

منتدى أمريكا والعالم الإسلامي

U.S.–ISLAMIC WORLD FORUM

DOHA, QATAR

Keynote Address By

His Excellency Sheikh

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to welcome you all to Doha. I am pleased to inaugurate the fifth annual U.S.-Islamic World Forum.

Allow me to present to you some major points constituting, in my opinion, basic rules for any vision of the course of events.

There is no doubt that there are positive aspects in the relationship between the Islamic world and the United States. Still, there are also numerous aspects of deficiency and failure.

We are still witnessing the absence of serious and effective treatment which ensures laying the bases for a relationship along the course of constructive development that respects mutual interests.

The starting point should, in the first instance, be the acknowledgment of some facts related to the internal conditions of the states in the Islamic world, and the impact of external influences on political, economic, social, and intellectual development. From here, we create the correct environment for making political decisions that lead to positive transformation.

The challenges facing us in the Islamic world will persist if we do not do our utmost to provide satisfactory solutions on the basis of well-studied policies built on dialogue and consultation.

The international community has accepted a standard organization of its common relationships which provides collective solutions for problems. Such organization is based on dialogue, cooperation and common interests. Hence, we should not deal with this organization selectively, based solely on capability and opportunity, for it will lead us to adopt the logic of force. In brief, it is our duty to respect the multilateral nature of international relations, so that the force of law, rather than the law of force, will prevail.

The relationship between the Islamic world and the United States is also very important for facing future challenges. In this respect, the settlement of the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict remain the biggest challenges. Public opinion in the Islamic world is no longer convinced that we should remain in the category of failure because of biased unilateral policies. What is needed here is a collective will to realize justice. What is true for this conflict also applies to other violent conflicts elsewhere in the region, such as the war in Iraq, the situation in Lebanon and the Iranian nuclear issue. These, and other issues in the Islamic world beyond our region, continue to constitute the basic source for tension and lack of trust.



Undoubtedly, such continuing conflicts make talk of structuring regional security a mere intellectual luxury, as it does not provide solutions rooted in the political, economic and social reality.

Similarly, political development on the basis of reform and the prevalence of democratic practices is useless unless it is accompanied by serious economic and social development programs.

Without these, factors that feed the sense of injustice and frustration and lead to mutual suspicions, escalating and rising violence at internal and international levels will remain.

In this respect, we should pay special attention to educational programs and guided orientation to achieve positive coexistence. We should address problems of youth, the elimination of poverty, the promotion of dialogue, culture and mutual understanding. We should also avoid targeting the Islamic world because of the positions of certain extremist groups. Indeed, extremism exists on both sides. What is currently taking place has political causes that should be addressed. If we really seek to deal with terrorism and to combat it, such efforts will not succeed unless we address the underlying causes and factors.

If we want to be convincing, we should, at the same time, succeed in making democracy prevail in international relations. If autocratic rule is unacceptable at the internal level, unilateral policies should also be eliminated at the international level, along with double standards, absence of transparency and resort to force.

It is important that we understand one another, respect different viewpoints and earnestly seek to settle our differences by peaceful means, as well as be ready to support one another in various aspects of life.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are some modest ideas that we hope will stimulate fruitful discussions at this Forum. I wish you success and happy sojourn in the State of Qatar.

Thank you.

