

Supreme Leader's Speech to Air Force Staff - 8 /Feb/ 2008

First of all, it behooves me to congratulate all the Air Force staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran's army and also the Iranian nation on this great day.

What happened on 19th day of Bahman in 1357 was undoubtedly a turning point. A number of the Air Force staff, in a self-motivated movement which was the result of all sentiments and mentalities in that force, took an action which was the ultimate stroke on the weakening body of the Pahlavi regime. The action was to a large extent both daring and wise. Such events, happening in a timely manner and in the required course of time, could sometimes change the destiny of a nation or hasten their progress on the road towards their destiny. The Air Force performed this action on that day. It was a great movement, and it opened up new gates to many people. As mentioned in this beautiful chant performed by these dears of mine in the army, "I'm the first to have devoted my heart to my Leader", that was truly the case. The movement was such a deeply rooted one. It was not the case of thinking today and setting out on the way the following day. As I previously mentioned, this was the result of an amalgamation of what was going on at the Air Force: "emotions, mentalities and rationalities" which emerged in due time in that way. Therefore, this is a great day, a very blessed one.

Reviewing historical events is basically aimed at leaving lessons and serving as examples for future generations. The lesson from this event is a living one for the Iranian nation at all times. The move was an intrepid and powerful one with reliance on self-confidence and rooted in true rationality and enthusiastic faith. It would have never happened in the absence of faith. The whole revolution, from the beginning to the end, is the manifestation of such a reality: a true and intelligent thought accompanied by enthusiastic faith, bravery, taking actions, and not being afraid of what might happen on that way. These are the very basic elements that help a nation progress; lack of such elements would indeed lead the nation to humiliation.

The Iranian nation underwent difficult times under the Pahlavi regime. Our nation, with all its glorious historical background, was getting despised by outsiders. The army was getting humiliated. Our nation was getting humiliated. Government officials at all levels and even at the highest echelons were being humiliated. The genius people in our community used to get humiliated. Our nation was being humiliated by those elements who considered themselves superior to us and those who looked upon our country as a field they could harvest, trample upon, graze on and rob of all its properties. Our nation opposed these actions.

The Islamic Revolution replaced the humiliation outsiders used to impose upon this nation with self-esteem. It replaced that bitter and abject dependence with self-reliance. It replaced that total capitulation against the outsiders with resistance and authority. On that day, the government officials of this great country were submissive to outsiders. At different levels and in the most fundamental issues in the country they capitulated. Whatever those outsiders wished - the British for a short term and then the Americans for the next few decades could be actualized within this country, so far as it was within those government officials' realm of power. And our nation had to endure complete submissiveness. The Revolution changed this state of capitulation to a state of resistance and authority. It turned that state of dependence into self-reliance. It turned that inherited, baseless and illogical monarchy to

populistic and democratic rule. The Islamic Revolution completely uprooted those human devastating foundations, established by the Pahlavi regime inside the country during several consecutive years, which were destroying human values. New foundations were established that earned the country a new identity.

The army gained a new identity as well. The identity of the army today is totally different than the identity of the army during the Pahlavi regime. Today, you are guardians of people's rights. Those days the army had to protect the interests of the monarchy as well as those of the Pahlavi regime and the filthy and dependent governors that were ruling our country. Today, you have a sense of dignity against the enemy. You do the constructions yourselves. You acquire the knowledge yourself. You do research yourselves. Those days you were forced to accept whatever you were offered with closed eyes. These are the achievements that promote a nation to the summits of achievement and grandeur. Therefore, the Iranian nation found the way to achievement and set out on the way. We paid the costs for this as well. Our nation knew and still knows that it has to pay the costs on its way towards its goals. Without paying the costs, it's impossible to reach pinnacles. We paid this cost, but we progressed with the help of God.

Today the Iranian nation is honored. It is inspirational. The government of the Islamic Republic has been recognized as a powerful system and different countries, different powers, whether inter-regional or intra-regional, have no way but to admit to the Iranian nation and they do admit the greatness of this nation. The Iranian nation has revealed its capabilities and powers in all fields. We should appreciate this.

And you dear youths currently serving in the Islamic Republic Air Force, should consider these elements in pursuing your career and follow the same policies. The Air Force should progress. It should multiply the authority and the dignity it has acquired. During the holy period of resistance, the Air Force proved itself. Great tasks have been carried out in the Force after the holy period of resistance as well. You should continue this way; the road towards perfection will never end and this will depend upon the determination of the youth at different levels in the army. The future belongs to you. The country belongs to you. The army and the Air Force belong to you as the personnel of the Islamic Republic Army and the Air Force, and your progress is the progress of the whole nation. It is the progress of the whole country. Make yourself mighty and powerful. Such power is not limited to material implements; the power of faith, determination, and a firm purpose and intention for progress are the qualities you have to strengthen in yourselves. You should make progress on a daily basis.

The Iranian nation is fortunately determined on this way. They tried a lot in different ways to break our nation's determination apart, but they couldn't. What is significant and really promising is the fact that within the last twenty eight or nine years, we have been constantly moving forward. There has been no halt. All political maneuvers, the different movements, different responsibilities at different times, and the result of all these means a regular progressive movement for the Iranian nation, and this will continue. Our enemies are trying a lot to stop this movement, but they have not been able to do so and will not be able to do that in the future either. And they admit this fact today. If you follow the world news, you will realize that today all tones in political circles, in policy and decision making centers in the world as well as in global centers of power, are tones of admiration towards the Iranian nation. Of course some are contemptuous and accompanied by revengefulness or envy, while others from some corners are accompanied by infatuation and delightfulness. The former is usually the case of government officials and politicians, but as for nations the latter is generally or most often true. Nations are infatuated by the Iranian nation. Our country officials observe such infatuation wherever they appear before the Muslim nations or in some cases when they appear before non-Muslim nations. This is due to the resistance of the Iranian nation and will continue.

Our nation holds dear the memories of the Revolution due to these facts. This is to show that the motivating and dignifying factor that set our nation on this glorious path is still alive in the hearts of our people. We are awaiting the demonstrations on February 11, marking the victory of Islamic Revolution. You will see that our dear nation will in a similar fashion as the previous years or even in a more enthusiastic mood - as our nation has always been more enthusiastic than before will be globally witnessed. This presence of people in the Demonstrations on the February 11 should not be underestimated. It is indeed a great event. Compare the anniversaries of revolutions and national days of other countries to this great movement by the people in our dear country. The anniversary of our Revolution is not a dull and formal occasion. It is a hundred percent populist celebration. Our people take part in such occasions in cold winter, in burning heat, and under all conditions when they have to be on the scene. On the February 11 every year, our nation appreciates the occasion and enters the scene, and demonstrates its presence in the eye of all its enemies and opposes. This could be observed in the whole world. This might be interpreted differently in different tones. The size of the population might be reported as small. For instance, populations as large as millions might be reflected as only a few thousands in their propaganda. These things are common in propaganda, but those who should realize the Iranian nation's status will do so. They will observe the realities. They will sense the presence of the people, their determination, their affinity with the revolution, and the people's attachment to the great content of the revolution.

The February 11 and the demonstrations on this day are the manifestations of national power. They are the manifestations of the Iranian nation's power. That men and women, young and old, take to the streets under all conditions and show their presence across the country before the eyes of the witnesses is the manifestation of the presence of the public and the determination and willpower of the Iranian nation. This is truly glorious.

Let me speak briefly about the issues in our country, and of course in brief about important issues that the Islamic World is dealing with today too.

Concerning issues in the country, the most important issue is that of the election. Elections are one of those most crucial and determining scenes. If you observe any of these periods of elections and analyze them, you will see that during any of our elections - whether parliamentary, presidential, or others - the efforts of those spreading the hostile propaganda of the global hegemony are aimed at blurring people's presence. They are aimed at reducing people's motives, putting an end to their determination and hopes for the elections or to blur them. Of course, with the help of God they have not been able to do so. This is indicative of the importance of the elections. Those who claim to advocate democracy, populism, human rights and populist systems and invade countries with such pretexts, kill people there and create catastrophes have been rendered helpless by the Iranian nation's democracy. To them, this is an unsolvable problem. They wonder what to do or say about this great event. They advocate the coup de ta regime. They support hereditary regimes. They support countries in which people's votes have never been the criterion on the basis of which the government is formed. Conversely, the Iranian nation enters the scene so democratically and chooses the legislators, the executive officials, and those who are to occupy fundamental positions. What could the enemies say? What can they do before the eyes of people in the world? They have no choice but to claim that there is no freedom or that people did not take part in the elections, or if they can they will close the elections, as were they striving for a term along with some deluded people to totally eradicate the elections. They were trying to do something so that elections would never be held, but with the help of God, they could not do so although this was their aspiration. This shows the importance of the elections.

What is really significant about this election is the presence of the general public. Every one must take part in the elections. This is a national duty. This is not some thing that will change under different governments, different political parties or systems. Taking part in the elections is a religious duty. Every one must take part in the elections.

Every one must consider it a duty to take part in the elections. They should seek no pretexts. Some remarks are unfair criticisms. Criticisms are sometimes logical. Other times they are aimed at disappointing people. The elections in our country compared to the ones that are held in the world and whose news we have received, are among the strongest ones. We hold strong elections.

Of course I have advised the election administrators and I still advise that they should strongly adhere to the law. The limit is the law. It is upon every one to accept legal obligations and to capitulate to those obligations. The law is the border line between right and wrong in the movements and the policies of both the nation and its officials. The law should not be avoided. These rules should be observed and fortunately they are. I constantly advise people to observe the rules with more care and caution. No one should be oppressed. No one's rights should be violated. The people's rights on the other hand should not be trampled upon. The unsuitable and impious should not be presented as pious. Also pious people should not be deprived of their rights. They should not be depicted as impious. These are the facts every one should observe, but what is of primary concern is taking part in the elections. Every one must take part in the elections. This is a public duty.

Of course there is some time left before the elections and I will give speeches to our dear nation before then. I made these remarks so that those who think about the elections, those who talk and make policies about the elections as well as those who take actions about and administer the elections would do their job while keeping the importance of the issue in mind.

Concerning the importance of issues in the Islamic World, the issues of Palestine and the Gaza tragedy are general issues. They are not limited to the people living there. The issue concerns the whole World of Islam. It has to do with the whole Middle East. In a sense, it concerns all nations.

The United States is practicing a set of totally mistaken and criminal policies in the Middle East. Their policy in the Middle East is totally concerned with serving the benefits of the US in the region. No matter what might happen to the nations in this region. This means the benefits of tens or hundreds of millions of nations or people living in the region are not important and are being trampled upon. Whether they are humiliated, killed, bereaved or broken under the pressures of life is not important to the Americans just because their benefits are to be protected in the region. This is the basis of the American policies in the Middle East. Of course, this is not anything new, and all nations are aware of that. Governments know that too. But we sometimes observe negligence in the sort of action that is to be taken against such policies.

The people of Gaza, the people of Palestine are forcefully resisting today. This is to be appreciated. These nations should be truly appreciated. They are on the one side under such great economic pressure, while on the other side they are undergoing attacks, slaughters, catastrophes, destructions, various assaults and artillery attacks on their women and children. Still, their nation is resisting. The enemies are trying to separate this nation from their elected government, and then do whatever they wish and practice their policies. They held a meeting and staged that historical conference - which was a very disgraceful one for the region - and this is what resulted. This is the very result of holding meetings with the US and the usurping Zionists to negotiate and to make decisions about the

region. The US president took a trip to the region and then went away. The result was such heavy fire on the lives of people and the children and women in Gaza. The siege and the slaughter resulted.

What is the use of holding negotiations with them while their goals are evident in the region? Islamic governments must make a decision. They must lift the siege of Gaza. There lies great responsibility upon the shoulders of the Egyptian government as well as the Egyptian nation in this regard. All Islamic nations must also aid the Egyptian government and the Egyptian nation to fulfill its responsibility in this regard. They have created a large prison for some one million and a half people, tormenting women and children in hunger, starvation, thirst, lack of fuel and heating in the winter. They are devastating their farms and destroying their gardens and their trades. They do not even stop at these cruelties. They are conducting Air raids and ground attacks. Is this endurable? The occupiers and their advocates must not be allowed to use other Palestinians against these innocent people. Should such an event take place, it will be an eternal disgrace to them. They must not make use of Arab governments in this regard. This is an issue of great consequence. The path the Palestinians have chosen is the right path. That is, the path of resistance and withstanding. And these will ultimately save the Palestinian nation.

We hope that God Almighty acquaints us all with our duties. We hope that God Almighty helps and guides all Islamic nations on the right path. We hope He will set all Islamic nations on the right path. God willing, we Muslims will solve all problems of the Islamic world ourselves. God willing, we will foil the enemies' plots with unanimity, solidarity and cooperation. We hope God Almighty will associate the souls of our dear Martyrs with those of the martyrs of early Islam Martyrs, our Holy Prophet and Imam Hussein, and we hope He will associate the soul of our magnanimous Imam with the souls of His Saints.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessing.