

**Speech**

**by**

**HE Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani  
The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the State of Qatar**

**At**

**The US- Islamic World Forum**

**Doha**

**29 May 2012**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Distinguished audience,**

I have the pleasure to welcome you to Doha at this edition of the US-Islamic World Forum which has become one of the annual events that we look forward to them in anticipation.

The central question which I would like to deal with in my speech is how the relations between the United States and the Islamic world should be in the light of the current developments in the Middle East.

If we look at the recent events in the region, the process of political change has already started in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya with the exception of Syria where the results are still not conclusive due to very well known external factors.

We should acknowledge that the massive changes taking place in the Arab world reflect the political, economic and social stress that kept sweeping the region for several years. We believe that governments have to respond to the needs of their peoples. This is the essence of the legitimacy of any government. Thus

governments should realize the fact that it is no longer helpful to confront the popular calls for reform with security and military means, repression, killing and expulsion, especially after it has been proven by the events that the masses have broken the barrier of fear and become ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of attaining their inalienable rights.

This is why, based on this objective perception, In our humble view the success of reform process relies on the degree of its comprehensiveness, inclusiveness, continuity and incorporation of all political, economic, social and other aspects of life, as well as whether it involves respecting the basic rights .

In this respect the awareness of the people as to the rights and obligations becomes essential in the era of reform despite the fact that such awareness is not easy to achieve overnight. No doubt that reaching the level of stability that reflects the attainment of the revolutions objectives of creating solid constitutional regimes would take time.

Thus, support to safeguard the national gains that have been realized should be extended from the countries inside and outside the region as a collective

responsibility conducive to the achievement of their common interests in peace and stability.

Some of the vital steps to be taken in this direction are the provision of the required resources of development to achieve social stability. We in the State of Qatar have confirmed in various occasions our readiness to shoulder our responsibility in this respect.

The important question in this juncture is that: is change which occurred, accidental, or is it a fleeting wave that would not take long before it subsides? We modestly feel that what has happened and is happening in the Arab countries reflects a genuine national trend, and that the situations would never again be as they used to be before the surge of change.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Honorable guests,**

After this brief overview on the nature of the events witnessed by the Arab world, I would like to say something about what the relations between the United States and the Islamic world should be like.

These relations are not new as we all know. There are points of divergence involved in them. However, there

are also many points of agreement that can be developed based on the common interests, mutual respect and the fact that the United States and the Islamic world need not eliminate each other or compete against each other.

This means that the logical outcome of this situation is to establish an effective partnership to be embodied in tangible actions as a true translation of the essence of these relations.

In this respect it is undeniable that political circles in the United States have shown some reservation towards these events before these circles declared their support in a later stage.

However, the point which is more important than this and which I would like to put more emphasis on is that the developments that took place in the Arab world require a realistic understanding of the factors that have precipitated the pace of change. We have to do this in order to avoid building our political positions on traditional worries and apprehensions which prevailed in the past and which crop up to the surface from time to time. We have to accept the outcome of change as long as it reflects the real aspirations of the masses and

as long as these aspirations are expressed, and with optimum transparency.

This entails that our political positions should depend on confirmed facts and actual realities of the political practices of the new regimes which were established as a result of the change rather than depending on apprehensions or unpleasant experiments of the past. In other words, we need to refrain from deciding our positions in accordance with pre-convictions. Instead, we need to re-read the new realities to formulate new positions and policies accordingly and safeguard our common interests.

The other point is that we all know that deprivation was one of the most important underlying factors behind the eruption of the revolutions that we have seen not only in the political but also in all aspects of life. Political justice alone would not be enough to bring about stability after the success of the revolutions of change without being accompanied by economic justice whose effects should be reflected on resolving the problem of unemployment, restructuring the educational systems in such a way as to meet the economic and social requirements, addressing health requirements and removing all the causes of social

instability in order to alleviate the frustration that leads to rebellion.

The question that comes to the fore in this context is that: is the United States going to exert effective efforts to mobilize the required resources and formulate the financial assistance programs for economic and social development in the countries of the region in support of the reform that resulted from the movements of change?

This could be costly or difficult under the present circumstances of the current global economic crisis or the existing financial restrictions. However, we have to remember at the same time that political reform without development is not enough to establish a solid foundation for a successful process of change, and thus it would be impossible to achieve peace and stability. Failure to reach this goal may in turn recoil negatively on the pace of recovering from the global economic crisis itself.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like finally to deal with another very sensitive issue. It is very well-known that the apparent failure in resolving the Palestinian cause and the conflict in the

Middle East was one of the underlying factors behind the eruption of the Arab revolutions. So we must ask ourselves, despite the close proximity of the American presidential elections, about the way in which the United States is going to act regarding this conflict which is considered to be the central issue for all Arabs and Muslims alike. Here is where we are going to face the greatest challenge in the US-Islamic world relations.

The Middle East peace process has been disrupted for a long time; not because the problem is impossible to solve but rather because of the opposition on the part of the Israeli government to the requirement to stop the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, and its opposition to the two-state solution based on the border line of 1967. The United States has declared accepting the Israeli position in this respect.

Is the American indulgence of the Israeli acts going to continue? Or, are we going to see an international meaningful action to bring the peace process on the track of comprehensive solution away from the track of partial solutions that did not so far bear any fruit?



On the other hand, and after the recent political developments in Israel, is the Israeli government going to consider seriously the winds of change that brought about new transformations in the Arab world, and realize that what is required to achieve peace is to rectify the mistakes regardless of the involved difficulties for the purpose of upholding the international legitimacy and achieving just and lasting peace?

I modestly think that what is required from all parties, the United States, the Palestinians and the official Arab side, especially after the change befalling Israel's neighbors, is to adopt new approaches in implementing their share in the collective responsibility to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Thank you very much