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WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTORY VIDEO:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WITTES: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome. (speaking Arabic) For those of you I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, I am Tamara Wittes, Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, and on behalf of the Center and our Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, I am truly delighted to welcome you all to Doha to begin our 3 days of deliberations.

This year our forum celebrates its 10th anniversary: 10 years of a unique and valuable partnership between the Saban Center at Brookings and the State of Qatar. Our partnership was established to foster thoughtful engagement between Americans and Muslim communities around the world and to advance concrete initiatives that can help bring us together to address our common challenges and opportunities.

Over the past decade, this forum has become the premiere platform for engagement by American leaders from government, business, and civil society with their counterparts from Muslim majority countries all around the world. Working together, we have built a unique network of relationships and served as a catalyst for positive action. This year in this room, we welcome over 200 participants from over 32 countries to the forum to continue this tradition.

In the next 3 days we will rely on all of you to keep up our record of thoughtful engagement and concrete solutions-oriented dialogue, and to help set the scene for our conference and all the conversations to come, I would like to ask you to turn your attention to the video screens.

[VIDEO PLAYS]

MS. WITTES: Now, as you can see from what we've just watched, we still face great challenges, and we must work together to meet them. From historic transitions in Afghanistan and Pakistan to the struggle for dignity and democracy in North Africa to the wrenching violence in Syria, we have work to do.

Each year I look forward to our forum as an opportunity to listen, to learn, and to contribute, particularly through our working groups, and this year's working groups will focus on four key issues for the future of our work together: Islamic frameworks for advancing women's political

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participation, inclusive development in Egypt and Tunisia, the contribution that faith can make to conflict resolution and diplomacy, debates over the freedom of speech within Muslim communities.

To begin our program, I'd like to introduce our chief partners and the forum's co-conveners, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Thani and Ambassador Martin Indyk. His Excellency, Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Jabr Al-Thani, is the Foreign Minister's Assistant for International Cooperation Affairs and the Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences of the state of Qatar. Sheikh Ahmed is an expert in economic development and planning with a distinguished career as a public official for his country, particularly as Secretary and Senior Researcher at the Supreme Council for Planning under the chairmanship of His Highness, the emir. He is our invaluable partner in our work at the Brookings Doha Center and the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic world, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome our partner and friend, Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Jabr Al-Thani.

(Applause)

SHEIKH AHMED: Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. We are privileged and honored to have you here in Doha, and I wish you a fruitful and pleasant stay in Doha. I would like to extend my welcome to Mr. Martin Indyk and his team from Brookings Washington. I'll be giving me speech in Arabic, so if you could please have your headsets ready.

In the name of God, ladies and gentlemen, Excellencies, it is my honor to welcome you in Doha on the occasion of the 10th U.S.-Islamic World Forum. It is our pleasure to welcome the participation of this unique and elite of policy makers, thought leaders, and experts from both sides who will tackle the research and studies of several common causes in different fields, mainly politics, economy, (inaudible), technology, culture, arts, as well as knowledge fields, development causes, religious freedom, women's rights, in addition to the latest development in the Middle East or in the Islamic world in general, and the repercussions on the global events and within the United States itself.

The organizers dedicated a whole session on the Syrian developments. This year the forum is characterized by the participation of important personalities such as His Excellency the President Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of Islamic Operation Organization, Mrs. Tara Sonenshine, the U.S. Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public

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Affairs, His Excellency Nassirou Arifari Bako, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Francophony in the Republic of Benin, as well as other participants who give this forum more importance.

The agenda tackles, in its high-level plenary, the subjects of transformation in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the repercussions on the region and international levels as well as conflict security, Arab public opinion and identity, the reshaping of the Middle East post-Arab Spring, democracy development and coexistence, as well as the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the region.

In addition, the working group sessions will tackle important subjects such as economic crisis and the ways to overcome them, women's rights and the need to foster synergies for advancing their rights in post-conflict Islamic states, as well as empowering women and giving them their rights by respecting international agreements not called for, the eradication of violence and discrimination against women and gender equality.

Ladies and gentlemen, the increase of religious fanaticism in societies and the rejection of different cultures and other religious ideas oblige diplomacy to play a more active and important role by building common bridges in order for co-existence to reign, as well as dialogue tolerance among all in a dynamic and ever-changing world in order to promote and build positive relationships between the Islamic world governments and people, which is the ultimate objective of this forum and the previous forum.

The working groups will also tackle the subject of politic demonizers and culture humanizers to avoid conflicts among societies. It will also talk about public opinion and identity, the reshaping of the Middle East, as well as other vital subjects.

The nature of the current changes in the region require foreign governments to adopt policies based on objective understanding, to look for common grounds, and ensure a common platform to build trust, foster equal dialogue, to ensure common interests.

Former research and studies point to the existence of three strategic dilemmas, the following: first, the difficulty to contain repercussions and the results of free-form process where studies point to the track adopted by the U.S. policies but lead to a contradiction between reforms and the coming into power of Islamic movements who were considered terrorist organizations. Therefore, it was imperative to define these movements and understand their diversity. This is the same track adopted by

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the United States during the Cold War when it put the USSR and China and the National Movements in one basket; therefore, it is important not to magnify the danger of the coming into power of Islamic movements and draft a mechanism with clear objectives to build a dialogue based on trust.

The second dilemma lies in the large demographic growth expected to end the Islamic world during the next half-century, which is expected to increase by 130 percent in the Arab world by 2050, compared to 54 percent on the global level. The problem does not lie in the demographic problem, but in the structure of this demographic. The youth is expected to reach more than half. This demographic explosion will have political repercussions due to the weakness of economic systems in the Islamic countries that are unable to keep up with this demographic growth. This could lead to the perpetuation of extremism and terrorists organizations if the United States and the international community do not partake in the economic and political process of promotion to absorb this new generation.

The third dilemma is the existence of trust crisis and credibility in the Islamic world concerning the reform process and the link between the politics.

In the end, we would like to welcome you again and hope that you will be able to build common bridges and improve positive relations with the United States and the Islamic world. We wish you all the success and thank you for your attention. (Applause)

MS. WITTES: And now it's my great pleasure to introduce Ambassador Martin Indyk. Martin is vice-president and director of the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution and the founding director of our Saban Center for Middle East Policy. For many years, Martin was a central figure in American efforts to achieve Arab-Israeli peace as a senior White House aide to President Bill Clinton, as a U.S. Ambassador to Israel, and as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. He's the author of several books; most recently *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*. Please welcome Ambassador Martin Indyk. (Applause)

MR. INDYK: Thank you very much, Tamara. It's wonderful to see how you've taken leadership of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings and taken it to new heights, and I'm very proud to be associated with you and working with you.

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Sheik Ahmed, thank you very much, not only for your wise words and your challenge to us at this 10th U.S.-Islamic World Forum, but for all that you and your very capable staff do to make this forum possible. It's been a decade of cooperation between Brookings and the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, and over those years we've learned a lot from you about how to stage successful events, and your leadership on that front and so many fronts is greatly appreciated, as is your friendship.

Distinguished delegates, I want to welcome you on behalf of Brookings to this 10th U.S.-Islamic World Forum. When I think back to the first forum that we had in this hotel after the horrendous terrorist attacks of 9/11, I'd like to think that we have come a very long way. Conceived in the wake of those terrorist attacks, we believed that it was essential to find a way to, through dialogue and engagement, to try to breach the vast chasm that had opened up between the United States and the Islamic world, and we were very fortunate to find an understanding and willing partner in the government of Qatar, and particularly its foreign minister and now Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim and, of course, the emir.

In those days after 9/11, Americans were prompted by the question, "Why do they hate us?" It was a simplistic question, but I think it captured the sense of bewilderment and, in essence, ignorance about the nature of the Islamic world and the intense antagonisms that were roiling it. It was in those early years after 9/11 that Americans first began to focus on the Islamic world. People may remember those who were with us in those early days, the polls that we revealed here of American public opinion towards the Islamic world, and it was an opinion toward the United States, which just underscored how deep the chasm was in terms of a lack of understanding of each other.

Then came the war in Iraq, which intensified the antagonisms and widened the chasm. In those days it was very difficult to maintain the dialogue. In fact, this forum was one of the few places where Americans and Muslims from all over the world were able to engage.

In those days, I remember very well the way in which what had become originally a notion that it would be good to engage with the entire Muslim world, not just the Arab world in this dialogue, that we actually learned the value of doing that; that we came to understand that Islam in Africa and in South Asia and in Southeast Asia had something to teach us, particularly in the way that it had

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developed politically. And there were many forums over the years in which we benefited greatly from the input that we had here from all over the Muslim world.

As the dialogue developed, we started to focus on the need for promoting cultural exchanges. We brought together again, in a unique way, leaders from the cultural communities of the United States and the Islamic world, whether it was musicians or film producers or comedians. We discovered the importance of using popular culture as a way of helping to bridge the gap, not just between the elites that tend to come to these forums, but also amongst the people where the antagonism was particularly intense during those years.

We focused on the role of minority communities, Muslim minority communities in Western countries, particularly in the role of the American Muslim community in the United States in serving as a bridge to understanding.

We focused on education and the importance of promoting educational opportunities in the Muslim world. In fact, we're very proud to have helped to spawn a variety of organizations. The poster child perhaps is Education for Employment which developed out of this forum and is working actively across the Middle East and North Africa today to create job opportunities for unemployed youth by providing them with world-class professional and technical training that leads directly to career-building jobs.

And then there was the role of faith leaders in ameliorating conflict, and the interfaith dialogue that we have spawned here at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum has managed to maintain its importance and relevance through the years. We're delighted again to host such important religious leaders as Cardinal McCarrick, Imam Mohammed Ashafa from Nigeria, and Rabbi David Saperstein. These are just a few of the examples of the way in which this forum has been able to make a substantive contribution to that challenge that we set for ourselves 10 years ago of bridging the divide between the United States and the Muslim world.

In the meantime, the context for our dialogue has changed and changed rather dramatically. That war in Iraq which exacerbated the challenges that we faced has now come to an end. One hundred fifty thousand American troops have come home. Now the war in Afghanistan is ending,

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and by 2014 only residual presence of Western troops will be in that country with the Afghan army taking responsibility for security there. And just a couple of weeks ago on May 24th, President Obama, in effect, declared that the long war of the United States on terror is over too. As he said in the landmark speech, this war, the War on Terror, like all wars, must end. That's what history advises. That's what our democracy demands.

It was an honest and even agonizing speech, and I'm not sure how many of you paid attention to it, and that's why I wanted to just spend a few minutes bringing the highlights of that speech to your attention because of what it says about America's approach to the Islamic world and because of the way in which it frames the discussions that we will be having over the next two days.

He declared, honestly and forthrightly, that he believes that the United States compromised our basic values in this war on terror by using torture to interrogate our enemies and detaining individuals in a way that ran counter to the rule of law. He declared that he would renew his efforts to close Guantanamo Bay.

He noted that the United States has spent over a trillion dollars and sacrificed almost 7,000 American lives to this war. Of course, tens of thousands of Muslim civilians have also died, many of them the target of attacks by fellow Muslims in this conflict.

But he also made the argument that the current threat is much less than it was; lethal still, yet less capable. There are still Al Qaeda affiliates out there seeking to kill Americans. There are still threats to our diplomatic facilities and businesses abroad, and there are still, of course, home-grown extremists, manifested themselves at the Boston Marathon.

But this is the future of terrorism. It's very different from 9/11. Indeed, as the President pointed out, the threat that the United States faces today vastly resembles the types of attacks that we faced before 9/11, and therefore he declared that the war on terrorism needs to be replaced by a counter-terrorism strategy that is focused, targeted, and designed to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America. That's it.

No longer will the United States go to war, invade other countries to slay the terrorist dragon. Instead, we will partner with other governments that are fighting extremists with their own

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societies. It will be a supportive role, not a leadership role, and we see that today, for example, in Mali.

Some parts of this approach trouble me, frankly, and trouble many of my colleagues, some of whom are here in the audience today. We would like to see a more robust strategic engagement of the United States, for example, in Syria, but we have to face facts. The American people, after a decade of war, are tired and seek to disengage, not from the world, but certainly from that part of the world; the greater Middle East that has proven yet again so immutable to American force and American efforts to promote its values.

And here's the tragic irony. When the United States sallied forth with its great armies to promote freedom and democracy to end the tyrannical rule of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, we were reviled and rejected in much of the Islamic world. And now when we're no longer prepared to play that role, no longer willing to intervene militarily in places like Syria, we are equally reviled and criticized. It's as if nothing we ever do is right or good enough. There has to be a golden (inaudible) between intervention and isolationism. President Obama tried to lay out this path in his speech on May 24th. He called it engagement.

Engagement is something that we have tried to do in this U.S.-Islamic World Forum from its creation. He spoke of political engagement, patiently supporting the transitions to democracy in places like Egypt and Libya and Yemen and Tunisia, engaging with Islamist governments. As Sheikh Ahmed pointed out, this is one of the challenges today. Promoting women's and minority rights in these newly democratic countries.

He spoke of economic engagement: the need for the United States to help modernize economies, upgrade education, to encourage entrepreneurship. And he spoke of diplomatic engagement; helping to resolve conflicts, helping to make Israeli-Palestinian peace, and shaping an emerging global order that is more peaceful and just. These are the roles that the United States can and must play, and it can do so effectively by working with like-minded people throughout the Muslim world.

Finally, President Obama spoke of the ideological conflict that fuels terrorism. There is a belief by some extremists, he said, that Islam is in conflict with the United States in the West, and that violence against Western targets, including civilians is justified in pursuit of some larger cause. Of

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course, he said, this ideology is based on a lie, for the United States is not at war with Islam. And this ideology is rejected by the vast majority of Muslims who are the most frequent victims of terrorist attacks.

How to fight that ideological battle, which is a common threat to Americans and to Muslims the world over, is a challenge that we here at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum need to continue to confront. We have the ability to do so. Thanks to the government of Qatar and its hospitality, we have the ability to engage in a dialogue in an effort to understand each other, in an effort to listen to each other in a way that will leave us better equipped to continue that effort to create bridges of understanding and thereby to defeat the extremists on their most potent ideological battle field. That is our challenge today as it was 10 years ago, and it is a challenge that I look forward to meeting with you over the next few days just as we have done in the past. Thank you for joining us and I wish you all very good deliberations.

(Applause)

MS. WITTES: Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin our first plenary session, there's one more person whom it's important to introduce. Durriya Badani is the Assistant Director of our Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the person who more than any other has planned and executed this conference. Many of you know Durriya well. Many of you have been in touch with her over e-mail and phone for the last several months planning for our meeting, but I want to take a moment now to recognize here as you'll be seeing and hearing from her more over the next few days. Durriya, would you please stand. (Applause) Thank you, Durriya.

And with that, I'd like to ask our first plenary panel to come to the stage, led by my friend and colleague, Senior Fellow, Bruce Riedel. Thank you all very much.

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