The Speech of Ayatollah Imam Seyed Ali Khamenei in the Gathering of Thousands of Pupils and Students - 1 /Nov/ 2023

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and Allah's blessings be bestowed upon the prophet Muhammad and his holy family, especially Imam Mahdi.

This meeting with you, beloved youth and teenagers, is truly bountiful, spiritual, and meaningful. I thank all those who made presentations, gave lectures, sang poems, and recited the Quran. I also thank the respected presenter.

Of the three events which took place on 4 November, on two occasions, the Americans harmed [and wronged] Iranians, and in one case, it was our nation who struck [a blow to] the Americans. Of the two blows America struck our nation, the first was the exile of Imam [Khomeini] on 4 November 1963 because of his opposition to the "Capitulation treaty." "Capitulation" is a political term meaning that a country's subjects are immune in another country. What the betraying Pahlavi government had decreed as a law meant that the American personnel in Iran were immune [from prosecution]; no matter what crime they committed, they should not be put on trial in Iran. This was the "Capitulation Treaty." Capitulation is one of the most debasing and humiliating laws. For instance, if a drunk American killed ten people while driving, Iranian courts did not have the right to prosecute that guy; he should be sent to America and put on trial there. This law was approved and passed by the Pahlavi regime. Only one individual openly and bravely opposed this law, the honourable Imam [Khomeini]. Imam [Khomeini] stood up and spoke against [Capitulation], declaring that Iranians would not tolerate this [humiliating] law (2). Consequently, the Imam was arrested on 4 November and exiled from Iran. This was what the Americans did to us.

The second blow was that of killing the pupils. At the peak of the revolutionary movement of our nation—a revolution not only against Pahlavi but also against America—the tyrant police [of the Pahlavi king and regime] massacred students in front of this university [Tehran University]; they attacked the pupils with fire and killed many mercilessly. This event took place on 4 November. These were the two misfortunes Americans brought upon us, the Iranian nation.

Ten months after the revolution's victory, on 4 November 1978, students broke into the American embassy, gained control, and revealed the secrets and hidden documents. Americans lost their reputation and were discredited. This was our blow to the Americans—the Iranians' blow. These were the three events [of 4 November].

Moreover, I want to put forth this: Today's youth should analyse and understand various events; mere sentimentality is not enough. I will elaborate on what I intend. You [i.e., the youth] should have an analysis [and interpretation] of the Islamic revolution itself; you should have an understanding of the "sacred defence"—the eight-year war [against Iran]; you should have an analysis of the various events of the 1980s as well. It would be best if you had insight into the divergences of the 1990s and mastery over the multiple events that took place in the 2000s and 2010s. This means you must know and realise what happened, how it began, who was behind the events, and what the consequences were. This is what is meant by analysis [and insight].

An issue raised here is our confrontations with the Americans. Well … For almost an hour, you have been repeatedly chanting slogans against America [in this meeting]— [what we all believe in] without any doubt—but what is the reason? What is our problem with America? Be aware: What I am announcing here is based on an awareness and knowledge of what is going on and what the Americans intend to undertake. I want the dear youth to

pay attention to this. Americans themselves relate their enmity with Iran to the event of the embassy, and some others follow them in claiming so. What does this mean? Some say, “The reason for the sanctions imposed on Iran by America, the fact that America wrongs Iran, causes upheaval and makes problems, the reason for these acts of enmity is that Iranian students captured the American embassy.” This is what they [just] utter, both the Americans and their [supporters and] followers in Iran. During my presidency, a famous American journalist interviewed me in New York. His first words were the same claim: the reason behind America and Iran’s controversy is that you [i.e., Iranian students] broke into and took over the American embassy. This is what they want others to believe. It is a big lie! This is not the truth. Twenty-six years before the embassy event, the coup d’état of 19 August took place. On that day, no one had broken into the American embassy. In 1953, Americans overthrew a national independent government—not dependent on America—through a cruel criminal coup d’état. This is how Americans portray their enmity. Thus, the issue of America’s enmity with the Islamic Republic, with the Iranian nation, with Islamic Iran has nothing to do with the embassy event.

As you know, the students [who broke into the embassy] took documents—the Americans had put many of the documents into shredders—and with great patience and care, they put the strips together, [which are] now collected in about seventy or eighty books. The documents attained from the embassy revealed that from the first days after the victory of the revolution, the American embassy was the centre of conspiracy and espionage against Iran. The American embassy even planned coup d’états against the revolution. They conspired in civil wars in Iran; they tried to start civil wars in Iran’s bordering provinces. They schemed to penetrate the new revolutionary government. The American embassy organised and guided the anti-revolutionary media in Iran: [telling them] what to write, what to say, what to fake, and what to rumour. They scheduled for the sanctions as well. This means that the [American] embassy, from the early days of the revolution, was the centre of conspiracy against Iran and the revolution. [Therefore, America’s hostility] has nothing to do with the conquest of the “conspiracy centre” [i.e., the American embassy]. Long before, the Americans had initiated their schemes against the revolution.

Hence, the truth is not what the Americans pretend or what some people in Iran—naively or intentionally—want to propagate. They say: “The reason a powerful country like America is so much against us is that you conquered their embassy that day.” No! This is not the point. What is the truth? In order to understand, fundamentally, what is going on, we should step back [and examine the past]. I want youth and teenagers to carefully ponder this issue and reflect on it with concentration, for the future is yours; you are the means of Iran’s progress. The country belongs to you, and you should go ahead. Let us meditate on the issue much more deeply.

The infiltration of the Westerners began with England—they were the first to enter Iran. The British infiltrated the Qajar government in the 1800s and gradually developed it. They intended to do in Iran what they had done in India. As you know, India was in the hands of the British entirely for about one hundred and fifty years; they had taken away the true life and existence of India. The main wealth of the British is the outcome of colonising India, which has a long narrative of its own. They intended to do the same with Iran. That is, to begin with, they would start with a small action, then gradually they would develop it. They would take control of the economic resources, and after that, political sovereignty would be easy, just like in India. In India, they first started the East India Company. As they proceeded, they then took over the Indian government, and India became part of the British Empire. This was the case for about one hundred and fifty years. Well, they wanted to do the same in Iran. Their first action was to monopolise tobacco—you must have surely heard of The Tobacco Movement, which aimed to dominate the cultivation and trade of Iran’s tobacco and put it under the control of England.

The authorities at that time—King Nasir ad-Din’s period—did not understand what this meant and accepted it. The top Shiite cleric in Samarra, Mirza Shirazi, understood the aftermath of this contract, and by issuing a fatwa [i.e., a religious order], he ended this concession. This was their first plan, which gained them no result. Consecutively, such contracts were made [over and over]. The most important one was the so-called “Vossug od-Dowleh Treaty” [i.e., Anglo-Persian Agreement] in 1919, in which the English gave a hefty bribe to Iran’s prime minister at that time (3) to sign the contract. This contract gave the authority of everything to England: Iran’s economy, politics, army,

and government. This contract was signed, but in the National Counseling Assembly of that time, Martyr Modarres stood against this agreement—all alone. He disclosed the truth and did not let [the contract] be carried out; thus, it was voided. There were other contracts, such as the Reuter Concession, but most of these contracts were voided and abolished by religious scholars. Later, the British took their revenge on the religious scholars.

Then, the English government realised they could not carry out their same plans for India in Iran; it was impractical. They found a solution. Pay attention! The solution was this: in order to do whatever they wanted in Iran, without any concerns, they should bring a brutal dictator into power, one who would be utterly dependent on them, [and create] a government that would carry out whatever Britain itself needed. They identified Reza Khan Cossack—they knew who he was. He was the exact person the British needed: a person who was truly brutal, severely harsh, very impertinent, ignorant, illiterate, uninformed of any knowledge, villain-like, virtue-less, and infidelic. This was the person they found. The weakness of the Qajar king, Ahmad Shah, was taken for granted, and the British performed a coup d'état in Iran—through Reza Shah and someone else called Seyed Ziya Tabatabaei, whom they later put aside. They first put Reza Khan as the Commander in Chief, then made him the Prime Minister and, eventually, King of Iran. What the British had wanted for Iran was accomplished.

Well. The first plan they carried out through Reza Shah was the subjugation of the clergy and the severe intimidation of the nation. As our elders and parents have told us, no one dared to express themselves during Reza Shah's reign. Not even in private could anyone criticise Reza Shah, nor did anyone dare to do so, even among family members. The intimidation was such! They forced the religious scholars to stay at home; they disrespected the clergy in society [by yanking off their turbans in the streets]; they closed the religious centres; they openly objected to religious orders, such as hijab [i.e., the covering of the body and hair by women]. The British also achieved what they intended in Iran: possession of economic and financial resources. Reza Shah did whatever the British wanted. It is worth mentioning that several Westernized or dependent intellectuals were responsible for justifying and supporting Reza Khan's rule —not all of them were dependent; however, they were Westernized and made loud-mouthed by the West. Those intellectuals—whom I do not want to name—have to stand in Allah's presence in the afterworld and are Reza Shah's accomplices in the crimes done to the Iranians. This is a fact.

Well! This is how Reza Shah became England's agent in Iran. Meanwhile, World War II took place. Reza Shah was inclined towards the Germans due to his nature [and personal tendencies]. He liked Hitler's actions. The British realised this inclination and decided he was no longer helpful. [So] they ousted him in 1941. They had put him in power themselves; they dismissed him themselves. They put his son in power on specific conditions: he should do as they ordered, and he fully agreed. They even told him not to listen to a particular radio. He accepted. He obeyed them to this extent! [Full obedience!]

Well! To this point, we had the British governance [over Iran]. The 1940s witnessed the gradual decline of the British's power and authority. People struggled: India was liberated, and so were some countries in Africa. England became weak, and its weakness set the stage for America. America entered in the mid-1940s. At the onset, they were friendly and gentle, following "Truman's fourth principle" [i.e., the Point Four Program] (4) and other things which cannot be explained now. In some cases, to attract the Iranians, Americans even accompanied the opponents of the British and united with them. Unfortunately, as a result, some independent politicians—not dependent on England—became interested in Americans and fell dependent. This is how Americans behaved in Iran [at the beginning]. At first, America entered gently to portray deceitfully that it had no colonial claims in Iran. This was the case until a national government gained power: Mosaddegh's government. Unfortunately, Mosaddegh was optimistic towards the Americans, either naively or out of negligence or simplicity—whichever you think. Mosaddegh opposed the British and was hopeful that the Americans would help. This is what it means to be dependent on foreign help [and support]. When Mosaddegh's government gained authority, and it became evident that it was not and could not be dependent on the Americans, the Americans carried out the coup d'état of 19 August, overruled the [national] government and committed numerous [crimes and] atrocities in Iran.

As soon as the Americans were unmasked and it became clear that they were not a friendly government or Iran's friend, they did whatever they could. They took control of everything [in Iran]. They made Iran dependent upon America politically and economically. They allowed the Zionist regime into Iran—Americans did this! They created the "Savak" [i.e., Iran's Bureau for Intelligence and Security of the State]. Savak was the centre of brutality and mercilessness on people, critics, and opponents. It suppressed the slightest opposition mercilessly. These events took place during America's sovereignty in the 1950s and 1960s. Over ten thousand military advisors were brought into Iran, and our nation had to pay for their high expenses. Everything concerning weapons and arms was the responsibility of the Americans and in their control: from whom to buy weapons, how much to pay for the guns, how to spend the money, and how to receive the weapons. The Americans plotted the diffusion of depravity in Iran. In order to corrupt the youth, moral corruption was precisely planned by the Americans in the 1950s and 1960s—and it reached its peak near the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. It is obvious that a young person who is depraved cannot stand up against anything or have the power to resist. Americans wanted to make the Iranian youth useless. Lagging in science, lagging in technologies, increased moral corruption, and terrible severe class discrimination: all of these occurred during America's governance and infiltration into Iran.

Americans continued their enmity [towards Iran and Iranians]. As the revolutionary movement soared, they sensed the danger and took severe action. Almost a week before the victory of the revolution, a prominent American general named Huyser came to Tehran to execute a coup d'état and kill hundreds of thousands, even millions, of humans. This was their intention. Huyser intended to do so. However, the revolution had reached a point where their measures were useless. A [person with a] steadfast determination, like the honourable Imam [Khomeini], was [standing] against them. Martial law was declared to arrange a coup d'état, but Imam [Khomeini] asked the people to go into the streets [and ignore the martial law]; thus, martial law was repealed, their plans were thwarted, and they were defeated. Observing the uselessness of their schemes, Huyser left Iran—if he had stayed a few more days, he would probably have been among the first to be executed after the revolution. It was a narrow escape.

Well. This is the conflict between America and Iran. Saying "Death to America" is not just a slogan; it is a policy. The cause of this conflict is, as I have said. Throughout long years—from the mid-1940s until the victory of the revolution (that is, the end of the 1970s), for thirty years—Americans did whatever they could against Iranians; they assaulted our nation in whatever way they could: financially, economically, politically, academically, and morally. The revolution gained victory in such a situation. The revolution stood against such corrupt governance and destructive infiltration [i.e., the Pahlavi government], and it achieved victory through divine blessing [and aid], the efforts of our nation, and the leadership of the honourable Imam [Khomeini].

What Huyser wanted to do in Iran [at that time], the Americans are doing now in Gaza. The case is the same. The same is being done in Palestine. The Zionists—who are ruling Occupied Palestine and oppressed Palestine—are backed by the Americans. If the Americans did not support the Zionists and provided them with armaments, the government of the corrupt, fake, and false Zionist regime would have been defeated and overthrown in the first week. Americans support them. What is happening in Gaza today is what the Americans wanted to carry out in Iran if they could. The disaster in Gaza—effected by the Zionists through the aid of the Americans, and in fact by the Americans—is freakish. Nearly four thousand children have been killed by the Zionists in three weeks! Have you heard of such an event in history? The Islamic nation must know what is going on, and it should understand the circumstances. The issue raised here is not Gaza or Israel. It is the question of good and evil [right and wrong], faith and arrogance. On one side, there is the power of faith, and on the other, the power of arrogance. The power of arrogance uses military force, bombardment, atrocities, and crime to win; however, the power of faith will win through divine aid and blessing.

Our grief for the sufferings of the people of Palestine, especially the people of Gaza, is beyond words—we are heartbroken. We are [indeed] sad, but looking carefully at the events, we realise that the people of Gaza, the people of Palestine, have succeeded in doing great things, and they will gain victory [despite this catastrophe]. First, the people of Gaza have unmasked the false human-right claims of America, England, France, and others—through

their patience and resistance—and disgraced them. Through their patience, the people of Gaza have moved the human conscience. Look at the world! What is going on? In these Western countries—in England, France, Italy, and even in various states of America—people come into the streets in large crowds, chanting slogans against Israel and, in some cases, against America. They have been dishonoured. They genuinely do not have any solutions; they cannot justify their actions. Hence, it is heard that an idiot said, "The gathering of people in England is Iran's deed." Perhaps the "basij" [i.e., resistance mobilisation force] of London has scheduled the gathering or the "basij" of Paris (5)!

Another truly disgraceful behaviour of Western politicians and Western media today is the labelling of Palestinian combatants as "terrorists." Is a person who defends his home a terrorist? Is a person who defends his country a terrorist? In World War II, the Germans invaded Paris, and the Parisians fought against the Germans. Were the Parisians terrorists? How is it that the Parisians were combatants and the French are proud of them, but the Hamas and Islamic Jihad youth are called "terrorists"? Shame on you all! The people of Gaza and Palestinian warriors have denounced the world liars.

An essential consequence of the Al-Aqsa Storm operation (6) was that it portrayed how a small group—compared to the Zionists, they were much less a small number—with limited equipment and facilities but faith and steadfast determination could completely destroy the enemy's achievements, gained through years of criminal effort, in just a few hours. [Al-Aqsa Storm demonstrated that a small group] could humiliate the world's arrogant governments. The Palestinians humiliated both the usurping regime and its supporters with their actions, bravery, and performance, and today, with their patience. This is a great lesson. Indeed, these crimes moved humanity. Everyone has been moved.

I said this a few days ago (7), and I will repeat it: We expect much more from the Islamic world. Muslim governments must know that if they do not help the Palestinians today—in any way possible—they are reinforcing the enemy of Palestine, which is the enemy of Islam and the enemy of humanity, and in the future, this danger will threaten themselves. What Islamic governments should insist upon is the immediate stop of the crimes being committed in Gaza. The bombardment should be halted instantly. The export of oil and food to the Zionist regime should be blocked. Islamic governments should not cooperate economically with the Zionists. Islamic governments should condemn this disaster openly and bravely in all world assemblies, without stuttering and without hesitation. It is not acceptable at all that in an Islamic or Arab gathering, those who spoke against the Zionist crimes should become ambiguous or stutter; they should express themselves straightforwardly. The events are apparent. The Zionist regime should be condemned. The Islamic world, all together, should take action against the Zionist regime.

The blow on the Zionist regime is non-compensable [and irrecoverable]. I have announced this before; I emphasise and repeat it again now. The Zionist regime authorities have confessed gradually that the blow struck upon them is not compensable. They cannot recover. The Zionist regime is now helpless and puzzled; it even lies to its [own] people. They show concern for their hostages held by Palestinians, but this is a lie as well. Their bombardment might kill their own hostages. This concern is just a lie they tell their people. This lie is inevitable. The Zionist regime is bewildered and has no other choice. It does not know what to do and acts out of necessity. If the Americans did not help them, the Zionist regime would be paralysed [and defeated] in just a few days.

The Islamic world should not forget this decisive and essential point: America, France, and England have confronted a Muslim nation; they have opposed the oppressed Palestine. The Islamic world should not forget this. They must comprehend who is opposing and crushing this oppressed people and nation; it is not just the Zionist regime. This understanding should not be forgotten in the Islamic world's trade, estimations, and analyses.

We indeed believe that "Allah's promise is true and those who do not truly believe in Allah's word should not unnerve or weaken you (by their negativism)" (8). God willing, the final victory, not too far in the future, is for the Palestinians and Palestine. May Allah bless you all.

References:

1) At the beginning of the meeting, three pupils and students declared some points about Iran's conditions and the events in Gaza.

2) Letters of Imam Khomeini, Vol. 1, p. 415, "Lecture for People" (26/10/1961).

3) Mirza Hassan Khan Wossuq od-Dowleh.

4) "Truman's Fourth Principle" [Point Four Program] points to the fourth policy of US President Harry Truman in his 1949 inaugural address, in which he claimed, "Rich countries have a moral duty to help poor countries."

5) Laughter of the audience.

6) The Palestinian resistance groups started a widespread operation on Saturday, 10 October 2023, called "Al-Aqsa Storm," during the beginning hours of which a significant number of Zionists were killed, injured, or taken hostage.

7) The lecture was presented in a meeting with organisers of the National Congress of Lorestan Province's Martyrs (25/10/2023).

8) The Holy Quran, Surah Rome, Verse 60.