Remarks at a meeting with thousands of Basij members from diverse sectors - 25 /Nov/ 2024

In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful[i]

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our Master and Prophet, Abul-Qasim Al-Mustafa Muhammad, and upon his most pure, immaculate, and chosen Household, especially the Remaining Proof of Allah on earth.

A very warm welcome to you, dear brothers and sisters. I extend my greetings to all of you, as well as to everyone across the country who hears these words. I want to share a few words about the Basij. The Basij of the Oppressed was an unprecedented phenomenon that emerged in the country; such an entity had no forerunner in this form anywhere else in the world and was considered an exceptional development. I will explain this from various perspectives. This phenomenon was not imitating something before it or modelled upon something; it sprang from our national culture and history. This is the first point: the consequence of this point is that because this phenomenon is authentic, it is enduring. This phenomenon is not something that can fade away; it is stable and lasting because it is deeply rooted in the nation, its history, and its national and Iranian identity.

This was a cultural network-building effort. At its core, the Basij is a cultural, social, and, of course, a military network. While the first thought that comes to mind today might be the military aspect of Basij, its cultural and social dimensions are no less significant despite the importance of its military role. This network-building was the initiative of Imam [Khomeini]. When did it begin? In the middle of facing a significant threat, this initiative was manifested. This was one of the unique qualities of our great Imam. Most of you did not experience the Imam [Khomeini] era, but one of his distinctive traits was this: he created opportunities out of threats. This instance was no exception. On November 4, 1979, the U.S. Embassy takeover took place. The leading global power of that time, the United States, began to bare its claws, threatening and imposing sanctions. Amidst these threats, on the 26th of November—just 22 or 23 days after the incident—Imam Khomeini issued the order to form the Basij. This happened at a time when the country, newly revolutionised and lacking most of the equipment for self-defence, faced such a significant threat. In these circumstances, the Imam planted a pure sapling, the blessed tree of the Basij, in the nation's social, cultural, and military landscape. He turned a threat into an opportunity.

Well, we said the military aspect of Basij is just one facet. I now emphasise that Basij is primarily a school, an idea, and a thought. In essence, it is intellectual and cultural networking. If the Basij engages in military, social, or scientific activities — which it does — the source of all these is the logic and school of thought that form its foundation. If I were to explain the logic and foundation of the Basij in two words, I would say they are faith and self-confidence. Or, you could phrase it as God-reliance and self-reliance. These are the two pillars of the Basij. The Basij is built upon God-reliance and self-reliance. Whatever fruits this tree bears today, tomorrow, or in the future stem from these two principles: self-reliance and God-reliance. The Basij has many characteristics, all of which originate from these two fundamental pillars. The Basij are courageous, innovative, swift in action, have a broad perspective, are masters in understanding the enemy, and are highly aware of the various movements (that may trend)—these are all attributes of the Basij. However, these and its other distinctive qualities stem from the two foundational traits. Upon reflection and analysis, this connection becomes entirely clear. I will briefly touch upon this point now.

When we speak of believing in God (Khoda-baavari), it means submitting to God, relying on Him, and having confidence in His promises. Believing in God means, firstly, being submissive to God; secondly, trusting in and

hoping for His assistance; and thirdly, having faith in His promises—such as, "If you help [the cause of] Allah, He will help you**[ii]** ". This pertains to believing in God.

Believing in oneself (khud-baavari) means self-confidence and self-acceptance. In other words, it is the discovery of one's capabilities. Often, we are unaware of our inherent potential—not only our physical capabilities but also our intellectual, spiritual, and emotional capabilities. Self-belief makes us aware of these abilities, helps us appreciate them, and drives us to utilise them. Many examples exist, but I won't delve into detailed explanations now.

Of course, Believing in God, whether on an individual level for a Basiji or at the organisational level for the Basij, when present, manifests the truth of divine promises before one's eyes. In one instance, the Quran states, "To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise" (Quran 48:4), and in another: "To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise". Here, 'Aziz' signifies an entity that always overcomes and is never overcome. This is the essence of 'Aziz.' "To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth." All the infinite components of existence are soldiers of God. If we are true servants of God, these forces can come to our aid. This is a divine and natural law. Of course, we are not in command of this divine army to use whenever we wish; the Commander is God. However, when we are prepared, He places this army at our disposal under specific circumstances and defined conditions. These are the Qur'an's words, the Holy Qur'an's explicit expressions, "Yes, if you remain steadfast and mindful of Allah and the enemy comes upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, designated for battle**[iii]**.". If you are prepared, even the angels of Allah will come to your aid. We have witnessed this divine aid during the Sacred Defence, before it, after it, in the political arena, on the battlefield, and in the scientific field. Where can one see divine assistance? It is where you undertake a task that seems impossible in your view, yet it becomes possible, and that task is accomplished. These are the characteristics the Basij forces have that are related to believing in God. As we mentioned before, this applies to the Basij as an organisation and individual Basij members. They recognise their intellectual, spiritual, and physical capabilities, value their power of will and decision-making, and do not yield to the enemy's will.

There is a factor within us that we often overlook. It is the power of decision-making, the strength of will. We possess willpower, the ability to decide. Sometimes, a person's will can become so strong that it can create and bring something into existence. This power resides within us, but we fail to recognise, appreciate, or strengthen it. In the Basij lifestyle and school of thought, recognising this innate and internal human capability is one of its remarkable features and advantages. These qualities, such as not yielding to the enemy's will, asserting your own will, having self-confidence, and recognising one's strengths, are precisely the opposite of the plans global arrogance has for nations. They are in direct opposition to these schemes.

One of the first tactics of global arrogance—those global hegemonic powers aiming to dominate nations—is to deny those nations their potential and then belittle them. This is also mentioned in the Quran regarding Pharaoh: "He misled his people, and they obeyed him." Pharaoh was, in fact, nobler than the rulers of the world today—the rulers of America and Europe—who act as modern-day pharaohs. He only did this to his own people, but these [modern powers] do it to other nations. "He misled his people, and they obeyed him". Pharaoh humiliated his own people, belittled them and denied their merits, "Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers that run below me**[iv]**?". As a result, his people saw him as superior and obeyed him. Colonial powers follow the same strategy: they deny your history, identity, and capabilities. For example, when you aim to nationalise your country's oil, which is under British control, their agents within your country give speeches or write things, saying, "What nonsense! Do you think Iranians can manage the Abadan refinery?" "Iranians can't even make a clay water pot!"—this is how they belittle nations. The Basij starkly contrasts this; it is the complete opposite of this national humiliation. Dominant powers manipulate national beliefs to establish their control. A nation has its history, beliefs, significant figures, and values, but these powers distort, undermine, and belittle them to achieve dominance."

My dear ones, my brothers, my sisters, my children! For many long years, especially during the Qajar and Pahlavi

eras, Iran had been humiliated. Then, the Revolution came and turned the tables. After World War I, several countries participated in a conference in Paris to decide the world's fate. The participants were those who had taken part in the war or had suffered its consequences. Iran, being among those affected by World War I, sent a delegation, but the Iranian delegation was denied entry to the Paris conference. Such was the level of humiliation inflicted upon the Iranian nation during that era. The Basiji mindset breaks this barrier; it neutralises this highly dangerous soft-power weapon. The Basiji way of thinking instils self-confidence. A teenager or a young person feels a sense of presence and capability, which is their self-confidence. As for their belief in God, as we mentioned, they know that all of existence is God's forces, and "To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth.". If they move in God's path, these forces will aid them. This holds true today and will continue to hold true tomorrow. Without a doubt, this Basiji spirit, this Basiji capability, this Basiji state that exists in our country—and fortunately in several other countries among the members of the Resistance Front—will certainly overcome all the policies of America, the West, imperialism, and the Zionist regime.

A few points about the Basij: One key point is that Imam Khomeini laid the groundwork for Basiji thinking during the fifteen years of the movement and struggle before the Revolution's victory. Many of the characteristics I describe about the Basij occurred outside the formal organisation and even before its official establishment. From 1963 to 1979, over fifteen to sixteen years, the Imam instilled this Basiji spirit, this self-confidence, trust in God, hope for victory, and a clear vision of the future of the Iranian nation. He spoke about this repeatedly, and our talented people and capable youth embraced his message. In the face of all those disadvantages (we had), this message was accepted. Gradually, this movement grew, advanced, and expanded until it culminated in the Revolution, toppling a regime that almost all the world's powers had supported. The Pahlavi regime was backed by the Americans, the Europeans, and even, toward the end, the Soviets. It had a tremendous amount of resources as well. The Imam overthrew, annihilated, and uprooted this regime without even a single bullet being fired by the people. Yes, coups occur worldwide, often failing or lacking longevity, but no armed conflict arose here. The people entered the field with their lives, bodies, and their faith, taking control of the arena and driving the adversary out.

After the victory of the Revolution, the Imam established the Basij as a barrier against various attacks—before, during, and after the Sacred Defence. This applied not only to the military but also to the social, scientific, weapons production, and international and political fields. It's important to understand that social and scientific power translates into political strength. When a nation demonstrates internal unity, resolve, resilience, active forces on the ground, scientific capabilities, and social strength, it naturally gains political power. This enables it to assert itself firmly on the international stage and advance its agenda. The Imam (may God be pleased with him) achieved these milestones.

The Basij did not only play a role in the Sacred Defence but also in securing and maintaining the country's safety, construction efforts, and scientific advancements. Those who managed to thwart America's malicious plot regarding the 20% enriched uranium that the country needed were Basiji. Martyr Shahriari was Basiji, and our nuclear martyrs were among the Basiji professors of the country. [This] is a detailed story. We needed 20% enriched uranium for radiopharmaceuticals, something the country urgently needed. We had a limited supply that had been procured earlier and was running out. We needed to purchase more. From whom? From the Americans. The Americans said, 'Hand over all your 3.5% enriched uranium to us, and in return, we will provide you with 20% enriched uranium. Two prominent world leaders at the time—whom I won't name, though they had good relations with us—were made intermediaries to facilitate this deal. Our country's officials initially agreed in the latter half of 2002. During the negotiations, it became clear that the Americans were deceiving us. When we realised their deceit, the process was halted. At the very moment when they thought Iran would surrender due to its need for 20% enriched uranium, our own dedicated Basiji professors managed to produce 20% enriched uranium domestically! The Americans could not believe it! Some years ago, I mentioned in this very place[v] that the most challenging part of the uranium enrichment process is reaching 20%. From there onward, it becomes much more manageable. While the enemy was attempting to deceive us, our Basiji youth, Basiji scientists, and Basiji experts overcame this challenging step domestically, making us independent of external sources. The Basij has played a role in such critical fields. The

Basij has also been active in global interactions. So whether in military matters, social issues, scientific fields, or international politics, the Basij force has been active and effective and has demonstrated significant capabilities.

We mentioned that many of these accomplishments occurred outside the Basij organisation, but what truly matters to us is the Basij spirit, ethos, and culture. Preserve this. Wherever you, the Basij members of today, may be—whether in factories, universities, seminaries, scientific laboratories, or on the battlefield—do not lose this distinction, this spirit, this readiness, and this sensitivity to events. Stay prepared. This is the first point.

The second point is this: In today's world, many young people in various countries face a mental impasse and a sense of futility. They are young, but they lack aspirations and goals and feel useless. Of course, many are resilient, but some are delicate and sensitive, leading to this sense of futility. This, in turn, results in a rise in suicide. You hear about it, and you see it in statistics—suicide rates are increasing globally for this very reason: young people feel mentally trapped and purposeless. Why? Because that person feels incapable of overcoming the various obstacles before him, and this sense of helplessness drives him to a mental impasse. The 'Basiji mindset' is a breaker of impasses. One of the characteristics of the Basij mindset and culture is that it breaks through impasses; it doesn't allow a young person to reach such a point. Why? Because as we've described, firstly, he trusts himself and his abilities, knowing that with determination, he can achieve. Secondly, he is not intimidated by the bluster and noise of the oppressors. That's the nature of the Basij. Now, look at the propaganda from America, the Zionist regime, and others—what a fuss they create over various issues, whether they be true or false! The young Basiji responds to this uproar with a dismissive smile and pays no attention to it; he is not intimidated by it. Thirdly, the young Basiji has ideals and a clear goal; he is not aimless. He firmly believes in his goal. The goal of a young Basiji is the Islamic society and, beyond that, Islamic civilisation. He is progressing in this direction. A young Basiji's goal is to establish justice, and he believes he can achieve this and is moving forward on this path.

The young Basiji is not even afraid of death; you can clearly see this during the Sacred Defence, they would cry and plead to be allowed to go. They were not of the right age, so they were not permitted, but they would cry and beg. This was about 40 or 35 years ago. Just a few years ago, it was the same in the defence of the holy shrines. So many young people wrote letters to me or sought meetings, asking for permission to go. They weren't granted permission, so they found their way into groups with the authorisation. You've heard about it, read their stories, and know their situation. They are not afraid of death. In the end, it leads to martyrdom. They firmly believe in martyrdom and are convinced that if they die on this path, they will attain the highest spiritual ranks with God. Therefore, the path ahead is open; there is no impasse for them. Such a person never feels trapped or cornered because no impasse exists for them. It is precisely for these reasons that the Iranian Basiji is certain that one day, they will undoubtedly bring about the downfall of the Zionist regime.

The next point: The Basij in the country must grow stronger daily and be fortified. The Basij banner represents the defence of the nation's rights and the protection of truth. This banner must always remain aloft. Achieving this requires supporting and strengthening it. How do we strengthen it? By deepening and enhancing its quality. We must give it depth. The teachings of the Basij must gain depth in the minds of young Basijis and be qualitatively enhanced; issues should not be viewed superficially. Books are necessary, study is necessary, discussion is necessary, study circles are necessary, and research circles are necessary; these things must be implemented.

One aspect of strengthening the Basij is ensuring that it serves as an executive and active arm for the country's administrative bodies, ready and present everywhere. This includes military efforts, scientific endeavours, service provision, education and training, clarification and explanation, promotion and advocacy, and entrepreneurship. As demonstrated in the exhibition I was shown, many of these areas are already being pursued by the Basij to some extent. God willing, they must continue with intensity and strength. It has always been such that, throughout these many years, the Basij has consistently supported governments, acting as their active arm. Of course, some governments were appreciative, while others were not—they accepted the Basij's help without expressing their gratitude.

One of the ways to strengthen the Basij is in the political arena. The Basij should recognise that the model the Americans prefer for the countries in this region is the dual option: either 'despotism' or 'chaos'; in Western terms, either dictatorship or anarchy. America envisions this binary framework for the region. Any country they target must either have a despotic power at its head, someone they can negotiate with, make deals with, and submit to their demands, or, failing that, the country must descend into chaos, making life unbearable for its people. The Basij must confront both scenarios: the establishment of dictatorship and despotism and the creation of chaos and unrest. If either occurs in the country, it is the hand of the enemy at work, and [the Basij] must stand against it. These were some of the points regarding the Basij. There is much more to say about it, but for now, this is sufficient.

I want to say a word about the region. I will share two points regarding the ongoing issues in Lebanon, Palestine, and Gaza, as well as similar matters—which you are all aware of, follow in the news, and are informed about. The first point is that bombing people's homes is not a victory. Fools should not think that because they bomb people's homes, hospitals, or gatherings, they have achieved victory. No one in the world would consider this a victory; these are not victories. The enemy has not achieved victory in Gaza or Lebanon and will not succeed there. What they have done is not a victory but a war crime. Issuing an arrest warrant for them is not enough[vi]; Netanyahu and the criminal leaders that follow him should be issued a death sentence. This is the first point.

The second point is that the crimes of the Zionist regime, both in Lebanon and in Gaza and Palestine, have the opposite effect of what they intend—they strengthen and intensify the resistance. This is a universal rule with no exceptions. The valiant Palestinian and Lebanese youth see that the danger persists whether they are on the battlefield or not. Whether or not one is a doctor, a nurse, a patient, a worker, or a merchant—the threat of death, bombing, and enemy intimidation is always near. So, they have no other option and decide to fight; you (Zionists) are the ones driving them to it. Through their actions, these fools are expanding and intensifying the resistance front; this is an absolute and inevitable reality. And I declare that to whatever extent the resistance front has reached today, it will multiply several times more tomorrow. O Lord, by the right of Muhammad and his family, hasten the arrival of this desirable outcome for all Your righteous servants.

And peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

[i] At the beginning of the meeting, Brigadier General Gholamreza Soleimani (Head of the Basij Organization for the Oppressed) presented a report.

[ii] Surah Muhammad, part of verse 7: "...If you help [the cause of] Allah, He will help you..."

[iii] Surah Al-Imran, verse 125: “Yes, if you remain steadfast and mindful of Allah and the enemy comes upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, designated for battle”

[iv] Surah Az-Zukhruf, part of verse 51: "...Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these that run below me?..."

[v] Statements at a meeting with university presidents, research centres, innovation hubs, and science and technology parks (November 11, 2015).

[vi] The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, after months of delay, issued arrest warrants on November 22 this year for Benjamin Netanyahu (Prime Minister of the Zionist regime) and Gallant (former Minister of War of the Zionist regime) on charges of committing war crimes in Gaza.