



*1000 Ashrafs, 1000 bastions of rebellion and resistance*

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Greetings to you all.

I cannot find any words capable of describing the trust you are bestowing on me other than to say that I am humbled and that your outpouring of emotion is a reminder of the great responsibility that you have put on my shoulders.

Every single day and night, my mind is preoccupied with the hope and anticipation that I will one day be able to fulfill this responsibility, a responsibility that I have to you, the Iranian people, to history and to God Almighty.

I have come to convey the words of those who have not been heard, those who are the decisive force in Iran; the words of those who have been oppressed, but whose resolve will change the face of Iran. In this endeavor, I rely on your determination and conviction and I want you to know that I rely on, and need each and every one of you.

One year has passed since the signing of the nuclear agreement between world powers and the velayat-e faqih regime (absolute clerical rule) in Iran.

The events of the past year can be summed up by the following: Ali Khamenei's faction failed to find a way out of the crisis engulfing the entire regime. The faction led by (former regime president) Hashemi Rafsanjani and Hassan Rouhani, who viewed this agreement as a ladder on which to climb, fell head first instead.

Western governments and corporations that were dreaming of seeing a golden city in Iran, instead found themselves among the wreckage created by the velayat-e faqih system.

Indeed, both factions failed in subduing a profoundly discontented society. On the other hand, the victorious party is the Iranian Resistance, which exposed the regime's bomb-making program and proved the righteousness of its solution, namely the need to overthrow the religious dictatorship.

In 2011, near the end of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's tenure, Khamenei realized that his regime was in peril. To save it, in his own words, he turned to the United States through "a reputable regional intermediary" and expressed readiness to abandon the nuclear program.

In September 2013, as the news of the nuclear talks were being made public, Khamenei ordered the massacre of Camp Ashraf residents, engaged in back channel deals and resorted to slaughter to save Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

He did so because he wanted to cover-up his backpedal from bomb-making with a hollow show of force. Nevertheless, he ultimately retreated or in the very least temporarily abandoned the nuclear weapons program. But the crisis engulfing the regime could not be contained. To the contrary, it was exacerbated, pushing the regime deeper into the quagmire of the Syrian war.

On the other hand, the People's Mojahedin, from Ashraf to Liberty, from Evin to Gohardasht prisons, and to everywhere else, remained iron-willed and steadfast and expanded exponentially.

Simultaneously, the Rafsanjani-Rouhani faction sought to portray itself as the savior of the regime through the slogan of moderation. They assumed that after the nuclear deal all doors would instantly be opened for the regime, enabling them to find a way to contain the protest movement inside the country.

In the year since the nuclear accord, many of the sanctions were lifted and oil exports increased. But the generated revenues were poured into the inferno of the Syrian war. Dozens of political and business delegations visited Tehran, where they found a bankrupt, unstable and totally corrupt system.

The country's economy was supposed to be fixed. But instead it plunged into recession more than ever before. The banking system is in ruins and factories closed down like autumn leaves.

The regime wanted to improve its relations with the rest of the world, but instead expanded its intervention in neighboring countries. As a result, at least six regional and neighboring governments severed their relations with the regime. In the end, they staged a sham election and resorted to massive propaganda about the victory of illusory moderates. But the result was the continuation of the Supreme Leader's domination over both Assemblies, which Khamenei engineered and to which Rafsanjani consented. Indeed, this is the reality of masquerades about moderation and reform in Iran.

Today, Iranian workers say that Rouhani's administration has imposed the most repressive policies against workers. Artists and musicians say that the scale of restrictions and pressures in the three years of Rouhani has been unprecedented since the revolution.

Our Kurdish, Arab and Baluchi compatriots as well as the followers of other religions, especially our Sunni sisters and brothers, say that they have been subjected to repression and discrimination as never before. We can reference the arrests and executions in Ahwaz, the shelling of Kurdish villages in Iranian Kurdistan, and the resumption of production and testing of ballistic missiles. The number of executions each year is two to three times the figure during Rouhani's predecessor.

In other words, neither the deception about moderation nor the hoopla about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has succeeded in opening doors for the regime. Even if the international community had provided the regime with the greatest opportunities, Tehran would still remain feeble and incapable of resolving the crises engulfing it.

Owing to explosive public discontent, the regime is constantly gripped by fundamental instability. Additionally, it has come face-to-face with a capable and vigilant alternative force. It is aware that this very alternative has the ability to steer crises in the direction of overthrowing the entire regime.

This reality can be seen more vividly than anywhere else in the regime's own behavior. On October 29, 2015, eight days after Khamenei wrote a letter to his president to approve the retreat from the nuclear program, he ordered the largest-ever missile attack on Camp Liberty in Iraq, home to Iranian dissidents. As a result of this crime, 24 Mojahedin members were killed. But, as with other instances, it was proven that Khamenei retreated from the bomb-making program the moment he feared the PMOI and of the alternative to the regime.

In July 2016, Khamenei accepted the failure of his scheme to obstruct the transfer of PMOI members and their extradition, lamenting, "Why did they not hand over these people to the Islamic Republic to carry out divine justice against them." For the past two weeks, the regime's Iraqi proxies have prevented fuel, medicine and food from entering Camp Liberty. And five days before the major gathering in Paris, he ordered another missile attack against Camp Liberty. This was a reaction to Iranians' embrace of this gathering. It was also a reaction to the courageous and commendable support expressed by political prisoners across the country for this gathering. Yes, once again the moment of the Supreme Leader's fear has arrived.

But, our response to the clerical regime's Supreme Leader is that divine verdict will certainly be carried out and that verdict is the overthrow of the velayat-e faqih regime. You can count on it!

Looking at what transpired in the past year, we can ascertain three fundamental realities:

First, both factions failed to find a way to preserve the regime. What is more, why should the Iranian people jump from the frying pan into the fire? The Iranian people reject the turban, whether it is white or black. The velayat-e faqih regime must be overthrown in its entirety.

The second reality is that because of the Iranian people's simmering desire for freedom and their readiness to fight on, the overthrow of the religious dictatorship is possible and within reach.

The third reality is that a real solution stands out, which entails that no other solution exists within the ruling religious dictatorship itself. As a result, the solution offered by the National Council of Resistance of Iran, namely the overthrow of the ruling theocracy, is the most viable one.

This solution is underpinned by the existence of a democratic alternative. It is a solution based on the Iranian society's simmering state and readiness. The suffering that political prisoners endure after staging lengthy hunger strikes exemplifies this resistance.

Our nation's workers are flogged and teachers are given long prison terms, but they refuse to give up and continue to fight. Our nation's young women and men are being arrested and humiliated every day, but they continue to defy the mullahs' impositions. Mothers are imprisoned and endure a multitude of pressures but they continue to demand justice. The combatants of freedom in Camp Liberty are shelled, and face death by attrition because of hardships and a crippling siege, but they refuse to surrender, symbolizing resistance against the ruling regime. This demonstrates our movement's endless prowess. Our nation has arisen to secure its liberty even if it means "plucking it out of the dragon's mouth."

Today, therefore, the question is not whether the ruling theocracy will be overthrown. The question is how we can reach that goal more quickly. We can do so by committing to the mantra of establishing “1,000 Ashrafs;” thousands of bastions of rebellion and resistance against the ruling theocracy.

To achieve a free and just republic in Iran, we do not expect any miracles to happen. Nor do we expect any coincidental or chance occurrences in our favor. Our entire asset base consists of the Iranian nation and its vanguard children. And this indeed gives us the greatest power in the world. So, we must expect everything to be achieved with our own hands and through our own determination. This is why we must establish 1,000 Ashrafs.

The symbolism of establishing 1,000 Ashrafs really speaks to an attempt to unearth repressed potentials; it means joining together the countless individuals who are currently scattered and disconnected, and it means encouraging people to invite real hope in their hearts and minds that the beast can be brought down. Yes, we can and we must.

1,000 Ashrafs means that we bring about the overthrow of the regime through the power of our people’s determination and their organized resistance movement. So, let me borrow from a poem by Bertolt Brecht: “Resist, person in exile! Resist, person in prison; Resist wife sitting in your house; Resist displaced person; Resist, you who are shivering in the cold; you must prepare to take command now.”

The mantra of 1,000 Ashrafs offers both the blueprint for freedom, and the motivating force for the general uprising. It is the heavy hammer that will descend upon the ruling theocracy.

We are full of hope because we have a history that has supplied the backbone needed to achieve freedom; because our nation has within it the capacity to produce major change, and because we have an organized movement that has built a bridge to the future through its sacrifice and resistance.

But, there is someone who can make these hopes become reality; a pioneer who has arisen from the pains and suffering of the Iranian people, who has hoisted the banner of resistance against two dictatorships; the bright light that glows in the dark quarters of this struggle, the central link for all these hopes, and the source of optimism and hope for the Iranian people: Massoud Rajavi.

Thousands of years ago, Arash (the heroic archer figure of Iran mythology) established the boundaries of the Iranian nation. And now, he, Massoud, is the figurative archer who points this historical arch toward freedom. Indeed, he is the source of inspiration and hope for our nation.

Let me add a few words about the policies pursued by the international community vis-à-vis the Iranian regime.

International stakeholders assumed that the nuclear deal with Iran would bring tranquility and calm to the region. But, instead, it rained down barrel bombs and 70,000 Revolutionary Guards on the people of Syria. It resulted in ethnic cleansing of Sunnis by the terrorist Quds Force in Iraq. And it led to the spread of extremism under the banner of Islam in the whole region.

Indeed, the world of Islam is truly agonized by the unprecedented and criminal explosion near the Prophet's Mosque, and we strongly condemn it.

The Iranian Resistance stands with the brother nation of Syria and its brave combatants. It is honored to act as the voice of solidarity between the two nations.

In confronting us, the mullahs and Daesh are reading from the same script. Both espouse a similar reactionary ideology, which is diametrically opposed to the pristine teachings of Islam. They have a similar modus operandi when it comes to barbarity and savagery. They need to rely on one another to survive. For this reason, so long as the regime's occupation of Syria, Iraq and Yemen continues, we cannot confront Daesh effectively.

Regrettably, the notion of practical coordination with the terrorist Quds Force is being justified on the pretext of confronting Daesh. I warn that any silence vis-à-vis such an approach or any collaboration with the mullahs would enable them to commit genocide and to infringe upon the national sovereignty of countries in the region.

Since the days of the great Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq (a democratically elected prime minister of Iran in the 1950s), U.S. policy on Iran, and consequently on the Middle East, has hopped from one mistake to the next: From the notion of empowering bogus moderates to blacklisting of the PMOI, thereby blocking the path to change in Iran; and to remaining silent vis-à-vis the 2009 uprising, thereby enabling the religious dictatorship. This policy has brought calamity to our nations and crisis to the U.S.

To correct this policy, we offer a solution that presents the only effective, the most indispensable and the most attainable option: the right of the Iranian people to overthrow the religious dictatorship and attain freedom and democracy. This must be recognized.

This solution does not only benefit the Iranian people. It also amounts to a breakthrough for the region and for the world. Many elected representatives of people throughout the world as well as senior U.S., European, Australian, Canadian, Asian and Middle Eastern personalities and dignitaries -- who support freedom and democracy in Iran and the security of, and protection for, the residents of Liberty -- proudly attest to this reality. I hail all of them and all of you present here today.

But the last word is also the very first word for which we have risen up, namely resistance for freedom. Of course, we were not the first to take on this responsibility. This is the evolutionary extension of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, of the national movement of Dr. Mossadeq and the July 21, 1952 uprising, which restored him as Prime Minister; it is a response to the stolen dreams of the 1979 Revolution and the blood-stained extension of the June 1981 uprising. Indeed, we were not the first to take on this responsibility. Prophets and great peacemakers were the pioneers.

In the Old Testament, God told Moses, "I have called upon you to liberate the enchained and those who live in darkness."

The Bible quotes Jesus Christ as saying, "For someone who believes, everything is possible."

And the Quran has said, "So, Resist through a magnificent resistance. Surely they see it far off, and we see it near."

Throughout history, no obstacle and no barrier, however impenetrable and fortified, has succeeded in hindering this mandate. And in this light, the ruling religious dictatorship cannot withstand the power of the Iranian people's Resistance.

Indeed, a new era will dawn in Iran; a society based on democracy, separation of religion and state, and gender equality will blossom.

To achieve this glorious objective, we have chosen to resist. We have chosen to resist anywhere and in any form to bring the ideal of freedom to fruition.

We have chosen to resist so long as oppression and tyranny persist. And we are honored and proud to have made this choice.

We will not relent until the day when freedom, democracy and equality roar like a powerful torrent from Azerbaijan to Baluchistan and from Khorassan to Khuzestan.

We will not relent until the day when Iranians of all persuasions and divergences can join hands to hoist the flag of victory, the flag of a free and democratic Iran.

Victory to you.