decade [named for] progress and justice, we should have been successful with regard to both progress and justice. With regard to progress, we have been successful in the real sense of the word, [because we] have really progressed and progress has taken place in all fields. [However,] when it comes to justice, we must [still] endeavor, must work [more], [and] must apologize to the Almighty God and to the dear people. We have a problem with regard to justice and, God willing, through perseverance of you efficient and faithful men and women, we will progress in this field as well. However, with regard to material progress [of the country], fairly speaking, very numerous and very important steps have been taken.
Progress is not that foreigners come and take away a country's money and make [high-rise] towers for them; these [projects] are not [sign of] progress. Some people look at some of these countries around us, whose wealth is [only] oil and see that yes, they have that type of airport or that type of tower! No, this is not progress that foreigners would come and take away a country's money, humiliate that country's people and build towers for them; this is not progress, this is going back, [and] this is a loss. Today, the highest tower in the region is located in the least effective country of the region! This cannot be called progress. Progress is when a country [and] a nation gets ahead of others through its ability, through its willpower, through its decision, through its knowledge, [and] through its potentiality. This is [real] progress and this, praise be to God, has taken place in our country. Today, we are the hub of medicine and medical treatment [in the region], enjoy a high scientific ranking in the world, have a say with regard to regional issues, have achieved high levels of knowledge in the nuclear field, have achieved high levels of knowledge in the field of nano[-technology], have achieved high levels of knowledge in the field of biotechnology, [and] have achieved high ranking in the field of those sciences that are related to cyberspace; these are [real] progress.
Many of our youths are so talented that they only await a signal to start soaring. We, officials, have been slightly underachieving in this regard. Otherwise, if we get along slightly more with the youth, they will really start to fly in scientific and technical and service fields and with regard to many other jobs, just in the same way that they are soaring in spiritual fields. We have greatly progressed in the field of security, in the field of defense, in the field of agriculture, in the field of healthcare, in the field of science, in the field of communication roads and the likes of these and our progress, praise be to God, is good. [During] the decade of progress and justice, [our] progress was good. These [advances] are the result of the revolution. Of course, since our publicity is weak, people in other countries may not know about this, [but] our enemies know many of these [facts]. Let me tell you this: we are strong in many things, [but] are weak in publicity. In publicity [and] for expressing what has happened [in this country] we are underachieving and weak and with few innovations; we must [therefore] progress in this field. However, those people, who are our enemies and monitor all our issues, they see the advances of the country, and know how much the country has moved [and] how much it has gone ahead.
Therefore, the revolution has done a great job in the country: it has taken the country out of a state of misery, [and]

has relieved the nation of its [previous] state of subservience and humiliation and dishonor; our nation is holding its head high today and this is the most important achievement for a country and for a nation. [Of course,] there are many such things; [and] there is a long list [of the revolution's achievements], [but] as I said before, we are weak in publicity. I recommend officials to give correct reports about all kinds and sorts of advances in the country, not just in an exaggerated manner, [and] not simply through verbal report, [but] also in a practical way [and] in an artistic way, so that, some people who have doubts [in this regard] and are negligent, they themselves will become aware – of course, some people are not negligent, [but] they raise doubt [about the revolution's achievements] intentionally – and people in other places would also know what the revolution has created. This is about the issue of the revolution.

As for the pathology of the revolution, since the time is short and we are approaching noon, I only say a few words. One of the most important blights to affect any revolution is being reactionary. What is the meaning of reactionarism? It means that this movement the revolution had started and the path on which the nation was moving with revolutionary force and with speed, would slow down in some places, then totally stop and then [reverse the course and] return [from this path]. This is [the meaning of] reactionarism. Reactionarism means to return [from one's path]. All big revolutions in the history that we know of – like the French revolution, the Russian revolution and revolutions, which have taken place in African and Latin American countries and other places – almost without any exception have been afflicted with this blight in early years of their life. [The fact] that slogans of the revolution remain intact [and] unscathed after the lapse of forty years, has not existed in any of these revolutions; [but] we managed to maintain these slogans. [However,] it is dangerous; it is my duty to warn our dear people of this danger. If we moved toward aristocracy, this would be [tantamount to] moving toward reactionarism. If instead of paying attention to the lower class, we get attached to the affluent and demanding class in the country, this would be moving toward reactionarism. If instead of relying on people, we rely on foreigners, [and] pin our hope on foreigners, this would be moving toward reactionarism; this must not happen. The elite in the society must be vigilant, [and] officials in the society must be vigilant [as well]. The country's officials must be very careful, [and] people [for their turn] must look on [and] monitor our behavior [and] behavior of officials with [high] sensitivity; with [high] sensitivity. Reactionarism is a very dangerous thing. When reactionarism takes place, it means that the same revolutionary people are in office, but have changed course [and] have changed way; as if the revolution was only meant to oust these [pre-revolution officials] and help us come to office! The revolution was not meant for this [purpose]. Revolution means change, revolution means change of course, [and] revolution means setting one's sight on some sublime goals and moving toward them. If we forgot these goals, it would not be revolution anymore.

Some people think that the revolution only took place [once] in the [Iranian] year [13]57 (1979) and was finished. [In fact,] revolution started in (13)57, not that it was finished. The beginning of change, [and] the beginning of the reform move in the society started in the year (13)57, [and] on the 22nd [day] of [the Iranian month of] Bahman and commenced right there. This move must gradually continue in a more profound, more expansive, more extensive, [and] wiser manner, [and should] not [be allowed to] come to a halt. It must not be like that if we said that given person is revolutionary, a negative view would develop about him; or [if we said] that given person is revolutionary, it would mean that he is a person who does not think, [and] for example, is a playful person; no, it is not like this. Yes, the establishment that manages the country should be respected, the Constitution should be respected, [and] all articles of the Constitution should be observed; the evolution has been cast in this way, [and therefore,] this cast should be held in respect; this is necessary.

If we think that the revolution would mean anything without the [Islamic] establishment, it would be another error [as a result of which] some people think that one must apply protest, criticism and the likes of these to everything, to all developments, [and] to all sections of the Islamic establishment under the name of the revolution; no, this is not [right]. Revolution means the revolutionary establishment. This Islamic establishment, this very establishment [that is comprised] of Ummah and Imam, [and] the establishment of religious democracy must be there in parallel with goals of the revolution, with the revolutionary movement, [and] with the revolutionary orientation; this must take place. Well, fortunately, we are not short of revolutionary [persons] and among the body politic, praise be to God, the revolution is a common coin. Among officials, those who support the revolution in the real sense of the word are not few. Such sensitivities must not be abolished.

In one of my visits when I was the president, I went to one of African countries. Several years – for example, seven, eight [or] ten years – had elapsed since the victory of the revolution in that country. This man, the head of the state,

was a black man who was leader of the revolution and commander of the revolution and, now, head of state. I saw that the behavior of this head of state, who was our host in his own country, was like the behavior of that Portuguese general, who had been ruling this country before their revolution; [his] behavior was the same behavior. On the surface, this country had a background of being under colonialism of Spain or Portugal. Naturally, a Portuguese military politician had ruled this country for many years, [and] now the behavior of this man, who is leader of the revolution, is quite like the behavior of that Portuguese politician! Well, what kind of revolution is this? His view to people, his view to those around him, [and] the way he treated his addressees [was totally like the former Portuguese ruler]. The Islamic Republic is far from this state; praise be to God, it has been far [from this state] up to the present time [and] will continue to stay away from it. The existence of aristocratic spirit among officials, seeking privileges by officials, carelessness about how the treasury is consumed, [and] disregard for the oppressed class, are counterrevolutionary moves. The entirety of the establishment must move with an eye to the goals of the revolution.
Well, an important issue, which exists today, is the economic issue. Let me say this here. Perhaps all officials and those who are well-informed and all the people believe that at the present time, one of the main problems with the country is the issue of the country's economy. Well, what we must do to reform the country's economy? One way [to solve this problem] is to rely on people; [that is, to implement] the Resistance Economy. I have announced this, [and] all the country's officials have confirmed it; I mean, nobody has opposed it; now, of course, some weak objections are heard here and there, but when the policy of the Resistance Economy was proclaimed, all the country's officials confirmed that this is the one and only way [to solve economic problems]. The meaning of the Resistance Economy is not being confined and imprisoned inside the country; [therefore,] nobody must say that "we want to have relations with the world!" Well, relations with the world exist in the Resistance Economy as well. However, it is said that the [main] trust must be put in [our own] people; [it means] an endogenous and extroversive economy. The main rush of the economic move comes from inside the country; [and it stems from] people's talents, people's potentialities, [and] people's assets. A solution must be found so that these assets, these talents, [and] these potentialities would lead to work and production inside [the country] and generation of wealth and creation of riches inside [the country]. I am not opposed to foreigners coming [here and] making investment, but the planning of the work and the leadership must be in control of domestic managers, they must make decisions, [and] they must manage [economic affairs]; the work must not be given to foreigners. If the work is given to foreigners, the country's managers will lose their lead. Didactic developments have taken place in this regard.
In this very [city of] Tehran, the head of one of the famous countries in the region – which I do not want to name; it was one of these relatively advanced Asian countries, which had really good economic advances and its economic growth was high – came here about 12 years [or] thirteen years ago and had a meeting with me. It was the time when that major economic earthquake had shaken East Asian nations. This [person] was head of one of the same [East Asian] states. He came to me; when he entered the room, among his first words was that he said, 'We became impecunious overnight'. When the economy [of a country] is dependent on the capital and will of a Jewish and Western and American capitalist, it becomes like this. The head of state of an economically strong, [and] vibrant country with high economic growth rate, told me that 'we lost all our money overnight'! This is [the result of] dependence on abroad. We ourselves see [the outcome] of relying on foreigners in the case of [Iran's nuclear deal or] the JCPOA. In the case of nuclear negotiations we trusted these [foreign countries] and were not benefited by our trust. Fortunately, I see that the country's officials are taking good measures [in this regard] and I must really thank our foreign minister; the way he has treated the wickedness of Americans and the flip-flop of Europeans has been very good and firm. Some [of his stances] have been declared and some have not been declared of which I am aware; his stance has been very strong and good. Yes, this is the [right] way; they must counter [wickedness of foreigners]; [and] they must demonstrate the national dignity [of Iranians] in foreign relations. It is dangerous to rely on a foreigner; reliance on the foreigners will lead to their gradual control over the country's fate through various means; [therefore,] the foreigners must not be relied on. [Of course,] the foreigners must be taken advantage of, must be made use of, [but] they must not be relied on, [and] must not be trusted. This is among very important issues to which all the country's officials must really pay attention.
Well, now we are on the verge of the fortieth anniversary of victory of the revolution. Forty years is not a long time; in the history of a nation, forty years is not much, [and] is a trivial thing. During these forty years, our nation made a strenuous effort; [and our people] really walked on rugged ground. Since the first year [following victory of the

revolution] – and almost since day one – we were under sanctions and these sanctions have continued in different forms and have increased [in number]. Everything that has happened – all these advances – took place while we were under sanctions; I mean, we were under sanctions and yet achieved these advances. This is indicative of the ability of the revolution and the ability of the Iranian nation.

We have priorities. We must give preference to devoted management over threadbare bureaucracy; this is one of our priorities; [that is,] insisting on devoted management. Country's officials in the executive branch, in the judicial branch, [and] in [all other] various sectors must pursue devoted management. Devoted management does not mean lack of discipline. Working hard, moving with plan, never stopping hard work, and following up on the work, these are the [true] meaning of devoted management.

In the field of domestic politics, we must prefer people over partisan minorities and factional groups and the likes of these; the body politic takes precedence over all.

When it comes to providing services, we must give preference to the oppressed people, to the remote underdeveloped areas over the affluent people. Fortunately, during these years, attention has been paid to many regions, which had never seen development; [this attention has been paid] both by those organs, which are [directly] responsible, and by those organs, which are not directly responsible. The IRGC – for example in Sistan and Baluchestan Province – is providing major services; although it is not a job for the IRGC to do service work, services provided to people by the IRGC in that given underdeveloped region are really remarkable. There are such works and must be followed up on; all the organs in the country must observe this priority.

With regard to defense policies of the country, all methods and tools, which are needed by the country in the present and future must be pursued and renovated. We must not have doubt for a moment that in order to defend itself, the country must move toward [procuring] whatever it needs even if the entire world is against it. Those people, who are constantly threatening humanity with atomic and nuclear tools, which are lethal to humans, have now locked on the Islamic Republic's missiles [and say] that 'why you are building missiles'! Well, what does it have to do with you? [Missiles] are our means of defense, a possibility to defend the country, [and] this nation must be able to defend itself. They say 'you must not have any means of defense, so that, we can bully you as much as we want'! [Of course,] we ourselves consider certain things as [religiously] prohibited and do not pursue [to acquire] them – like nuclear arms and weapons of mass destruction, [which] we do not pursue [to develop] – but with regard to what is needed for us, we do not waste time, [and] do not hesitate.

In [the field of] foreign policy, preferring the East over West, preferring neighbors over distant [countries], [and] preferring those nations and countries that have common grounds with us over others is one of our current priorities.

In economy, employment is our topmost issue, [and] the issue of [domestic] production is another one. [At the beginning of] this year, I announced that [this year must be the year of] "[promoting domestic] production and employment." We must endeavor in this direction, [and] work must be done. All the country's officials must make an effort in this field. Of course, steps were taken this year, [and] I have been given some statistics, but [achieving] what is the [main] purpose, needs more effort. We must do something that figures related to employment in the country would go up, [and] domestic production would also increase; this is [the best] cure for [problems that are nagging] the country's economy.

I also want to say [something] about the future of the country. Know that, first of all, young people must get ready; in scientific terms, in ideological terms, [and] in terms of revolutionary motives, the youth must always be ready. The youth are the driving force behind the progress of the revolution; it has been like this since the beginning, [and] it has been like this up to the present time. Fortunately, today, we have more young people with determination and perseverance and insight than the onset of the revolution. Not that they are as many as what existed in the early [years following victory of the] revolution; no, the insight of today's youths, [and] the depth of [the religious] knowledge of today's youths is higher than many young people in the early [years following victory of the] revolution and we face no shortage in this regard; praise be to God, this is [true]. Young people must get themselves ready; [and] these adolescents who are moving toward youth must [also] get themselves ready. Revolutionary way of thinking, revolutionary motivations, revolutionary insight, [and] revolutionary actions are among major topics that our young people must bear in mind.

Everybody must also know that the Islamic Republic is strong; the Islamic Republic is very strong. The proof to the strength of the Islamic Republic is that for forty years, all arrogant governments of the world have sought to

annihilate and destroy the Islamic Republic and have not been able to do a damn thing. The proof to the strength of the Islamic Republic is this very survival of the Islamic Republic in these four decades. Despite this unfavorable atmosphere, despite this unfavorable situation, [and] despite these great hostilities, the Islamic Republic is alive. Therefore, this shows that this sapling has now turned into a robust tree, which they cannot move from its place. This edifice is very high and strong and we will become stronger as well. You [must] know this! The Islamic Republic will become stronger. I am aware of the threats; I hear what they say, I hear about what they say in public, [and] I sometimes hear about what they occasionally say in their private circles [and] I know what conspiracies they are plotting against us, but despite all this, I repeat what the Imam said that “America cannot do a damn thing.” I am very happy to have met with you dear ones and convey my greetings to all our dear people in [the city of] Tabriz.

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