

Leader's Speech to the Residents of the Eastern Azarbaijan Province - 17 /Feb/ 2007

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I express my welcome to all the dear brothers and sisters who have covered long distances from Tabriz and other cities of the Eastern Azarbaijan Province to attend this gathering. I hope that divine grace and blessings will, as always, be bestowed upon you, the zealous, faithful, brave and persevering residents of the Eastern Azarbaijan Province.

During the past many years, whenever I have met the residents of Azarbaijan, whether here or in Tabriz or in other cities, I have seen the signs of vitality, dynamism, enthusiasm and initiative in their behavior and slogans. The same thing also holds today.

Even when the contemporary history of Iran is studied, one notices that the people of Azarbaijan and the residents of Tabriz have always been at the front line whenever the interests of our country have been at stake. For instance, in the Tobacco Incident, which marked a very important stage, while the enemies were trying to undermine our country's independence, the residents of Tabriz led by their clergymen such as the prominent cleric late Mirza Javad Mojtahid put up strong resistance and played a significant role in foiling the enemies.

With respect to the Constitutional Movement, the events of Tabriz are remarkable. Many books have been written about the role played by the people of Azarbaijan in the Constitutional Movement, but I believe there still remain many points that are worthy of exploration and writing about.

We know that the position of Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan on the issue of constitutionalism was contrary to the position of those who advocated British constitutionalism and were in favor of constitutionalism under the aegis of alien powers. There were certain individuals who were making attempts at bringing the Constitutional Movement under British influence, but Sattar Khan resisted their attempts. These same individuals later lured Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan to Tehran and killed them in the Atabak Garden there.

The course of action adopted by the people of Azarbaijan and the residents of Tabriz during the Constitutional Movement was characterized by resistance and perseverance, power and strength, massive public presence on the scene and adherence to the right path of religion and the country's independence.

This was true also with regard to the following events. For instance, in the case of the agreement signed by Vosouq-ud-dowlah, according to which the incompetent government officials in Tehran had entrusted the country's financial and military affairs to the British, the residents of Tabriz led by Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani voiced their opposition to and protested against this agreement, and the following surprising events took place in Tabriz. The city of Tabriz has always been like this.

The uprising of the Tabriz residents against the former regime on February 18, 1978 was also among such decisive events. If this uprising had not taken place, the great movement culminating in the Islamic Revolution would not have come into existence. A number of people were martyred in the city of Qom during the protests against the former regime, but the residents of Tabriz and Azarbaijan did not allow this incident to fall into oblivion.

In fact, by holding a ceremony on February 18 marking the 40th day after their martyrdom, the residents of Azarbaijan set an example to the residents of other Iranian cities in terms of revolutionary activities. Their initiative was an auspicious move and gave rise to the following protests. Later the residents of other Iranian provinces held a ceremony marking the 40th day after the martyrdom of a number of Tabriz residents. This led to the great movement of the Iranian people which culminated in the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

This is the reason why I have often said that those behind U.S. and British policies on Iran have not known the province of Azarbaijan; they have not known the residents of Tabriz. When they have illusions about dismembering the Iranian nation, they ignorantly pick Azarbaijan.

Azarbaijan is the center of gravity of the Iranian nation. It is one of the most significant vital organs of the Iranian nation. Those who have no knowledge of Iran and no knowledge of Azarbaijan pick Tabriz and Azarbaijan for their foolish goals. So far whatever event has been orchestrated by the counterrevolutionary elements in Tabriz or in Azarbaijan has been firmly responded to by the residents of Azarbaijan themselves.

Tabriz is self-sufficient. Azarbaijan is self-sufficient in terms of revolutionary fervor and in terms of defending the revolution. It is because of these facts that one realizes that the enemies have no knowledge of Azarbaijan or of Iran or of the Iranian people.

Those behind counterrevolutionary policies in the world, including those in the intelligence services of the United States and Britain and others, who are conspiring against our revolution and against the Iranian nation have no knowledge of the Iranian people, nor of the lasting realities that are associated with our nation.

You noticed the massive participation of the Iranian people in the parades and rallies marking the 28th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory this year. It was widely acknowledged that the turnout in the capital Tehran and

in the provincial cities on the revolution's anniversary this year was higher compared with the previous years. What was the reason for this high turnout this year? The reason was that the Iranian people had felt that the enemy was casting a threatening eye on their country. Consequently, they displayed a massive presence on the scene.

This is the power of our revolution. The Islamic Revolution is a strong revolution that is able to defend itself. The reason is that when the Iranian people feel threatened, they massively emerge on the scene.

When the Iraqi-imposed war began, our people were leading their normal everyday lives. However, when the threat was felt, the Iranian people from all walks of life and from all social strata, including university students, those working in business, those working in factories and the people from various towns and villages, left behind their comfortable lives and went to the frontline to counter that threat and to defend their identity.

"Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant which they made with Allah: some of them have completed their vow, and some are still waiting..." (The Holy Qur'an, 33: 23)

Some of them were martyred and some suffered physical disabilities. But a great number of them are still on the scene and their number is increasing day by day.

I have often emphasized and once again stress with certainty that our present-day youngsters, who constitute the third generation after the revolution, are by no means inferior to first-generation youngsters, who were present on the scene in the imposed-war era and took part in the Sacred Defense, in terms of their preparedness and valor and enthusiasm for defending their religious and revolutionary identity; they may even be superior in some respects.

This is the truth of a revolution which has emanated from the faith and belief and genuine demand of the Iranian people. The fact of the matter is that the Iranian people consider the revolution to be belonging to them; they are pleased with their revolution, since they can see that the path to prosperity and salvation and human exaltation, both in material and spiritual terms, is the path that is shown to them by the revolution, namely the path of Islam and its salvational teachings.

Here, I deem it necessary to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Iranian people for their massive participation in the nationwide parades and rallies marking this year's anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory. Such participation and presence on the scene and such divine fervor will bring the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic system before the eyes of the enemies and will cause their threats to diminish, as they have already done so.

The enemies will become more audacious when they see the signs of weakness in a nation. Mistaken are those who are emboldening the enemies through their claims such as those to the effect that there is a crisis in the country, while the fact of the matter is that there is no such crisis in the country. But even if there are certain weak points, one should not express weakness in the face of the enemies, since this will only make them more audacious.

The arrogant powers have compared the world to a global village, and the United States calls itself the headman of this village so that it may do whatever it desires. Now if a nation or a political personality says or does something contrary to their wishes, they level all kinds of accusations against him. This is the nature of the enemies.

Thus, one should not express weakness in the face of these enemies even if there are some weak points. Those who are claiming that there is a crisis or a state of emergency in the country are playing into the hands of the enemies. As a matter of fact, they are lying because there is no such crisis or state of emergency in our country.

The reality on the ground indicates that, by the favor of Allah, we have a unified as well as a vigilant and intelligent nation. As soon as our people feel that the enemy is posing a threat, they give rise to a glorious presence on the scene, as they did on this year's anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory.

The more the enemies insist on an issue, the more our nation will become alert to that issue. The enemies tried to discourage the Iranian people with respect to nuclear energy. A number of narrow-minded and superficial individuals in the country also helped the enemies by saying that the Iranian nation does not need nuclear energy, considering the hardships and expenses involved. But our vigilant people did not give up, since they know that the issue of nuclear energy is not only the issue of today, but that it is also the issue of tomorrow, that it is an issue related to the country's fate and future.

The right to utilize nuclear energy is the undeniable right of many countries and nations in the world, but they do not display a massive presence on the scene as the Iranian people did to attain their right. So what will be the result? The result will be that those countries that are producing and using nuclear energy will determine the fate of the world's energy in a not-too-far future.

What these countries have in mind is that tomorrow when the world runs out of oil - it is not an eternal source of energy and will someday be used up - they will control the world's energy. For this reason, they do not want other nations to produce and utilize nuclear energy, so that other nations may become dependent on these countries for their energy requirements.

Fortunately, the Iranian nation fully grasped this point and insisted on its right to the utilization of nuclear energy, and the Iranian government officials also seriously pursued the matter, and they have already obtained good results.

God willing, they will make greater progress and achieve better results in the future.

We are grateful to Almighty Allah that the blood of those martyred in Tabriz on February 18, 1978 and the honorable martyrs of the imposed war and other events was not wasted. They offered their blood and their families lost their dear ones, but in return they regained their national identity, their independence and their dignity.

Our country was dependent one day on Britain and another day on the United States. It was under the yoke of some materialistic and corrupt and hedonistic and immoral individuals. But today it has turned into an independent and free country, so much so that even its enemies are admitting to this reality and saying that it is not possible to bully the Iranian nation and government.

The high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic, by the favor of Allah, have all emanated from the general public, and they are devoted to people and committed and dedicated to their jobs, doing their best to serve the public. This is indeed a great achievement.

Our youngsters have become aware of their inherent worth and merit and are looking for scientific knowledge and new discoveries. They are seeking to tread the path to the high summits of progress. This is also a remarkable achievement.

Today our country benefits from abundant talented human resources that are capable of making considerable progress in various areas of activities, and it is up to government officials to make proper use of these valuable resources.

It is true that in some major areas, effective measures have been taken by the relevant officials with the above goal in mind, but similar measures should be taken by government officials in many other spheres of activity as well. I use this occasion to advise government officials to highly value these great talents and recognize the worth of their enthusiasm and perseverance.

It is possible to accomplish very great deeds with so many enthusiastic youngsters in our country who are characterized by the firmness of purpose and courage. Government officials should not be afraid of progress. They should not be afraid of ascending to high summits. They should not fear the enemies either. We are not saying that they should not be cautious and vigilant. Caution is necessary at all times. However, caution is different from fear.

If someone fears or feels daunted by the enemies, he will no longer be able to move forward. Thus, our officials

should not be frightened of the enemies, but of course they should be careful and vigilant and consider the various aspects of whatever they plan to do. Also, they should never remove the firm intention to move forward from their own hearts as well as the hearts of the Iranian people.

Stagnation is by no means permissible, be it in universities or in other academic and scientific circles or in industrial centers and factories or in places of trade and commerce or in scientific-religious schools. Stagnation is not permissible in any sphere of activity. Everybody should try to move forward.

Now that the Iranian nation is making progress at a fast pace, we have come to realize more than in the past that our nation has remarkable capabilities and potential to take great strides. God willing, we will be able to tread even very difficult paths, thanks to the freedom and perseverance and self-confidence with which the Iranian nation has been imbued by the Islamic Revolution.

I once again express my gratitude to you, the dear brothers and sisters, for taking the trouble to travel long distances in order to attend this gathering. Convey my greetings to all our honorable brothers and sisters residing in Tabriz and in other cities of Azarbaijan.

I pray to Almighty Allah to bestow increased favor and blessings on you and make the immaculate souls of martyrs and the blessed soul of our beloved Imam pleased with you. I also hope that the sacred heart of His Holiness Imam of the Age - may our souls be sacrificed for his sake - will be happy with you all.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings