



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Opening Speech of

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At

Club de Monaco Conference
Institute for Mediterranean Political Studies

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Doha, Qatar

Four Seasons Hotel

Distinguished guests,

I would like to welcome you in the State of Qatar, and to express my pleasure to exchange views with you on topics of common interests relevant to the future of international relations in the region and the world, at a time when the Arab World is witnessing significant changes that will have important implications, not only for the region, but for the entire world.

Our meeting today falls within the policy adopted by the State of Qatar in organizing of conferences, forums and events. This policy aims at promoting dialogue among the peoples and the convergence between cultures, in order to find the solutions that could tackle the issues which threaten security and peace in this vital part of the world.

The foreign policy of the State of Qatar believes in the significance of adhering to peaceful co-existence based upon mutual respect and common interests in accordance with rules of international laws. Moreover, the State of Qatar believes in the importance of interaction between cultures and civilizations, and the significance of adhering to the values of tolerance, justice, openness and the right of the peoples to live in freedom and dignity in their respective countries. In fact, these are the very principles around which we gather today. Based upon this point, the State of Qatar strongly adheres to the necessity of the settlement of international disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, and renounces the use of force as a method of conflict resolution. Qatar also believes in the importance of laying the foundation of good governance based on the rule of law and the respect for freedoms and human rights, and the eradication of corruption and deepening the rules of economic and social development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Arab world is witnessing radical changes resulting from the Arab spring, which blew its winds over the region. The State of Qatar, on its part, views these developments in a positive perspective, and provides its support for the changes in the region in order to strengthen the democratic process and consolidate the liberties in the region. In this regard, the State of Qatar could not stay idly while

witnessing these peoples being brutally suppressed for just demanding their legitimate rights. Thus, Qatar started providing all forms of political and moral support as it believes that the comprehensive political reform process is necessary to accelerate the pace of the participation of the majority of the people in determining important decisions related to their future. These changes would not be realized in the Arab world without developing of institutions that insure this participation, and the consolidation of aspects of human knowledge, especially the youth sector, which is considered to be the new force in the Arab political scene. Qatar also believes that the region, rather the whole world, should enjoy a true atmosphere of dialogue based on respecting the liberties and people's choices.

I would also like to refer here to the situation in Syria, where the continuation of the situation in that country, as it is now, is threatening the whole region with dire consequences, unless the international community succeeds in redressing the situation in an effective and serious manner. In light of this painful reality, the State of Qatar believes that the Syrian regime should stop its machine of killing and the bloodshed against its own people on the basis of the Arab League initiative of the 22th of January 2012, which includes an integrated plan that allows for reaching a peaceful solution in Syria. In this regard, the Syrian regime should listen to the calls of its people and the many Arab and International calls, and seek in earnest to make real reforms aimed at achieving a peaceful transition of power, and the establishment of a democratic system that guarantees the full participation of all Syrian groups.

Distinguished Guests,

The State of Qatar firmly believes that peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through the establishment of the desired Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders. Accordingly, Qatar's diplomacy dedicates its vigorous efforts to achieve this goal through reconciliation efforts which it undertakes to reach a rapprochement between the Palestinian parties, in order to achieve the aspirations of the Palestinian people and preserve their national unity. Yet, the State of Qatar believes that the biggest obstacle to reaching a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict lies the policy of Israel, which has thwarted all positive moves towards reaching peace because of its insistence on continuing its settlement policies within the Arab territories.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the Arab gulf region witnesses a significant tension due to the Iranian crisis associated with its nuclear program, the State of Qatar understands the strategic importance of this region because it contains half of the world's reserves of oil and gas, and where one-quarter of the world production comes from these two essential engines of world economy. The state of Qatar has consistently sought to achieve peace, security, and stability in the Middle East and around the world. In this regard, the State of Qatar has stressed the importance of dialogue with Iran and the adoption of political and diplomatic means to resolve differences, away from any military intervention, including the Iranian nuclear issue. In this context, Qatar demands that the Middle East region, including Israel, be a nuclear-weapons-free zone under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in order to reach a solution to the outstanding problems.

Finally, I would like to welcome you here in Doha once again and to wish you success in your dialogue during this conference.

May God's peace, mercy, and blessing be upon you