



Iran: Khamenei on Power and Patience

OE Watch Commentary: Each year, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and other top Iranian officials mark several anniversaries and holidays with major speeches: The anniversary of the Islamic Republic, Qods (Jerusalem) Day on the last Friday of the Islamic month of Ramadan, the anniversary of the 1979 seizure of the US Embassy, and Nowruz (Persian New Year).

Khamenei's Nowruz speech this year, excerpted here, focused largely on demonizing and chastising the United States. He noted, "Today, our enemy and the enemy of the Islamic Republic is the United States... American officials are liars, treacherous, shameless, greedy and charlatans." He continued to argue that it is the duty of the Iranian nation to confront the United States. Khamenei then discussed patience as a reason why the Islamic Republic remained strong and was destined for victory. Part of Khamenei's concept of patience was strategic—Iran can outlast its enemies—but



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei delivering his traditional Persian New Year address.

Source: Khamenei.ir, <http://english.khamenei.ir/d/2020/03/22/3/22071.jpg>

part is also steadfast embrace of ideology. Those who remain true to the Islamic Republic's principles are destined for victory; whole those within the system—the so-called reformists—who seek compromise with the West are impatient and inevitably fail.

Khamenei's speech also touched upon demography—an increasingly prevalent theme (see: "Khamenei Speaks on Demography," *OE Watch*, December 2013)—as the Iranian leadership begins to worry about the effect of declining fertility on Iran's future power. Khamenei bluntly stated that the birth rate is too low and that, if it remains so, Iranian power will decline.

He then addressed how another element of future Iranian power must be domination of cyberspace. Like demography, this is a repeating interest for Khamenei who, in 2012, created the Supreme Leader's Cyberspace Council to help set policy and coordinate among Iran's numerous cyber-specific organizations.

He then concluded by addressing the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on Iran. While he raised the conspiracy that COVID-19 is an American invention, he also said he did not know the truth. This is sufficient to signal to the Iranian media that they can continue to "investigate" the links between COVID-19 and the US government in order to keep the conspiracy theory alive while eschewing regime responsibility for having done so. Khamenei defended the National Anti-Corona Headquarters' decision to close shrines and mosques and said that, simply put, the Islamic Republic "had no other choice." Here, he rebuked those who continued to defy social distancing restrictions in order to visit shrines and, in some cases, lick the interior tombs. That said, he argued that the Islamic Republic's religiosity would be its strength as it gives Iranians a higher morale caliber than those in the West who are too eager to betray for selfish immoral purposes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“We should increase our power as much as we can.”



Continued: Iran: Khamenei on Power and Patience

Source: “Sokhanrani Nowruz Rahbar-e Enghalab Khatab beh Mellat-e Iran (The Nowruz Address by the Leader of the Revolution to the Nation of Iran),” *Khamenei.ir*, 22 March 2020. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=45227>

Khamenei's Nowruz Speech

“Patience” does not mean sitting idle and waiting to see how events pan out, rather patience means resisting, showing steadfastness and refusing to change one’s calculations as a result of the enemy’s deceptions. Patience means pursuing the goals that we have set for ourselves....

The people have been completely patient. The past 40 years have proved this in a tangible manner. Some of our so-called intellectuals have unfortunately shown impatience and some of them went as far as to cooperate and to speak in harmony with the enemy because of their impatience. Of course, only some of them were like this.

The opposite point to such individuals is the youth who are thankfully very large in number, and who will continue to grow in number on a daily basis, God willing. They are active in the arena of culture, science, technology, politics and international understanding – in other words, they correctly understand international issues. Such youth are in contrast with those individuals and as I said, they are thankfully increasing every day. So, showing patience means not giving up, not becoming weak and not having doubts, and stopping the enemy with courage and wisdom and subjugating him....

I have said in my recent speeches that the country should become strong. Strengthening the country is one of our goals. This is one of the main guidelines of bethat [commencement of Muhammad’s prophethood]. This concept has been taken from bethat and from the Holy Quran. The Quran says, “Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war.” [Qur., 8:60]. It means that we should increase our power as much as we can....

Preserving the young population of the country is one of the means of power. That is the reason why I stress the issue of increasing the birth-rate so much. In the present time, our country is a young country. If the birth-rate is not at a sufficient level – which is the case in the present time – then in a few years’ time, the young population of the country will decrease. Then, a country that has few youths will make little progress. So, this is one of the means of preserving the young population of society. Another means of power is cyberspace, which is vital today. Today, cyberspace dominates the lives of individuals throughout the world. There are some people who do everything they need to do through cyberspace. Power in this area is vital.

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