



Iran: Khamenei Speaks on Sanctions, Enmity toward America, and Nuclear Power

OE Watch Commentary: On July 31, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gave a wide-ranging televised address on the occasion of the feast of the sacrifice, Eid-e Ghorban (or Eid al-Adha as it is often called in the Arabic-speaking world). That he delivered a televised address rather than appear in person at his normal public prayer venue at the Tehran University campus highlights the caution the elderly Khamenei now takes after several senior administration officials succumbed to COVID-19; he cites the Iranian government's National Anti-Corona Headquarters stipulation that gatherings cannot include more than ten people. He laments that this means he can no longer have meaningful interactions with the Iranian people although, in reality, he has been stringently separated from uncontrolled interactions for almost four decades, having served as president beginning in 1981 prior to assuming the supreme leadership upon Ayatollah Khomeini's death eight years later.



Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei delivers a televised address on 31 July 2020.

Source: Khamenei.ir, https://cdn0.khamenei.ir/ndata/news/46144/C/13990510_0146144.jpg

Khamenei began his speech with a religious discourse about the importance of prayer and sacrifice. The second-half of his speech, however, excerpted here provides a State of the Union-style overview of his thinking and the direction he seeks to take Iran. He praises the spirit of the Iranian people and states—without much basis in fact—that more people in Iran have volunteered to treat the ill or fight against COVID-19 than in any other country; he suggests this is the same spirit of sacrifice that has supposedly infused the Islamic Republic since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.

He remembers both Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the secretary-general of Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq, who died in a U.S. drone strike on 3 January 2020, and suggests each was performing parallel functions. He further praises Muhandis for his work transferring equipment and supplies from Iraq just across the border into Iranian Khuzestan.

He next addresses the “enmity” the Iranian nation faces, and suggests that this is merely a test to prove that the Iranian people can rise above it, as they did during the Iran-Iraq War. While he labels U.S. sanctions a “crime” against Iran, he also repeats his frequent refrain that they have also forced Iran to become self-sufficient and ultimately preserve the Islamic Republic's independence against the backdrop of great power competition. In the portion excerpted here, Khamenei castigates those who would accept U.S. statements that Washington and Tehran could normalize if only the Islamic Republic stopped its sanctionable behaviors; he instead insists that any compromise to resolve the nuclear and ballistic missile disputes, or curtail terrorism would only lead to enhanced American demands. Ultimately, he argues, the way to defeat sanctions is to be victorious in the battle of wills and that those who seek compromise undermine the ability of Iran to be victorious.

He then turns to the nuclear energy and doubles down on the Iranian program, which he suggests is motivated purely by Iran's development needs. His statement that Iran cannot otherwise produce 20-30,000 megawatts in an economically conducive way, however, is not accurate. Upgrading Iran's pipeline and refinery network could provide Iran with greater energy security than a network of nuclear power stations. Iranian officials have previously said they seek to build eight nuclear power plants, but they have only enough natural uranium within their territory to produce 15-years of low-enriched uranium fuel for such plants; Iranian gas and oil fields can fuel natural gas power plants for far longer should the Iranian government seek to build them. While the Bushehr nuclear plant at present produced 1000 megawatts of electricity and, when complete, will produce double that, the largest gas plants now operational in Japan, Taiwan, and Russia can supply 4-5,000 megawatts.

Khamenei concludes his talk by addressing the economy: He discusses the necessity both to control prices and to stabilize the Iranian currency, as well as to reform the banking sector. Many of his demands are mutually exclusive: it is impossible for the regime to dictate prices without catalyzing a currency black market, and it is likewise impossible to have a modern banking sector without the sort of transparency which the government opposes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“We will negotiate with the entire world except for America and the fake Zionist regime”



Continued: Iran: Khamenei Speaks on Sanctions, Enmity toward America, and Nuclear Power

Source: “Biyanat dar Sokhanrani Televisioni beh Monasabat Eid Ghorban” (“Statement in a Televised Speech on the Occasion of Eid Ghoban”), *Khamenei.ir*, 31 July 2020. <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=46146>

Speech on the Occasion of Eid-e Ghorban

.... Can the sanctions be cured or not? The answer is that they are definitely curable. The second answer is that certainly this cure does not lie in retreating in the face of the US. Some people argue and promote the notion that if we want to put an end to the US’s greed and bullying, we should retreat. However, this is not the case. It naturally occurs that when you retreat in the face of someone who is greedy and transgressing, he will advance. This is a natural and clear phenomenon. If you retreat and give in to the US’s demands, he will present new demands. Today, this is what America is saying to us: it says that we should completely abandon our nuclear industry, that we should reduce our defense capabilities to one tenth of what they are – that is to say, we should put aside our defense missiles and resources which have a deterring function, thus rendering ourselves defenseless – and that we should let go of our nuclear power.

We have a strategic depth in the region on the basis of which many regional nations and governments support and love us and are willing to work in favor of our goals. However, the Americans say that we should abandon them. This is what America wants from us. Abandoning these privileges will not make him retreat though. When you agree to reduce your defense capabilities, to destroy your own regional power and completely forget about your nuclear industry, which is vital for our country, he will not become satisfied and will demand another thing and will make another request. No sensible mind is willing to fulfill a transgressor’s requests in order to make him stop.

Nuclear energy is a definite need for the future of the country

Notice that under the influence of the enemy’s propaganda, some people unfortunately say, “What is the use of nuclear energy for us?” There are some people who write these things in newspapers and other media. I have said before that nuclear energy is a definite need for the future of our country. In a few years, we will be needing at least 20,000, 30,000 megawatts of electricity generated by nuclear energy. We cannot obtain this otherwise and the other methods are not economically reasonable. Well, what should we do the day when we need it? Whose door should we go and knock on? Should we go and beg the US and European countries to give us nuclear electricity or develop the enrichment process? Will they do that? Today, we should think about tomorrow! These needs cannot be fulfilled in the space of six months, one or two years. These needs should be satisfied in advance and we have prepared the ground for it. Despite the fact that we have suffered a great deal of loss because of the Bar-Jaam [the JCPOA], the essence is fortunately still there and good and dazzling tasks are being accomplished in this regard. The enemy does not want this though. The same is true of defense and missile areas.

The reason why the Islamic Republic is opposed to negotiating with the US

When the Americans say, “Let us negotiate”, this is what they want to negotiate over. I strongly ask everyone to pay attention to this. Of course, I have repeatedly spoken about this, but I have to say it again because some people do not understand or pretend that they have not understood it: When the enemy says, “Let us negotiate”, it means “Come and sit at the negotiating table so that we will instruct you not to build missiles, which you have to accept of course.” If you accept their terms, well, you will be ruined as you have actually rendered yourselves defenseless. And if you do not accept their terms, there will be the same story: there will be more skirmishes, more sanctions and more threats. This is what negotiation means. The reason why I say that we will not negotiate with the US is that it is pointless. Of course, they will benefit from negotiations. The poor thing – the old man who holds office in the US – seems to have made promotional use of negotiating with North Korea. He wants to take advantage of these negotiations either for electoral or non-electoral purposes. In any case, he has personal interests, but beyond these matters, the US political system claims to be pursuing vital issues in the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In other words, they say that we should forsake our defense capabilities and our regional and national power. Well, this is not possible. An honorable person who is interested in preserving the country’s interests will not give in to these demands. This is what negotiation means. This is the reason why I am against negotiating with the US. Otherwise, we will negotiate with the entire world except for the US and the fake Zionist regime. We are having relations, negotiating and interacting with others and we have no problem with that. This is America’s problem with us....

In my opinion, the Americans are trying to find an enemy. They sometimes mention Iran and they sometimes mention China and Russia as their enemies. They want to fabricate an enemy.