

## **Khomeini: Speech Number Sixteen**

**In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

*We are from God and to Him is our return.*

**I cannot express the sorrow I feel in my heart. My heart is heavy. Since the day I heard of the latest developments affecting Iran, I have barely slept. I am profoundly disturbed. With sorrowful heart, I count the days until death shall come and deliver me (the audience weeps). Iran no longer has a festival to celebrate; they have turned our festival into mourning. They have turned it into mourning and have lit up the city; they have turned it into mourning and are dancing together with joy. They have sold us, they have sold our independence, and still they light up the city and dance.**

**If I were in their place, I would forbid all these lights; I would tell the people to raise black flags over the bazaars and houses, to hang black awnings. Our honour has been trampled underfoot; the dignity of Iran has been destroyed. The dignity of the Iranian army has been trampled underfoot!**

**They have taken a law to the Parliament according to which first of all we are to accede to the Vienna Convention, and secondly we have to add a provision that all American military advisers, together with their families, technical and administrative officials, and servants - in short, anyone in any way connected to them - are to enjoy legal immunity with respect to any crime they may commit in Iran! If some American's servant, some American's cook, assassinates your *marja'-i taqlid* in the middle of the bazaar, or runs over him, the Iranian police do not have the right to apprehend him! Iranian courts do not have the right to judge him! The dossier must be sent to America so that our masters there can decide what is to be done!**

**The previous government approved this measure without telling anyone, and now the present government just recently introduced a bill in the Senate and settled the whole matter in a single session without breathing a word to anyone. A few days ago, the bill was taken to the lower house of the Parliament and there were discussions, with a few deputies voicing their opposition, but the bill was passed anyhow. They passed it without any shame, and the government shamelessly defended this scandalous measure. They have reduced the Iranian people to a level lower than that of an American dog. If someone runs over a dog belonging to an American, he will be prosecuted. Even if the Shah himself were to run over a dog belonging to an American, he would be prosecuted. But if an American cook runs over the Shah, or the *marja'* of Iran, or the highest official, no one will have the right to object.**

**Why?**

**Because they wanted a loan from America and America demanded this in return! This is apparently the case. A few days after this measure was approved, they requested a \$200 million loan from America and America agreed to the request. It was stipulated that the sum of \$200 million would be paid to the Iranian government over a period of five years, and that \$300 million would be paid back to America over a period of ten years. Do you realise what this means? In return for this loan, America is to receive \$100 million - or 800 million tumans - in interest! But in addition to this, Iran has sold itself to obtain these dollars! The government has sold our independence, reduced us to the level of a colony, and made the Muslim nation of Iran appear more lowly than savages in the eyes of the world! They have done this for the sake of a \$200 million dollar loan for which they have to pay back \$300 dollars!**

**What are we to do in the face of this disaster?**

**What are our clergymen to do? Where shall they turn to for help?**

To what country should they present their appeal?

Other countries imagine that it is the Iranian nation that has abased itself in this way. They do not know that it is the Iranian government, the Iranian Parliament - this Parliament which has nothing to do with the Iranian people. This is a Parliament elected at bayonet point, what does such a Parliament have to do with the people. The Iranian nation did not elect these deputies. Many of the high-ranking *'ulama* and *maraji'* ordered a boycott of the elections, and the people obeyed them and did not vote. But then came the power of the bayonet, and these deputies were seated in the Parliament.

According to a history textbook printed this year and now taught to our schoolchildren, one containing all kinds of lies and inaccurate statements: "It has now become clear that it is to the benefit of the nation for the influence of the religious leaders to be rooted out." They have come to understand well that:

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit this nation to be slaves of Britain one day, and America the next.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit Israel to take over the Iranian economy; they will not permit Israeli goods to be sold in Iran - in fact, to be sold duty-free!

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the government to impose arbitrarily such a heavy loan on the Iranian nation.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit such misuse to be made of the public treasury.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit any government to do whatever it wants, whatever is against the interests of the nation.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the Parliament to come to such a miserable state as this; they will not permit the Parliament to be formed at bayonet-point, with the ignominious results that we see.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit girls and boys to wrestle together, as recently happened in Shiraz.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit people's innocent daughters to be under the tutelage of young men at school; they will not permit women to teach at boys' schools and men to teach at girls' schools, with the resulting corruption.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will strike this government in the mouth; they will strike this Parliament in the mouth and chase these deputies out of both its houses!

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit a handful of individuals to be imposed on the nation as deputies and determine the destiny of the country.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit some agent of America to carry out these scandalous deeds; they will throw him out of Iran.

So, the influence of the religious leaders is harmful to the nation? No, it is harmful to you, harmful to you traitors, not to the nation! You have realised that as long as the influence of the religious leaders exists you cannot do everything you want to do, commit all the crimes you want, so you wish to destroy their influence. You thought you could cause dissension among the religious leaders with your intrigues, but you will be dead before your dream can come true. You will never be able to do it. The religious leaders are united!

Once again I esteem all religious leaders, I kiss the hand of all the religious leaders. If, in the past, I kissed the hands of the *maraji'*, today I kiss the hands of the religious students. I kiss the hands of the simple grocer (the audience weeps intensely).

Gentlemen, I warn you of danger!

Iranian army, I warn you of danger!

Iranian politicians, I warn you of danger!

Iranian merchants, I warn you of danger!

'*Ulama of Iran, maraji'* of Islam, I warn you of danger!

Scholars, religious students! Centres of religious learning, Najaf, Qum, Mashhad, Tehran, Shiraz! I warn you of danger!

It is a dangerous situation. It is clear that there are things kept under cover that we know nothing about. In the Parliament they have said that they have to be kept secret! It is evident that they are dreaming up further plans for us. What else can they do that is worse than this? What are they planning? What will this loan inflict on this nation? Should this impoverished nation now pay \$100 million in interest to America over the next ten years and at the same time should you sell us for this? What use to you are the American soldiers and military advisers? If this country is occupied by America, then what is all this noise you make about progress? If these advisers are to be your servants, then why do you treat them like something superior to masters, superior to a Shah? If they are servants, why not treat them as such? If they are your employees, then why not treat them as any other government treats its employees? If our country is now occupied by the US then tell us outright and throw us out of this country! What do they intend to do? What does this government have to say to us? What has this Parliament done to us? This illegal, unlawful Parliament; this Parliament that the *maraji'-i taqlid* have declared illegitimate with their edicts and decrees; this Parliament which not one of its representatives has been chosen by the people; this Parliament which makes such empty claims about independence and revolution saying: "We have undergone a White Revolution!" Where is this "White Revolution?" They have made these people suffer!

God knows that I am aware of what is happening (and my awareness causes me pain), I know what is happening in the remote villages and provincial towns, in this our own impoverished city of Qum (the audience weeps). I am aware of the hunger of our people and the depressed state of our agrarian economy.

Do something for this country, for this nation, instead of piling up debts and enslaving yourself. Of course, taking the dollars means that someone has to become a slave; you want to use the dollars and we have to become the slaves! If an American runs over me with his car, no one will have the right to say anything to him! So you use the dollars; this is the issue.

Should I not be saying this? Those gentlemen who say we must hold our tongues and not utter a sound - do they still say the same thing on this occasion? Are we to keep silent again and not say a word? They sell us and still we are to keep silent? They sell our Qur'an and still we should hold our tongues? By God, he who does not cry out in protest is a sinner! By God, he who does not express his outrage commits a major sin!

Leaders of Islam, come to the aid of Islam (the audience weeps)!

'*Ulama of Najaf, come to the aid of Islam!*

'*Ulama of Qum, come to the aid of Islam! Islam is destroyed  
O Muslim peoples! Leaders of the Muslim peoples!*

O presidents and kings of the Muslim peoples! O Shah of Iran! Look at yourselves, look at us. Are we to be trampled underfoot by the boots of the Americans simply because we are a weak nation? Because we have no dollars? America is worse than Britain, Britain is worse than America and the Soviet Union is worse than both of them. Each one is worse than the other, each one is more abominable than the other. But today we are concerned with this malicious entity which is America. Let the American President know that in the eyes of the Iranian nation, he is the most repulsive member of the human race today because of the injustice he has imposed on our Muslim nation. Today, the Qur'an has become his enemy, the Iranian nation has become his enemy. Let the American government know that its name has been ruined and disgraced in Iran.

You get immunities for the advisers? Those helpless deputies in the Parliament who shouted out "ask our friends (the Americans) not to make such impositions on us, not to insist that we sell ourselves, not to turn Iran into a colony," did anyone listen to them?

There is one article in the Vienna Convention they did not discuss at all - Article 32. I don't know what article that is; in fact, the speaker of the Parliament himself doesn't know. The deputies also don't know what that article is; nonetheless, they went ahead and approved and signed the bill. They passed it, even though some people said, "We don't know what is in Article 32." Perhaps those who objected did not sign the bill. They are not quite so bad as the others. Those who did sign are a group of illiterates.

One after the other, our statesmen and leading politicians have been set aside. Our patriotic statesmen are given nothing to do. The army should know that it will also be treated the same way: its leaders will be set aside, one by one. What self-respect will remain for the army when an American errand boy or cook has priority over one of our generals? If I were in the army, I would resign. If I were a deputy in the Parliament, I would resign. I would not agree to be disgraced.

The influence of the Iranians should be rooted out! American cooks, mechanics, technical and administrative officials, together with their families, should enjoy legal immunity, but Mr Qazi should be imprisoned! Mr Islami should be taken in shackles from this place to that! These servants of Islam, the *ulama* and preachers of Islam should be imprisoned. The supporters of Islam should be imprisoned in Bandar `Abbas because they are religious leaders or the supporters of the religious leaders. These are the ones who gave the history of Iran to the people! The government clearly documents its crimes by putting out a history textbook that says: "It is to the benefit of the nation to root out the influence of the religious leaders." This means that it is for the benefit of the nation that the Messenger of God should play no role in its affairs. For the religious leaders of themselves have nothing; whatever they have, they have from the Messenger of God. So the government wants the Messenger of God to play no role in our affairs, so that Israel can do whatever it likes, and America likewise. All our troubles today are caused by this America. All our troubles today are caused by this Israel. Israel itself derives from America. These deputies and ministers derive from America. They have all been appointed by America. If they were not, then why don't they stand up and protest?

I am now thoroughly agitated, and my memory is not working so well. I cannot remember precisely when, but in one of the earlier parliaments, where Sayyid Hasan Mudarris was a deputy, the government of Russia gave Iran an ultimatum - I can't remember its exact content - to the effect that: "Unless you accept our demand, we will advance on Tehran by way of Qazvin and occupy it!" The government of the day put pressure on the Parliament to accept the Russian demand. According to an American historian, a religious leader with trembling hands came up to the tribune and said: "Now that we are to be destroyed, why should we sign the warrant for our own destruction?" The Parliament took courage from his act of opposition, rejected the ultimatum, and Russia was unable to do anything!

This is the conduct of a true cleric; one feeble, aged cleric in the Parliament, a mere heap of bones, rejected the ultimatum and demand of a powerful state like Russia. This is why they realise that they should destroy the influence of the clergy in order to attain their aims and desires!

**There is so much to be said, there are so many instances of corruption in this country, that I am unable in my state at the moment to present to you even what I know. It is your duty, however, to communicate these matters to your colleagues. It is your duty to inform the people; the `ulama must enlighten the people, and they in turn must raise their voices in protest to the Parliament and the government and ask, "Why did you do this? Why have you sold us? Are we your slaves that you sell us? We did not elect you to be our representatives, and even had we done so, you would forfeit your posts now on account of this act of treachery."**

**This is high treason! O God, they have committed treason against this country. O God, this government has committed treason against this country, against Islam, against the Qur'an. All the members of both houses who gave their agreement to this affair are traitors. Those old men in the Senate are traitors, and all those in the lower house who voted in favour of this affair are traitors. They are not our representatives. The whole world must know that they are not the representatives of Iran! Or, suppose they are, now I dismiss them. They are dismissed from their posts and all the bills they have passed up until now are invalid.**

**From the very beginning of the constitutional period in Iran according to the text of the law, according to Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, no law is valid unless the *mujtahids* (Islamic jurists) exercise a supervisory role in the Parliament. Which *mujtahid* is supervising the Parliament now? They have to destroy the influence of the clergymen! If there were five clerics in this Parliament, if there were only one clergyman in this Parliament, he would punch them in the mouth! He would not allow this bill to be enacted.**

**As for those deputies who apparently opposed this affair, I have this to say to them: "Why did you not do something? Why did you not stand up and seize that despicable man by the collar?" Is this how you show your opposition, you simply sit there and say: "We are not in agreement," and then continue your flattery as usual?**

**Is this opposition? You must create an uproar, right there in the Parliament. You must not allow them to pass this bill when you are opposed to it. Is it enough to say simply I am opposed? Well, we see that when you do they pass it anyway! You must not permit there to be such a Parliament. Kick these people out of the Parliament.**

**We do not recognise this as a law. We do not recognise this Parliament as a true Parliament. We do not recognise this government as a true government. They are traitors, traitors to the people of Iran!**

**O God, remedy the affairs of the Muslims (the audience replies with "Amen").**

**O God, bestow majesty on this sacred religion of Islam!**

**O God, destroy those individuals who are traitors to this land, who are traitors to Islam and to the Qur'an.**

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1- Meaning the Capitulation Bill approved by the Shah's Parliament on October 13, 1964 (Mehr 21, 1343 AHS). Capitulation is the name of all agreements that give the consular judicial rights or the extraterritorial judicial rights of a country within that country to a foreign government. According to this agreement, the citizens of the foreign country have legal immunity from the criminal and civil laws of the host country and the special courts of their sovereign government in the host country hold the right to judge their lawsuits and trials when they stand accused. According to the Capitulation Law and the Vienna Convention, these political and judicial immunities not only cover the American political agents, diplomats, military advisers and personnel, but their families and relatives also.

2- The regime made sure that the news of the approval of the disgraceful Capitulation Bill was not divulged. On the day which coincided with the anniversary of the birth of *Hazrat* Fatima (upon whom be peace) and which under normal circumstances would have been an occasion for rejoicing, with the announcement that "our day of festivity has been turned into a day of mourning," Imam unveiled the shameful act of the regime.

3- The Shah and the government of Hasan 'Ali Mansur.

4- After the Second World War, the United Nations set its International Law Commission the task of preparing and codifying a general and international agreement on the political relations between the countries of the world. After years of discussion and study, the draft of this Commission, including one introduction, fifty-three articles and two protocols (on how the agreement was to be implemented) was approved by the General Assembly, at the Vienna Conference, and was designated the Vienna Convention. From March 5, 1965 its stipulations became compulsory in Iran. The shortcomings of the Vienna Convention were corrected in 1967, with the general plan being preserved, and it was proposed by the UN in seventy-nine articles and was approved by the members. Two articles of the seventy-nine, Articles 32 and 37, were those to which Imam Khomeini objected.

5- The government of Amir Asadullah `Alam

6- The high-ranking `ulama and the clergy called for a boycott of the twenty-first round of parliamentary elections in September 1963 (Shahrivar 1342 AHS) and the people, without delay, started a general strike and did not participate in the referendum. For example, of the 300,000 people eligible to vote in Tabriz, the member of Parliament with the highest vote in this city won only 2,283 votes.

7- The meaning here is the corruption which was created by allowing the establishment of mixed schools. The Shah, in his book *Mission for my Country*, said that in the fields of teaching and education he wanted to implement the Western method. He wrote: "In my country, the existence of women teachers for educating girls is not obligatory. In most schools and universities the classes are mixed and the lessons are given by both male and female teachers and lecturers without discrimination and sexual preference, the only concern being their expertise. I would also like to test the method which is customary in America (i.e. girls and boys marry while studying at the university) in establishing mixed universities where young girls and boys are educated together for the job of teaching."

8- The Shah.

9- Mr. Nasir Behbudi, in a meeting of the National Assembly on October 13, 1964 (Mehr 21, 1343 AHS) said of the Capitulation Bill: "Please agree to discuss this matter in the uncomplicated and private atmosphere of the commission. Do not let more than this be revealed in the Parliament." *Parliamentary Proceedings*, 21st session, meeting 104.

10- Referring to those *maraji'* who believed in keeping silent.

11- Mr. Sartipour, in a speech given at a parliamentary meeting on October 13, 1964 (Mehr 21, 1343 AHS) in which the Capitulation Bill was discussed, said: "He - Mr. Mansur, the Prime Minister - has the opportunity to discuss this and ask our friends to keep us in a favourable position. One of the conditions of our friendship is that our friends should respect our loyalties to that which we regard as sacred." *Parliamentary Proceedings*, 21st session, meeting 104.

12- It was pointed out earlier that one of the seventy-nine articles of the Vienna Convention, Article 37, stipulates that the diplomats of each country are granted certain immunities in other countries, and sometimes this implies legal immunity. If a diplomat, who enjoys this immunity, commits a crime in the host country, he is exempt from legal prosecution and punishment and his case will be handed over to the courts in his own sovereign state for them to deal with. However, in the first paragraph of Article 32 of the said convention, permission has been given to the sending state to waive the immunity from jurisdiction of diplomatic agents and of persons enjoying immunity under Article 37. The omission of Article 32 prepared the grounds for Iran's unconditional surrender.

13- Ayatullah Qazi Tabataba'i was one of the famous `ulama and preachers of the province of Azerbaijan and the city of Tabriz, and was the leader of the Islamic movement in that district. This clergyman, along with many others who were arrested and imprisoned both before Imam's arrest and after it in the bloody uprising of Khurdad 15, 1342 (June 5, 1963), was in prison at the time of this historic speech. Throughout the course of the Islamic movement and his short life after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatullah Qazi was in the front line of the revolution. He was martyred by the Mujahidin-i Khalq (the *Munafaqin*) on 'Id al-Qurban, November 1, 1979 (Aban 10, 1358 AHS).

14- Refer to footnote 5 of Speech 7.

15- Bandar `Abbas: a port on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf to which opponents of the regime were frequently banished because of its remoteness from all urban centres as well as its inhospitable climate.

16- Refer to footnote 33 of Speech 15.

17- The American historian Morgan Shuster, in his book *The Strangling of Persia*, writes: "A venerable priest of Islam arose. Time was slipping away and at noon the question would be beyond their vote to decide. This servant of God spoke briefly and to the point: "It may be the will of Allah that our liberty and our sovereignty shall be taken from us by force, but let us not sign them away with our own hands!" One gesture of appeal with his trembling hands, and he resumed his seat.

Simple words, these, yet winged ones. Easy to utter in academic discussions; hard, bitterly hard, to say under the eye of a cruel and overpowering tyrant whose emissaries watched the speaker from the galleries and mentally marked him down for future imprisonment, torture, exile or worse.....

And when the roll call was ended every man, priest or layman, youth or octogenarian, had cast his own die of fate, had staked the safety of himself and family, and hurled back into the teeth of the great Bear from the North the unanimous answer of a desperate and down-trodden people who preferred a future of unknown terror to the voluntary sacrifice of their national dignity and of their recently earned right to work out their own salvation." *The Strangling of Persia*, p. 182.

18- On November 29, 1911, the Russian empire, which exerted great influence in Iran, sent troops into Iranian territory and delivered an ultimatum to the Iranian government which was supported by Britain. The ultimatum called for the dismissal of the American advisory group led by Morgan Shuster; a guarantee that no foreign adviser would be hired in future without the consent of Russia and Britain; and payment of an indemnity to the Russian troops in Iran. The ultimatum was discussed in a meeting of the Second National Assembly on December 1, 1911 and was met with strong opposition from Ayatullah Mudarris and other members of Parliament

19- Hasan `Ali Mansur.

20- Details of the parliamentary proceedings of October 13, 1964 (Mehr 21, 1343 AHS) which resulted in the Capitulation Bill being approved show how the Pahlavi regime had for years allowed the Americans to exploit the constitution, the sanctities and the Islamic and national affairs of the country in order to satisfy their avaricious desires. The manner in which the Capitulation Bill was presented to the Parliament went against normal legal procedures and the charter of the Parliament. The contents of the bill grossly contradicted the numerous articles of the (former) constitutional law. This bill was nothing other than a bill of sale of the judicial and hence the political independence of the country. Apart from those who approved the bill in the parliamentary discussions, who with closed lips or shouts of "bravo" voted in favour of the bill, the method of opposition of a few representatives - even then this opposition was not to

the bill itself rather to how it was presented to the Parliament - was the cause of great surprise and regret and served as another example of the injustice suffered by the Iranian nation throughout the fifty years of Pahlavi rule. On this day, October 13, 1964 (Mehr 21, 1343 AHS), Mr. Sartipour, as an opponent of the bill, said that the aforesaid bill conflicted with three articles of the Constitution. At the end of his speech he said: "I would like Mr. Mansur, who really wishes to adhere to the law and respect the Constitution, to find the opportunity to discuss this matter with our friends (meaning the American government) and ask them to keep us in a favourable position."

Mr. Sadeq Ahmadi, another opponent of the bill, after some initial adulatory remarks said: "I still cannot say whether I am for or against because my investigations are incomplete." The third opponent, Mr. Fakhr Tabataba'i, said: "The respectful advisers who have been given technical jobs are necessary for our country, we want to make use of these advisers and we employ these respectful advisers, they are our employees. I want to see whether it is wise to give them such immunities; this most certainly does not have an international aspect.....Mr. Mansur's government does not think of anything but the good of the country and whatever service the government gives or whatever positive steps it takes, I approve of."

Mr. Nasir Behbudi said: "My request is this, that you agree to discuss this bill in the uncomplicated and private atmosphere of the commission. Do not let more than this be revealed in the Parliament."

The most comprehensive speech in opposition to the bill was from Mr. Zahtabfard. Announcing that he was at one with Mr. Mansur and was not ready to oppose the matter, he presented some of the facts, intertwining them with flattering remarks and allusions. He said: "Mr. Mansur, everyone has the right to ask yesterday's Dr. Musaddiq and today's Mr. Mansur what is the reason for granting such privileges to the American technical advisers. I am speaking logically, and I am not afraid of anybody because I rely only on God, the king, the nation and the Constitution." Mr. Zahtabfard ended his speech with this conclusion: "We must give this assurance to the public, who are our family, that if, God forbid, the Parliament takes steps towards approving this bill, it also acts for the benefit of this great nation of Iran." See *Parliamentary Proceedings*, 21st session, meeting 104, pp. 16.