The Leader’s remarks in an address to pilgrims at Imam Reza (PBUH)’s holy shrine - 22 /Mar/ 2018

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

(Arabic prayer)

I thank the Almighty God that allowed me to meet with you dear and loyal people one more time, [and] one more year beside this purified and blessed mausoleum and the chance to offer my sincere greetings to dear pilgrims, who have come together in this place from across the country, and to the esteemed neighbors [of this holy shrine who live] in this sacred city. I congratulate [you on] the beginning of the [Iranian] New Year and Eid Nowruz and express my condolences on the occasion of the martyrdom of Hadhrat Imam Hadi (PBUH). Out of all effects and blessings, which we know about the Guiding Imams (Peace Be upon Them), this honorable Imam is known for the characteristic that in his special pilgrimage prayer, the most important topics related to [spiritual] ranks of the [Shia] Imams (Peace Be upon Them have been explained in a way that is sufficient and convincing [and] with the most beautiful terms. The Jami’a Kabira prayer belongs to this Honorable One; the pilgrimage prayer of Amir-al-Mo’menin (PBUH) on the day of Ghadir, which is one of the most eloquent expressions and remarks by [Shia] Imams (Peace Be upon Them, also comes from this Honorable One. I hope that due to the blessing of the affectionate glance of this honorable Imam – whose martyrdom anniversary has fallen on the first day of the year and coincides with Eid Nowruz – Iranian nation would benefit from the divine guidance in this year
Today, I will talk about a number of points with you, dear brethren and sisters, who are present here and in fact to the entire great nation of Iran. First of all, I will cast a cursory and brief glance at the forty-year records of the Islamic Republic – both with regard to fundamental principles and slogans and values and with regard to performances. Because the [Iranian] year [13]97 (2017-18), which is this year, is the fortieth year after victory of the revolution. During these forty years, this hoisted flag [The Islamic Revolution] has attracted the eyes and hearts of a huge collection of regional nations. Let’s cast a cursory look and see in what conditions the main mottos of the Islamic Republic establishment have been during these forty years, [and] how our performance, I mean the performance of officials, has been in this period. Of course, this this is a long and detailed discussion, which is not suitable for this meeting with that length and detail. Therefore, I suffice to a short explanation and [explain this issue] almost in passing. I leave lengthy and in-depth discussion [of this issue] to another meeting in the holy month of Ramadan. If I were alive and survived until the holy month [of Ramadan], God willing, I will talk in detail about this issue in one of the meetings in the holy month of Ramadan. This is one point.
The next point is that, as I said before, there are very extensive potentialities and capacities in our country, which have not been tapped into so far. If they are taken advantage of, conditions of the country would greatly improve and would be much better. The next point that I tell you today is “what are [the main] obstacles in the way of taking advantage of these potentialities?” We must somehow know our own behavioral defects, [and] see what has caused us not to be able to take advantage of this vast potential. The next point [and] the next topic is about this year’s motto, which is “to support Iranian products.” I will do some explaining in this regard. Then I will briefly talk about regional issues and the future. These are [the main] topics of my discussion today. I hope dear brethren and sisters, who are present in this meeting, will listen to this discussion with patience and I ask the Almighty God to make me articulate, so that, I would [be able] to say what I have in mind.
As for the main values of the revolution and mottos of the revolution and its fundamental principles, what I can say is that the revolution has passed a good test in this regard. I mean, Iranian nation has been able to preserve the fundamental principles and the main mottos of the revolution with their original strength up to the present time. These are the main mottos and values [of the revolution]: independence, freedom, democracy, national self-confidence and self-reliance, justice, and on top of and more important than all these, to realize and implement the

commands of religion and the Sharia [law] in the country. These mottos have been preserved in their original [state of] vibrancy
At the present time, the country is endowed with independence and this has been the general demand of this people in the revolution; I mean it is the reaction of Iranian nation to two hundred years of foreign domination over this country. It would be beneficial for our youths, for our thinkers and our researchers to pay attention to this [point]. Before the revolution, hegemonic powers dominated this country for about two hundred years and [Iranian] government ruled while overshadowed by foreign powers. The Qajar government survived through guarantee of the tsarist government of Russia; that is, during wars between Iran and Russia [and] in the case of [the conclusion of] Turkmenchai [Treaty], Abbas Mirza of Qajar dynasty was promised [by Russians] that the rule [of Iran] would continue within the Qajar dynasty. This means that the Qajar dynasty lived under the flag and guarantee of Russians. Then the British came to [Iran and] put Reza Khan in power; the same British [colonialists] put [Reza Khan's son] Mohammad Reza in power. Then on the 28th [day of the Iranian month] of Mordad in [the Iranian] year [13]32 (August 19, 1953), Americans entered the arena [in Iran] and renewed Mohammad Reza as Iran's monarch; that is, during these long years, our governments rose and fell through [the influence of] this or that [global] power. At a juncture of time – [through a] deal in 1907 – the British and tsarist Russia reached an agreement to divide the country of Iran between them; one part was under the British domination, one part was under the Russian domination, [and] a small part in-between was independent. I mean, the country was under domination [of foreign powers] in this way. Therefore, it was the public demand of Iranian nation to get out of this situation and become independent. I can say that at the present time, no country in the world has a nation as independent as Iranian nation. All nations in the world, one way or another, show some degree of conservatism in the face of [global] powers. That nation, whose votes are not influenced by any of [those] powers, is Iranian nation. Therefore, independence [of the country] has remained intact.
Freedom [is another motto of the revolution]; independence and freedom, along with each other, were among the main mottos of the revolution. Freedom has been [already] realized in this country. Yes, some people do not talk fairly; [they] take advantage of the freedom that exists [in the country] and lie that there is no freedom; their claims are also reflected by foreign radios and in foreign propaganda. This is not the reality of the case. At the present time, there is freedom of thought in our country, there is freedom of expression, [and] there is freedom of choice. Nobody is put under pressure and made subject to threats and prosecution, because his thinking and opinion are against what the government believes. Anybody claiming that "I have been put under pressure, because my opinion with regard to that given issue has been against the opinion of the government," anybody making such a claim, he would have lied; this is not true. Many people express different anti-government ideas – which is their conviction – in various media and nobody ever bothers them; [and] they are not supposed to be bothered by anybody either. There is also freedom of expression; [and] they can say [what they want].
Yes, anywhere in the world, freedom has its own framework. Freedom meaning "acting against the law" does not exist; [and] freedom meaning "acting against religion and the Sharia [law]" does not exist. The framework of freedom in our country is [made up of] our Constitution and [ordinary] laws of the country and all [of them] emanate from the purified Sharia of Islam; this [limitation for freedom], of course, exists. If somebody expects to be free and to act against the law, it is not logical and [that kind of so-called freedom] this does not exist. Therefore, freedom does exist [in our country].
Democracy [is another motto of the revolution]. General elections [held] in our country are among those elections the likes of which are rarely seen across the world and in various countries. Almost all these years, and recently every two years, elections have been held [in Iran]. Everybody is free to take part in these elections, everybody takes part, [and] our nation takes parts [in various elections] with zeal and enthusiasm. You just observe that during these forty years, those governments, which have been elected by people, have followed various [political] tastes; sometimes they were inclined toward one policy, [and] at another time, they inclined in the opposite direction; all of these [governments] were elected by people. [Therefore,] democracy is established in our country. We did not let our elections be delayed for a single day even during the period of the [Iraqi imposed] war.
Another [revolutionary] value and principle is national self-confidence and self-belief among the Iranian people. I mean, the nation should not feel passive and humiliated in the face of other nations; it means that the spirit of "we can" [exists in the country]; [and] praise be to God, this [spirit] exists in the country at the present time. Of course, I

said before that it will take a long time to explain these [issues] and the figures that are related to them, and I will do this in another meeting. At the present time, praise be to God, our nation and our youths are standing on their own feet and have a feeling of independence and self-belief.
The issue of justice [is also important]. I said a few weeks ago that in terms of [administering] justice, we lag behind; this is what I believe in. However, others – [mostly] ill-wishers – took advantage [of what I said] in another way. They translated my remarks to mean that in terms of justice, no steps have been taken in the country; this is not true. Many steps have been taken with regard to justice, [and] very good steps have been taken, but this is not that justice, which we seek and is aspired by the Muslim nation, [because] it is distant from it. Otherwise, if you compare [the current state of] our country with the period before the revolution or with many other countries, you would see that the class divide is narrower here, abilities of the lower class are higher, [and] generality of education and healthcare and other things are certainly more [remarkable] than many other countries.
I have written some statistics down here, which is good to be mentioned. The source of these statistics and the authority, which has issued these statistics, is the World Bank; I mean, they do not come from a domestic bank. It is said [in] this [report] that before the revolution, the Gini coefficient was above 50. The Gini coefficient is a [means of] calculation, which is used to show the class divide and the distance between the poor and the rich in countries. The higher the value of this coefficient, the wider is the class divide; the lower is this figure, the narrower is the class divide. Before the revolution, the Gini coefficient was above 50; in the [Iranian] year [13]94 (2015-16), the Gini coefficient in the country was 38; that is, we have been able to reduce the class divide this much – [namely] the difference between 50 and 38.
[According] to another statistics – all these figures are related to the World Bank; they are figures given by the World Bank [and] are among international statistics – before the revolution, those living in absolute poverty accounted for 46 percent of Iranian nation; that is, before the revolution, almost half of Iranian nation consisted of those social groups that lived in absolute poverty. At the present time, this figure of 46 percent has fallen to 9.5 percent – of course, this figure is for the [Iranian] year [13]93 (2014-15); I do not have figures on later years – [and] this means that this amount of work has been done [in the country].
Despite all the pressures that have been put on it, the Islamic Republic has taken great steps toward realization of justice and has made good advances. Of course, [Western] propaganda says something else and [of course,] that [level] of justice that we expect [to have and] we pursue [to realize] is higher than these [steps]. Therefore, the motto about [administration of] justice is also a real motto and a motto that, praise be to God, has lasted and become established in the country.
And [another issue is] the issue of religion and realization of the Sharia [law] due to the blessed existence of the Guardian Council; and [you see that] all the arrogant powers are against the Guardian Council, because it has the duty of adapting laws and performances to the sacred Sharia. This [part of my remarks] is about mottos [of the revolution]. Therefore, in short, I can say that the forty-year performance [of the Islamic establishment] with regard to the main mottos of the revolution is an acceptable performance and a good one.
But [let us talk] about performances of the country's officials; I mean how is the track records when it comes to the executive performance of officials. As for [establishing] security and stability [in the country], performance [of relevant officials] has been very good. With regard to science and technology, performances have been very good. With regard to the country's infrastructure – I mean, communication roads, dams, power plants, ports and the likes of these – performance [of relevant officials] has been very good. As for [increasing] non-oil exports, [and] about per capita gross domestic product [figures shows that] per capita gross domestic product has been almost doubled compared to the time before the revolution, [and therefore,] a good track record exists in these fields. It is the same about social development; I mean, there are satisfactory figures with regard to performances in various sectors [in this regard]. Of course, [enemy's] propaganda [try to] show [a picture] different from this. In their propaganda, enemies try to keep people distant from positive realities, because [in this way they would be able to] turn their hearts against the Islamic Revolution and against the [Islamic] establishment and against Islam; [however,] the reality is what I said.
The next point is about untapped potentialities and capacities. This is also a very important point. I want to say that what you see – including advances, potentialities, [and] public and national capabilities – is [the result of] taking advantage of [just] a part of the country's potential; [however,] the country's [true] potential is much more than this.

If we could take advantage of all the [existing] potential of the country through good planning, the progress of the country, [and] the [economic] growth of the country would be much more than what it is at the present time. [These are part of] the existing potentialities.

One capacity is related to our educated youths; this is very important. We have ten million university graduate youths in the country; [and] more than four million students are studying [in universities]; that is, 23 times more than [the number of our students] in early [post-]revolution [years]. In early years after [victory of] the revolution, we had 170,000 or 180,000 [university] students; today, we have more than four million students, which is 23 times more than students at that time; [and] this is a very important capacity for the country. Apart from young students, there are young people who are studying at religious seminaries or youths who are working in [various] applied fields, whose number is very high. These [youths] have many capabilities and can play a role in [the field of] science, in industry, in experimental affairs and in training [manpower]. We have not taken good advantage of these [young people]; [and] we are not taking good advantage of them [even] at the present time. It is for this reason that I insist that young people must work, take action, establish [companies], [and] show innovation whenever they can. A comprehensive plan must be made in the country for taking advantage of this young population that we have in the country. When I said that [young people] must act in “fire at will” manner, it is not special to cultural work, [because] in all fields, which are useful for the progress of the country, young people can play a role. This is one of our potentialities.

One of the important potentialities and capacities [of the country] is the burgeoning of population, which is opposed by some people. Some people say “why the country’s population should reach this number and why it must increase?” This is a mistake. Eighty million people in a country give credit to that country; this country has [a population] of eighty million. This policy [enforced] by Western countries – about which I will explain later – [that is,] the policy of family control, is plaguing them at the present time and is bringing them to their knees. They do not want Islamic countries to be endowed with large populations and active youths and efficient human beings. [The fact] that I keep insisting that population must certainly increase, families must have children – [and] more children – is because the future of this country needs these young people, and the youth and manpower is nothing that one could import from abroad; [because] it must be supplied by the country itself. This burgeoning of population is one of [the country’s] potentialities.

The vast area of our country’s territory and neighborhood with international free waters is among opportunities for this country. We are not taking full advantage of these [opportunities]. One of the two [coastal] rims of the Persian Gulf belongs to us, [and] a large part of the Sea of Oman also belongs to us. [We have] many neighboring countries. We are neighbor with fifteen countries and this is a very important potentiality and capacity for the country. In geographical terms, our country is situated at a sensitive location, [and] it is a connecting link between east and west and north and south and this is important in geographical terms.

There are valuable natural resources in our country, which at the present time, are sold to foreign countries without having any added value. One of [these resources] is oil and gas. I said in this very meeting last year that in terms of the existing oil and gas reserves we rank the first in the world. That is, no country has total oil and gas reserves as much as our dear Iran has. [We rank] the first in terms of gas reserves [in the world] and stand in fourth place [in terms of] oil [reserves] and in terms of total [oil and gas reserves] – total volume of oil and gas – we rank the first in the world. This is a very important capacity, [and] is a very important potentiality. [The fact] that the enemy wants to enforce its domination and mandate on this country at any cost is because of [the presence of] these riches. This [oil and gas] is one of the valuable resources of the country [in addition to] abundant and valuable metals, pasturelands, forests and many other potentialities. If these capacities are taken advantage of, the Iranian economy will rank among the top twelve countries out of more than 200 countries in the world. If, God willing, we could take advantage of these potentialities through innovation by the youth, through presence of the youth, [and] through presence of active and endeavoring managers, [then] the country’s economy would rank among the top twelve economies in the entire world and [Iran] would be developed in all aspects, though of course, this is not the case at the present time.

Well, why we have not taken advantage of these potentialities? The reason why these potentialities have not been taken advantage of is the existence of obstacles. I enumerate some of these obstacles.

One of these obstacles is that some of our officials do not believe these very potentialities; they either do not believe

them or do not attach importance to them. The existence of all these young people in the country is an important potentiality. Some of our officials did not attach importance to this [potentiality] in the course of time; some of them did not believe it [and] did not consider it as important. Some [officials] did not accept that “these young people can do the work” [and] did not believe it. The day when the country’s nuclear industry started to work and reached that acme that all of you know, there were some people – even some of our scientists, [and] some people from our older generations – who told us “Sir, do not do this, it has no use, it is not possible, [and] you cannot [do this].” Some of them wrote letters to me and said you cannot [do this]; why? Because all of those people who were involved [in developing Iran’s nuclear industry] were almost young. Most of them were in their thirties and young [and] they could [pull off this task]. Later on, the same people who denied [our abilities], admitted that “yes, these [young people] were really able to do this task.” Today, in different industries, in nanotechnology, in various industries, [and] in top industries – or “high-tech” [industries] as Western-minded people call them – young people are doing most of the job; they are busy working, are making effort and can [do anything]. Our young people are capable of doing many big jobs. Some of our officials, in the course of time, did not believe in this potentiality or did not consider it as important.

In my opinion, the most important challenge facing the country is a mental challenge; I mean, the public opinion does not know how much wealth is available in the country, [and] some of our officials, unfortunately, do not know how much wealth – both human wealth and natural wealth – is available in the country; the enemy is exploiting this [weakness]. The enemy wants to say that you cannot or have not; [however,] I insist on telling people that we can and we have and our potentialities are plentiful. Our officials must have faith in the power of the youth and in the ability of the youth and attach importance to it. [For their part,] our youths must not be tired of working, must not be tired of innovating, [and] must not be disillusioned by not be appreciated in some cases. Some young people complain to me that “we have done this work, or we could have done it, or we can do it, [but] we are not taken seriously.” Very well, they must not lose heart, must follow up on the work [and] innovation. Both officials have a duty [in this regard] and young people themselves have a duty. This is one of the obstacles.

Another obstacle is underworking. Some people, who have positions in various sectors, have unfortunately been, and [still] are, afflicted with laziness and underworking. The conditions in the country necessitate energetic and perseverant work. [Therefore,] wherever they are, officials and managers must boost their efforts.

One of the obstacles that have prevented us from taking advantage of these potentialities is to trust prescriptions offered by foreigners. As I said before, our people are not passive in the face of foreigners. Some of our officials across the country put more trust in foreigners’ prescription than the domestic one and this is a big mistake. You just take into account that this very Western policy of family planning, which [says] “less children, better life,” is a European policy, [and] a Western policy; they have acted upon it and are facing problems at the present time. They are giving reward to families who produce children, [because] they want to make up for their past lag, but it is of no use [anymore]. [Some Iranian officials] have accepted this policy [and this] Western prescription. A few years ago, I insisted [and] said – in [my] speeches [and also] in private meetings with officials – that they should remove obstacles to childbearing. The officials accepted this as well and confirmed what I said, but unfortunately, there are obstacles in the middle ranks of management [and] this Islamic prescription, which [quotes the Prophet of Islam who] says “get married, produce children, and increase in number [because] I will take pride in you on the Day of Resurrection,” is not implemented, [but] the Western prescription is followed through! This is one obstacle to our progress

Another [obstacle is acting upon] the policies of the World Bank, [including the economic] adjustment policy and policies related to some international agreements, or as they call them, conventions. Acting upon these policies is among obstacles to progress of the country.

[Another obstacle] is to turn a blind eye to the endogenous nature of economy. Endogenicity is among policies of the Resistance Economy and is [one of the] characteristics of the Resistance Economy. Endogenicity means that generation of wealth [must] take place through endogenous activity in the country; our sight must not be set on other countries, [and we] must not expect anything from the outside [of the country]. During past years [and] under various administrations, they wanted several times to get a loan from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, but I did not allow it; [and] I blocked it. They had taken preliminary steps in order to do this. [It would not be

right] that we demand [a solution] from a foreigner and [in return] become committed to [promises given to] that foreigner, [because] this is a grave mistake. Economy must be endogenous. Of course, endogenicity of economy does not mean that we should close the country's doors; no, I have said "endogenous and outward looking," which I will later explain when discussing [this year's motto of] "supporting Iranian products." One of the obstacles has been inattention to the policy of endogenicity of economy in the country.

Another obstacle to our progress is political or factional tribalism. [That is,] "if you do this job, it is good, but if the opposite [political] faction does it, it would be bad." This is a [major] problem with us. We are afflicted with political factionalism and tribalism; we must get rid of this. [Even] if a good work has been done by somebody who is your enemy, when management [of that work] is yours, [and] decision-making is yours, you must promote that good work, [and] must follow up on it. [To say that] "we won't do it, because that given person has done it, [or] we do not do it, because the opposite faction has done it," would be a mistake; [and] this [attitude] is erroneous. This is one of our problems.

One of our problems is lack of a serious campaign against corruption. Let me say here that, at the present time, the issue of corruption in the country, I mean, the common talk about corruption and corrupt [persons] in the country, has turned into a very prevalent issue; no, this is not true [and corruption is not such large-scale]. Of course, even a low degree of corruption is undesirable, [and even] a little corruption is detrimental. However, [the fact] that some people claim that "corruption has swept all places," no, it is by no means like this. People who are righteous, people who are faithful, people who do good, [and] people who are honest are not few in managerial organs of the country, [but] are numerous; [in fact,] most of them are like this; now, of course, a [small] group is corrupt. Of course, a serious campaign and a continuous campaign must be launched against these corrupt people. [The case in which] I say [something and] some activity is started and then ebbs after a while, this is not the work that would be finally useful for the country. So, one of the problems is lack of a serious campaign against corruption.

My dear ones! One of our problems is the country's dependence on oil. This oil is a divine bounty for us, but [the fact] that our economy depends on this oil, this is one of the biggest problems facing our country. We must do something [and] make an effort to make the country's economy independent of oil revenues; oil must not control us, [but] we must control oil. If oil takes control of us – [since] the oil price is determined by other powers, [which] sometimes [put] embargo [on our oil], sometimes buy [it], sometimes say we must not buy [oil] from that given country, [and] buy [it] from this given country – these problems will exist. We must get rid ourselves of the oil-based economy, which is of course a very difficult task; however, this step must certainly be taken in the country.

One of the important obstacles is fundamental flaws in our lifestyle. This one has nothing to do with officials, [but] is related to ourselves and you, the people [of the country]. We have problems with regard to lifestyle. One of our problems is consumerism; another one of our problems is extravagance and excessive consumption and high expenses; another one of our problems is extreme tendency toward a luxury lifestyle; [and] another one of our problems is [willingness toward] an aristocratic life. Unfortunately, aristocratic life in upper classes spills over toward lower classes. [As a result,] even an average person – [I mean] one belonging to the middle class – when he wants to throw a party, [and] when he wants to hold a marriage [ceremony], he does it as affluent people do. This is a flaw, this is a mistake, [and] this [kind of behavior] deals a blow to the country. Excessive consumption, excessive demand, excessive eating, [and] excessive spending are among important flaws that we have in our lifestyle.

We must be passionate about [supporting] our national economy. Consuming foreign products is one of our important flaws. We must be passionate about domestic consumption and [consuming] domestic products and [also about] our national economy. Our youths are passionate fans of that given soccer team; one of them supports the red team, [and] the other one supports the blue team, [and they do that] with passion. And they are even [passionately supporting some] foreign teams; one supports the Real team, [and] the other one supports [another] team. These [young people] show passion about these teams. If we showed the same degree and the same amount of passion about the national economy and domestic production, many of our problems would be solved; this is another one of obstacles.

Well, now [let us] talk about the motto of the year, [which is] the issue of "supporting Iranian products;" this is the current year's motto. First of all, let me tell you that some people say "it is no use that you set the motto of the year, [because] they do not act upon it; so, why you bother setting the motto of the year?" I do not agree with this claim. The motto of the year is determined with two goals in mind: one is to set a direction for the executive policies and

performance of administration's officials and governmental officials; [and] the other one is to convince the public opinion. I mean the public opinion must realize what issue is currently important for the country. At the present time, the issue of Iranian products is an important issue. It is possible that some executive officials in various years would not agree with these mottos, which I set for every year, but those of them who agree, make effort, act, [and] work as much as they can. Of course, if the work is done in a better and more inclusive manner, more results will be achieved. Therefore, it is not like that these mottos are useless. No, these mottos happen to be quite useful.

This year's motto is addressed to both officials and people. This year's motto is [to support] Iranian products. Iranian products mean the final product of the work and capital and economic activity and mind and innovation and everything. The investor with his capital, the worker with his work, [and] the designer with his mind and with his knowledge all of these [people] make an effort and the result [of their work] becomes Iranian product. Therefore, this is a grand thing [and] this is a very important thing; [and] this must be supported. In supporting this Iranian commodity – which is the product of the effort made by economic activists and labor activists and investors and planners and designers and the likes of these – people both play a role as producer of Iranian product, and people also play a role as consumers of Iranian product. They must both produce [and] must also consume; must both make an effort for production [of this product] – I will explain those steps, which must be taken – and also be careful in consumption, so as to consume Iranian products. And this [issue] imposes some duties on people and on government officials; [therefore,] the addressees of this motto are both people and officials.

Well, how to support [Iranian products]? First of all, this support [can take place] in the form of increasing production, which is a duty for the executive officials – [who must] make [necessary] plans – and is also a duty for people themselves, so that, domestic production would increase.

The quality of domestic production must also increase. The Honorable Prophet [of Islam] has been quoted as saying that "God bless that person who does something and strengthens it;" [this means that producers] must do their work in a strong and beautiful and good way, [so that,] the quality of [their] work would increase.

One way to support [domestic production] is to adapt [products] to current needs and tastes and advantages. This is also one way to support [domestic production]. It must not be like that you would not care about what people want. Production of Iranian products means that the thing, which is produced, must [be] compatible with taste of people and what people want, along with necessary subtleties.

Marketing [for Iranian products] outside the country and [boosting] exports is also one way to support Iranian products. Since we are neighboring fifteen countries – apart from other remote countries, which can consume Iranian products, we are neighbor with fifteen countries – we must take advantage of this neighborhood, [and] export Iranian products. This is a duty for Foreign Ministry, is also a duty for Ministry of Commerce, [and] is also a duty for popular economic activists; [they must] do marketing [for Iranian products]. I have been given a statistical report – I do not remember those figures correctly, because I have not written them down, but it contained very important statistics – which [showed that] if we could supply 20 percent of products [needed by] our own neighboring countries – just neighbors – [and] if we could undertake [to supply] 20 percent of their total consumption, a given number of jobs [would be created in the country] – [which was] a very big number, though I do not remember correctly now, [and] cannot mention it – whose effect in creating jobs in the country and generation of national wealth could be very high. This is also one way [to support national production].

The next [point] is about the low cost price and competitiveness [of Iranian products]. A very important work [that must be done] in the country is that we would be able to make domestic products competitive against the foreign counterparts. [I mean,] we must be able as much as we can to produce at a lower price compared to foreign products, and of course, [achieving this goal] needs preliminary steps [to be taken]. Some of the preliminary steps are for the administration to take, [and] some [others] are incumbent on us.

This support [for domestic products] has requirements, so that if these requirements are not met, this support will not be done. One of these requirements is serious management of imports by the administration. Executive officials must seriously manage imports. Those products, which are produced or can be produced inside [the country,] must certainly not be [imported from] abroad. Some people come to me [and] in many cases they complain and say that we have established this factory here, [and] have produced this product, [but] as soon as this product is going to be sent to the market, we suddenly see that customs doors are opened and [a product] similar to this [domestic] product is imported from abroad. This causes many of our factories to fail in this regard; some of them may go bankrupt and

face [various] problems. These imports must be certainly taken into account and be managed by the administration. Sometimes they import certain things, [and] I give notice to officials that why this [product] has been imported? In response, they tell me that we have not imported this, [but] the private sector has imported it. This answer is not a sufficient answer; the private sector must be managed [as well]. The administration must manage [the private sector], [and] be in control of what must be imported and at what quantity, and what must not be imported. [Attention] must be paid to these [points]. Undoubtedly, this is one of those important steps, which must be taken. One of those requirements is the serious fight against smuggling, and unfortunately in various years, this fight has not taken place in a correct manner and must take place. Of course, I recently heard that the Ministry of Economic Affairs [and Finance] has started a new system in the customs. They have said that this system is very effective, [and] is very useful in preventing smuggling. Very well, they [must] follow up on this task and this task must certainly be fulfilled. Smuggling must be blocked. And with regard to contraband, when people know that this product is contraband, they [must] consider themselves duty-bound to passionately avoid consuming this product, so that, it would not be economical for the smuggler to do this. The figures [declared by] our young experts about the destructive impact of imports on the country's production are very important figures. There are young experts, who work in these areas and understand [them] very well. They brought me statistics and showed that [for example] how many jobs in the country are eliminated through that given amount of imports. Then we are complaining about unemployment of the youth, while imports are entering the country like a flood [and] with no good reason. Therefore, one kind of support [for domestic production] is to launch a campaign inside [the country] against smuggling and excessive imports.

One sort of support [for domestic production] is investment by economic activists in [promoting domestic] production. It must not be like that economic activists be more inclined toward mercantilist activities. If they want to make an investment, they [must] make that investment in production. If they purify their intention and work for God [and] for the country, this investment turns into [an act of] worship. Investment is profitable, but since it is [made] for the progress of the country [and] to help people, it [also] becomes an act of worship.

Well, these points were related to this issue of supporting Iranian products. My recommendation is this: as I said [before], look for Iranian products with passion; retailer [must] sell Iranian products; buyers [must] buy Iranian products; [and] officials [must] help [promote] Iranian production and support [it] and prevent imports and smuggling. This [recommendation] concludes this discussion.

Let me say a few words about regional issues and wickedness of Americans, this is also necessary [and] is a current issue. During the last year, the Islamic Republic hoisted the flag of dignity and might of the Iranian nation across the region. The Islamic Republic played an important role in routing Takfiris in the region; it [really] did this. The Islamic Republic succeeded to save people from the wickedness of Takfiris in an important part of this region and to restore security. These are [major] steps that the Islamic Republic has taken. These are big steps, not small ones. Now nosy parties at international level who want to interfere in all domestic affairs in various regions of the world, object saying that why Iranians get involved in issues related to Iraq, [and] why they get involved in issues related to Syria and the likes of these and why they interfere? Well, what does it have to do with you; [and really] what it has to do with you? The Islamic Republic succeeded to thwart America's plot in the region; what was America's plot? America's plot was to create such wicked and oppressor and sacrilegious groups as Daesh in order to deflect attention of [regional] nations from the usurping Zionist regime and get them preoccupied with their own domestic issues, with civil war, [and] with [other different] domestic problems and leave them with no opportunity to think about the Zionist regime. This was America's plot that created Daesh, [and] through the divine assistance and with God's permission, we could thwart this plot

They say, "We were involved in suppressing Daesh," [but] they are lying! It is America's policy to have Daesh, but under their own control. Of course, Daesh and the likes of Daesh are among those things, whose creation is easy for America, but their maintenance is difficult. They want to have these [groups] under their own control and under their thumb, [and] have no motivation for eliminating these [groups]; [because] security of the region does not matter to them. In addition, Americans are not able to establish security in the region, and its proof [is the current situation in] Afghanistan. Americans have been present in Afghanistan for 14 years; what have they been able to do? Have they been able to restore security to Afghanistan? Not at all! They could not. Now, some people say they could not [restore security and] some say they did not want [to do this]; whatever it is, it causes the claim of America and

the likes of America – [that is,] Britain and others – for presence in this region to be a wrong and unjustified claim. Our presence [across the region] is at the request of the regional governments. Anywhere we have gone has been because of the request by the regional governments and nations; [and] we have not bullied [anybody], have not told them what to do or not to do, [and] have not interfered in [the internal] affairs of countries. They asked for help, [and] we helped [them]; we helped them based on rational and logical motivations; everybody must know this. Any offer of help with regard to regional issues has been done through very logical and rational calculations. It is not like that somebody has done something out of emotions; no, [it is] not [like this]. Praise be to God, we have been also successful, [and] will be [successful] after this as well. We do not intend to interfere in [the internal affairs of other] countries and I can say this without a doubt that America will not achieve its goals with regard to regional issues and, God willing, we will achieve our goals.

Let me round up this discussion my dear ones! Let me round up and summarize what I said in a few sentences. This is the roundup of our discussion:

Firstly, all problems in the country can be solved. We have no problem in the country, which cannot be solved; [and] we have no problem whose key and solution would be in the hands of foreigners. There are problems, but all the country's problems can be solved [and] Iranian nation itself and officials of the country hold the key [to their solution].

The second point: the revolution is moving ahead with power and vibrancy. The fortieth [anniversary] of the revolution is not the period of senescence of the revolution, [and] is not the period of backward movement of the revolution, [because] it is the period of maturity and vibrancy of the revolution. At its forty, the revolution, praise be to God, continues to move ahead while preserving its mottos and holding its main flags hoisted.

The third point: our youths are the source of hope for the country in all fields; [therefore,] the young people are very valuable. In top industries, it is the youth who are active; in issues related to culture and art, it is the youth who are active; in military affairs and command, it is the youth who are playing a role; [and] in management positions [of the country], wherever there are young people, the management will be a more vibrant management and my recommendation is that young people must be recruited more and taken advantage of more in various management [positions].

The next point [is that] the enemy was hopeful – this point is important – that the third generation of the revolution and the fourth generation of the revolution would turn their back to the revolution, [but to the contrary], at the present time, the tendency and commitment of the third and fourth generations of the revolution to the revolution and their profound and mature interest in the revolution, is no less than the first generation if not more. The enemy is trying to magnify problems and show them much bigger and much more than what they [really] are. On the opposite, I say that all these problems can be solved by our youths through the divine assistance and under the divine guidance. The enemy is very concerned and angry about the flourishing of our young generation. [The fact] that you saw enemies – [including] Americans and [other] Western countries – were so averse to our centrifuges was not just because these centrifuges enrich uranium, but more than that because [of the fact that] this scientific movement enriches the mind of our youths, [and] makes them ready for [doing] bigger jobs; [they were against centrifuges] mostly because they showed the ability of the Islamic Republic for helping the country's young generation flourish. I tell you that our dear youths will build this country better than what has been in the mind of the previous generation, which is our generation. God willing, they will build it better and will be able to hoist the flag of independence and grandeur and honor of the country higher than where it has been up to the present day.

O Almighty God! Cover our youths with your favor and mercy and guidance and fix their steps on the right path of truth. O Almighty God! [We swear you] by [Prophet] Mohammad and the Household of Mohammad to make the Islamic Iran more dignified on a daily basis and resurrect the purified soul of our honorable Imam [Khomeini], who opened this path to us, with the souls of your Chosen Ones. O Almighty God! Make the sacred soul of [Hadhrat] Vali-e Asr satisfied and content with us; [and] cover us with the prayer of that Honorable One. O Almighty God! Cover us with the spiritual and occult guidance of that Honorable One; count us among helpers of that Honorable One and speed up his return [after his long occultation.

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