

Remarks at a Meeting with Thousands from Various Segments of Society: - 11 /Dec/ 2024

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

And all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our Master and Prophet, Abu al-Qasim al-Mustafa Muhammad, and his pure, immaculate, and chosen family, especially the remaining proof of Allah on earth.

I extend a warm welcome to all the dear brothers and sisters who today have filled the atmosphere of this Husseiniyyah with their heartfelt sincerity and the love that springs from divine Oneness, especially to the brothers and sisters who have travelled here from other towns.

Today, events are unfolding in our region, one of the world's most critical areas. Public opinion in this country has also been engaged with these issues; people have questions, comments, and opinions. It is necessary to resolve ambiguities as well. I do not intend to analyse the events in Syria—others do analysis. My purpose today is to explain and outline. By "explanation," I mean to convey what has occurred—including things that may have been intentionally hidden from view—as far as we can see and understand. By "outlining," I mean that, in today's remarks, I will outline and illustrate our position, our actions, where the region is going, and its future based on our understanding. This is the essence and summary of the points I will, God willing, present today.

First of all, there should be no doubt that what happened in Syria was the result of a joint American-Zionist plan. Of course, a government that is a neighbour of Syria played, and is still playing, an unmistakable role in this matter, as is evident to everyone, but the leading players are those two. The primary agents, the main plotters, the chief planners, and the command centre are in the hands of the U.S. and the Zionist regime. We have proof, and this proof leaves no room for doubt.

One proof is their behaviour concerning this incident. Take a country—even if you disagree with its government—where a war has broken out, and two groups are fighting each other. Such incidents happen all over the place. Why are you interfering? According to the reports provided, the Zionist regime has bombed more than 300 locations in Syria! Why? If you are not involved in this incident, and the plan behind it has no relation to you, sit back and watch. Two groups are fighting each other; why are you intervening in the war and bombing over 300 locations? The Americans themselves announced, of course - this was until yesterday and perhaps more since then - that they have bombed 75 locations! Some of these locations were Syria's infrastructure facilities, places that cannot be quickly rebuilt or repaired and require significant effort for a country to reconstruct. Building airports, establishing research centres, and training scientists are not easy tasks. Why did the Zionist regime and the U.S. get involved in this matter, take one side in the conflict, and start bombing the country? Bombing three to four hundred locations is no small matter.

In addition to these actions, the Zionist regime has occupied Syrian territory, and their tanks have advanced close to Damascus. The Golan Heights, which belonged to Damascus, has been in Israeli hands for years, and now they have also started taking over other areas. The U.S., Europe, and governments that are so sensitive about these matters down to even one metre or ten metres in other parts of the world are not only silent and do not utter a word of protest but are also providing support. This is their doing.

Furthermore, another indication is that, in recent days, some essential aid, like equipment, personnel, and resources,

was to be delivered to the Syrian people, particularly in the area around Zeynabiyyah. However, the entire route was blocked by Zionist and American aircraft.

F-15s appeared in the sky and did not allow any aircraft to pass. However, one of our pilots showed courage and took the risk, managing to land. But more was needed, and more should have been done, yet they blockaded it. If you are not involved in this affair, if you are not the ones fighting Syria under the guise, for example, of being some terrorist group or armed faction, if you are not supporting them from behind the scenes, then why are you doing these things? Why are you intervening? Why are you providing support? And why are you preventing aid from reaching the Syrian people?

Of course, the aggressors I mentioned each have their own motives, and their objectives differ. Some are seeking to occupy territory in northern or southern Syria, while the U.S. aims to solidify its foothold in the region. These are their goals, but time will show, God willing, that none of them will achieve these objectives. The courageous Syrian youth will liberate the occupied territories of Syria—there is no doubt this will happen. The U.S. will also fail to secure its foothold, and, by God's grace and with His power, the U.S. will be expelled from the region by the Resistance Front.

I mentioned the "Resistance Front," so let me say a few words about it. After the events in Syria, the agents of arrogance were pleased, expressing their happiness in the belief that, with the fall of the Syrian government, which supported the Resistance, the Resistance Front had been weakened. They were happy and claimed that the Resistance Front had become weak. In my view, they are gravely mistaken. Those who think that such events have weakened the Resistance Front lack a proper understanding of resistance and the concept of the Resistance Front; they do not honestly know what the Resistance Front means.

The "Resistance Front" is not a hardware system that can be broken, dismantled, or (physically) destroyed. Resistance is faith, a mindset, a firm and resolute decision of the heart; it is a school of thought, an ideological doctrine. Anything rooted in the faith of a group of people is not a superficial or contractual matter—and I will explain why it is the people's faith. This faith not only does not weaken under pressure, it actually becomes stronger.

When they witness acts of malice, the motivation of individuals and elements of the Resistance Front grows stronger, and its domain expands. This is how resistance works. When people witness the enemy's savage crimes, those uncertain about whether to resist or not emerge from their doubt and realise that the only way to move forward is to stand firm against oppressors, tyrants, and aggressors. One must stand, one must resist—this is what resistance means.

Look at Hezbollah in Lebanon, at Hamas, at Islamic Jihad^[ii], and the Palestinian resistance forces. All of them faced immense pressure. Was the calamity that befell Hezbollah a trivial matter? Hezbollah lost someone like Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah—was that a small loss? Yet Hezbollah's attacks, power, and firm blows became more formidable than ever after that. Even the enemy recognised and acknowledged this. They thought that after their strike, they could enter Lebanese territory, push Hezbollah back, perhaps to the Litani River, and advance further, but they failed to do so. Hezbollah stood firm with full strength and acted in such a way that they eventually called for a ceasefire themselves! This is what resistance means.

Look at Gaza! For over a year now, Gaza has been under bombardment. They assassinated prominent figures in Gaza, such as Yahya Sinwar, martyring him. They were dealt these blows, yet the people stood firm. They thought that by putting pressure on the people, they would rise up against Hamas themselves. The opposite happened—the people became even more supportive of Hamas.

The same is true for Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian elements. This is resistance; this is the Resistance Front: the more you apply pressure, the stronger it becomes; the more crimes you commit, the more motivated it becomes; the

more you fight it, the more it expands. And I tell you, by God's grace and power, the scope of the Resistance will extend across the entire region more than ever before. The ignorant analyst, unaware of the true meaning of resistance, imagines that if the Resistance weakens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will also weaken! I say that by God's grace and with His permission, a strong and powerful Iran stands today, and it will become even more powerful.

Let me say one more thing about resistance. First, let me explain what resistance means. Resistance means standing firm against the dominance of the United States and any other oppressor. This is the meaning of resistance. Resistance means fighting against dependency on such powers. Resistance means people refusing to become subservient to a superior power like the U.S. or similar entities. This is the essence of resistance. In this sense, resistance is deeply rooted in the beliefs of the region's people. I am not talking about governments; people value resistance. The roots of resistance lie in the faith and convictions of the people. Did you see what the region's people did in support of Gaza? There are people who do not speak their language, have not been to their region, and do not know them personally, who stood in solidarity across this region—and even, in some ways, across the world—against the Zionist regime and in support of the people of Gaza. This shared belief among the region's people is the reason for such actions. It is this same orientation that brings about resistance.

Look, it has now been nearly 75 years since the occupation of Palestine. An event 75 years ago should have gradually faded; people should have forgotten it and eventually been extinguished. Today, the steadfastness of the region's people and the Palestinians themselves on the issue of Palestine is perhaps ten times greater than it was at the beginning. Instead of fading, it is intensifying. This is the characteristic of a shared and widespread belief, and it will undoubtedly continue.

Alignment with the Zionist regime is a red line for people. I am not talking about governments; they speak differently and say other things. But if you ask the people, they are opposed—an overwhelming majority of people are against it. Of course, the Zionist regime commits crimes, but crimes do not lead to victory. Neither the Zionist regime's crimes in Lebanon, nor its crimes in Gaza, nor those in the West Bank—where Palestinian groups are actively fighting—bring victory. They commit many crimes there, but crimes do not make anyone victorious. This is the divine norm (sunnah), and today, this historical experience is unfolding before our eyes in Gaza and Lebanon.

Well, a question arises: Given the description we have provided of the events in Syria, were we present in Syria during these past years or not? Everyone knows the answer is yes; the martyrs of the defence of the holy shrines are evidence of our presence. However, the nature of this presence requires explanation. One crucial point is that everyone is aware of our presence, and everyone has participated in the funerals of the martyrs. However, there are several aspects that most people or at least many of our young people do not know. We assisted the Syrian government, but before we assisted them, during a critical period, the Syrian government provided vital assistance to us. Most people are unaware of this. In the middle of the war, during the Sacred Defence, when everyone was working for Saddam and against us, the Syrian government made a significant, decisive move in our favour and against Saddam. That move was cutting off the oil pipeline that transported oil to the Mediterranean and Europe, the revenue of which would have gone into Saddam's pockets. It caused an uproar around the world. They stopped the flow of oil that belonged to Saddam. How much oil was being transported through this pipeline? One million barrels per day. One million oil barrels flowed daily toward the Mediterranean through this pipeline. Even the Syrian government benefited financially from this oil transit, earning money from it, but they also gave up that revenue. Of course, they were compensated for it, meaning the Islamic Republic did not leave this service unrewarded. So, first, they helped us. That's one point.

[However], in the case of the ISIS sedition, ISIS functioned as a bomb of insecurity. ISIS was intended to destabilise Iraq, destabilise Syria, destabilise the region, and then move to its primary target and ultimate goal, which was the Islamic Republic of Iran and destabilise it. That was the ultimate goal and the meaning of ISIS. We helped deal with that; our forces were present in Iraq and Syria for two reasons. One reason was to protect the sanctity of the holy

shrines because those devoid of spirituality and faith were hostile toward the holy shrines, intending to destroy them, and they did commit acts of destruction. You witnessed it in Samarra. Later, with the help of the Americans, they destroyed and demolished the sacred dome of Samarra. They intended to do the same in Najaf, Karbala, Kadhima, and Damascus. This was ISIS's goal. Naturally, a believing, courageous youth who loves the Ahl al-Bayt would never tolerate such actions and would not allow it. This was one reason.

Another reason was the issue of security. The officials quickly realised at the right time that if this insecurity in those areas was not neutralised, it would spread and reach here, engulfing our entire country in insecurity. The insecurity caused by the ISIS sedition was not ordinary. You remember the individual examples that occurred: the Shah Cheragh incident[iii], the Kerman incident[iv], the Parliament attack[v], and similar events. Wherever they could, they caused such tragedies. This was intended to reach here. Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali) said, "A nation that fights the enemy within its own home becomes humiliated; do not let the enemy reach your home[vi]." Therefore, our forces went, our prominent commanders went, and our dear martyr Soleimani and his companions and colleagues went. They organised and armed the youth of those regions, both in Iraq and Syria—first in Iraq, then in Syria—and stood against ISIS, broke ISIS's back, and managed to prevail. So, that is how we got there. Pay attention to this point: The nature of our military presence in Syria—and likewise in Iraq—did not mean that we would take our armies—our military and IRGC divisions—and send them there to fight as substitutes for their army. No, that makes no sense. It is neither logical nor acceptable to public opinion for an army from here to go and fight in the place of an army there. No, the responsibility for the fighting lies with the army of that country itself. The work that our forces could and did carry out was advisory. What does advisory mean? It means establishing major central and key command centres, determining strategies and tactics, and, in critical moments, entering the battlefield. But most importantly, it involved mobilising the youth of that region. Of course, eager and insistent, many of our youth and Basij members also went. Even when we did not grant permission, they repeatedly requested, asked, wrote letters, sent messages, and pleaded, asking to be allowed to go to Syria and stand against the enemy. Naturally, it was not deemed appropriate then or considered advisable. However, they went, finding various ways to go—which, as you know, some of their stories are well-known. Some were martyred, while others, thankfully, returned safely. The primary focus was advisory work. Our presence in those areas was advisory. In rare and critical cases, it involved the presence of our own forces, who were mostly volunteers and Basij members alongside the local forces. Martyr Soleimani trained, armed, organised, and prepared a group of several thousand local youth in Syria, and they stood firm. Unfortunately, some of their military officials later created objections and problems, and regrettably, they abandoned something that was in their favour in the final analysis.

After the ISIS sedition was extinguished, some of the forces returned, while others remained. Among those who had gone, some stayed there and were on the scene and involved in these events. However, as I mentioned, the primary responsibility for the fighting lies with that country's army. Alongside that country's army, a Basij force that has come from elsewhere can fight; however, if that country's army shows weakness, the Basij forces cannot accomplish much. Unfortunately, this is what happened. When the spirit of steadfastness and resistance diminishes, this is the result. The calamities that are befalling Syria today result from the weaknesses we have spoken about there. God knows how long they will continue and how long it will take for the Syrian youth to rise up and put an end to them, God willing.

The Iranian nation takes pride in and honours its military and IRGC. Senior officials of the armed forces and military organisations have written to me during events involving Lebanon or Hezbollah, saying, "We cannot bear this; allow us to go." Compare this with an army that cannot withstand pressure and flees! Unfortunately, our army during the era of the tyrannical regime was the same; they did not stand firm against the attacks of enemies and foreign aggressors in various wars, including World War II. Back then, the enemy advanced and took Tehran itself; they did not stand firm. When there is no resistance, this is the result. One must resist and utilise this God-given strength.

Even in these difficult circumstances, we were prepared. They came to me and said that all the resources needed for

the Syrians today have been prepared, and we are ready to deliver them. [However], the skies were closed, and the land routes were blocked; the Zionist regime and the U.S. had closed both the skies over Syria and the land routes. It was not possible. This is how the situation was. If, within that country, the motivation had remained intact and they stood up to the enemy, the enemy would not have been able to close their skies or block their land routes; it would have been possible to help them. This is a brief overview of the situation.

There are a few other points I must make. First, everyone should know the situation will not remain as it is now. A group may come to Damascus or other places, celebrate, dance, and assault people's homes and the Zionist regime may continue bombing, bringing tanks and artillery—but this will not last. Indeed, the courageous Syrian youth will rise, stand firm, make sacrifices, and endure losses, but they will overcome this situation just as Iraq's courageous youth have. With the help, guidance, leadership, and organisation of our dear martyr, the brave youth of Iraq were able to drive the enemy out of their streets and homes. Otherwise, the Americans in Iraq were doing the same things—they would break into houses, force the man of the house to the ground in front of his wife and children, and press his face into the ground with their boots! This happened in Iraq as well, but they stood firm and resisted, and our dear martyr dedicated all his efforts to this cause. They (the youth of Syria) will do the same. Of course, it may take time and may be prolonged, but the outcome is certain and inevitable.

The second point is that the events in Syria have lessons and insights for us—for every one of us and our officials. We must learn from them. One of the lessons is "heedlessness"—being heedless of the enemy. Yes, in this incident, the enemy acted quickly, but they should have realised beforehand that this enemy would act and would act swiftly. We even helped them; our intelligence apparatus had sent warning reports to the Syrian officials several months earlier. Of course, I do not know whether these reports reached the higher authorities or got lost along the way, but our intelligence officials had informed them. Since when? Since September, October, and November, they had been reporting continuously. One must not be heedless of the enemy and should not underestimate him. You must not trust the enemy's smile either. Sometimes, the enemy speaks to you with a pleasant tone and a smile, but behind their back, they hold a dagger, waiting for an opportunity.

Another point is that the Resistance Front should neither become arrogant over its victories nor despair over its defeats. Both victory and defeat are parts of life. This is true for an individual's personal life: there are successes and failures, and the same applies to groups: there are successes and failures. One day, a movement is in power, and another day, it is removed from power; the same applies to governments and countries. Ups and downs are a part of life, and one cannot avoid them. What is necessary is that when we are at a high point, we should not become arrogant because arrogance leads to ignorance, and arrogance itself makes a person heedless. When facing a low point or encountering failure, we must not become depressed, despairing, or broken-hearted.

The Islamic Republic has faced great and challenging events over these forty-plus years—significant events! The youth today did not witness those times. Here in Tehran, while people were sitting in their homes, Soviet-made MiG-25 fighter jets belonging to Saddam would fly overhead. If they were feeling generous, they wouldn't bomb, but they would instil fear—instil fear! And we could do nothing about it; we didn't have air defences or the necessary equipment. We have faced such situations before. One day, right here in Tehran, while everyone was sitting in their homes, Saddam's planes suddenly arrived and bombed Tehran. They bombed the airport and other locations. On that day, I had a speech at a factory near Tehran's airport. There was a commotion, so we got up and looked out the window. I saw the Iraqi plane as it descended, dropping its bombs on the airport and leaving. We witnessed these events. The Islamic Republic has faced many bitter incidents but has never undergone a moment of passivity in the face of these challenges.

Passivity should not come from a believer. The danger of passivity is sometimes greater than the incident itself. Passivity means looking at a situation and feeling that nothing can be done and, therefore, surrendering—this is passivity. Thus, arrogance is poison in progress and successes, and passivity is venomous in failures and challenges. We must be vigilant against both. The Quran says, "When the help of Allah comes and victory, and you see the

people entering the religion of Allah in crowds, then glorify the praises of your Lord[vii]". Be grateful to Allah, and do not become arrogant! "And seek His forgiveness;" ask forgiveness for the shortcomings you may have committed yourself!

Some people, of course, make it their mission to demoralise the public; this must not happen. Some do this from abroad, using foreign television stations, foreign radios, and foreign newspapers to speak to the people in Persian, portraying events in a way that frightens the public and undermines their morale. That is a different matter and must be dealt with differently, but no one within the country should engage in such actions. If someone within the country, in their analyses or statements, speaks in a way that undermines the public's morale, this is a crime and must be addressed.

The Iranian nation is undoubtedly ready for action. Of course, being (militarily) present in any country clearly requires the consent and agreement of that country's government. When we were present in Iraq, the Iraqi government requested our assistance. Similarly, when we were present in Syria, the Syrian government had requested our help. It was because of their request and consent that we were able to go there. If they do not request it, naturally, the path is closed, and assisting them will not be possible. However, by the will of God Almighty and His help, the roots of Zionism and the malicious Western agents in this region will be uprooted by the grace of Allah.

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

[i] This meeting was held to explain the regional conditions and the state of the Resistance Front following the actions of Syrian opposition groups, their occupation of various cities and regions in Syria, and their advance toward Damascus. This was also facilitated by the lack of intervention and resistance from the Syrian army, resulting in the collapse of the Syrian government and Bashar al-Assad (the country's president) leaving Syria

[ii] The Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement

[iii] A terrorist attack on October 26, 2022, at the shrine of Ahmad ibn Musa (peace be upon him)—claimed by ISIS—where gunfire was directed at pilgrims and servants of the shrine, thirteen people were martyred, and thirty others were injured.

[iv] On January 3, 2024, coinciding with the commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of Martyr Haj Qassem Soleimani (Commander of the Quds Force of the IRGC), two bombs were detonated among the crowd. This resulted in the martyrdom of nearly one hundred people and injuries to several other visitors at the Martyrs'

Cemetery in Kerman.

[v] On June 7, 2017, several members of the ISIS terrorist group attacked the administrative building of the Parliament in Baharestan Square, resulting in the martyrdom and injury of several visitors and staff members.

[vi] Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 27: "By Allah, no people were ever attacked in the heart of their homeland except that they were humiliated."

[vii] Surah An-Nasr, 110:1-3