The Speech of His Highness
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Amir of the State of Qatar

At

The 26th Arab Summit

Sharm el- Sheikh
March 28, 2015
In the name of God the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Your Excellency President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi,

Your Majesties and Highnesses,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to express my deep appreciation to the President, government and people of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt for the efforts to render this summit a success and for the warm reception and generous hospitality.

I also extend thanks and appreciation to my big brother, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, for his sincere and constructive efforts during his presidency of the previous summit.

I would like to congratulate us and the brotherly people of Oman on the auspicious occasion of the return of our brother, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, safe and sound. We wish His Majesty continued good health and well-being.

Thanks also go to His Excellency Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the Arab League, and all his assistants for their tireless efforts to serve the joint Arab action.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

This summit is being held amid complex regional and international situations and serious challenges facing our Arab Umma.

The Palestinian cause comes in the forefront of these challenges. Peace, stability and security could only be achieved in our region by
reaching a just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international and Arab legitimacy and in accordance with the principle of the two-state solution. A just and comprehensive peace is our strategic choice that we have maintained for decades, yet the peace process is not only at a standstill for more than twenty years, but unfortunately has also persistently moved backward. Israel is still carrying on its aggressions on the Palestinian people, the latest one was its aggression on the Gaza Strip and unjust blockade of the Strip, the continuation of settlement activities and the plans to Judaize the city of Jerusalem. Also, recently the Israeli Prime Minister has clearly expressed his rejection of the establishment of a Palestinian State, and his party won majority votes in the elections after this statement.

The peace negotiations, with its various mechanisms and initiatives, have ended in deadlock due to the continued Israeli intransigence, and there is no use to pursue this course, which has become a cover-up for aggression and settlement activities.

Hence, we call on the United Nations Security Council to assume its moral and legal responsibilities and take the initiative to specify the necessary actions and measures to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem, in accordance with the resolutions issued by the Council, namely, resolutions 242 and 338, under the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, and within a clear political action plan and a specified time frame. We also emphasise the necessity of an Arab and international move to stop the settlements and to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, which suffers from a historically unprecedented humanitarian crisis, due to the continuation of this unjust blockade, which threatens dire consequences. The siege on Palestinian people who remained steadfast in their land should not become the norm.

It is easily noticeable that this blockade, imposed on a whole community for years, has had an impact on its health, education,
economy and social life. We call on the international community to put pressure on Israel to lift this blockade. We also have to do our utmost to facilitate matters for our Palestinian brothers.

People in the region no longer accept the contradiction between the Arab states talking about the fairness of the Palestinian cause and the injustice which has befallen the Palestinians, on one hand, and their acceptance of what the Palestinians are suffering from, on the other hand.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

The Syrian regime has turned the country into rubble. The majority of the Syrians were displaced and have become alienated and exiled to the seas and deserts, and their children are exposed to horrible scenes of killings and destruction.

The regime is continuing its wrongdoing without being deterred, practising the most brutal forms of murder, including torture to death and the use of lethal weapons against the civilians. Faced by this situation, we must stand firmly together in order to stop the war against the Syrian people, in a way that would restore stability to Syria and provide security and dignity to our Syrian brothers.

We have to stress conclusively and unequivocally that this regime is not part of any solution. The political solution means fulfilling the demands of the Syrian people and allowing all streams of the Syrian civil forces to form a transitional government, that would act to pave the way for the Syrian people to determine their own choices in free, fair and transparent elections which will allow them to shape their future and regain their homeland, freedom and dignity without fear or terror.

At the beginning of the Syrian popular uprising, the Arab League put forward a political solution with the aim of securing peaceful and
consensual change, and a settlement that would include the regime itself, but the regime turned that down, and launched a genocide and displacement campaign against its own people. I would also like to reiterate that it is incumbent upon us, as Arabs, and upon the international community, to fulfil our humanitarian duty towards the Syrian people in areas of displacement in Syria or in the areas of their refuge in neighbouring countries, and provide all kinds of assistance to support them to cope with the hardships they experience that are beyond the human ability to endure.

I have to commend the role of my big brother HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the sisterly State of Kuwait in convening a third conference to support the humanitarian relief efforts to help the Syrian people.

Lastly, is it not about time that we asked: For how long should we be waiting for international intervention in Syria? The lack of action in Syria has become crystal clear and there is no need for further speculation or analysis. So when will we, as Arabs, act to end this tragedy and with whom will we coordinate?

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

The world has witnessed during the past few years, the growing phenomenon of terrorism, and its spill over to many Arab countries. It has become a serious threat to Arab, regional and international security.

The phenomenon of terrorism could not be separated from a build-up of many factors over the past decades, such as the desperation of the “losers” of the process of modernisation without development, and the despair about the possibility of peaceful change because the security-oriented State has blocked all reform potentials, in addition to the sectarian exclusion policies, and social marginalisation, etc.
Terrorism should not be justified, whatever the reasons are. We all condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We must all work to uproot it, because it threatens our communities and their national unity, and cripples our ability to give and build and limits humanitarian and cultural interaction. In the long-run, the causes and factors which led to its emergence must be addressed, while differentiating between terrorism and resisting occupation and the peoples’ right to struggle for self-determination.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

In the sisterly Yemen, we consider that the outcome of the national dialogue, which was in accordance with the GCC initiative and under the auspices of the United Nations provides a solid foundation for a new phase in Yemen on the basis of participation of all factions, in a fair and equitable manner.

But the recent events which were perpetrated by the Ansar Allah group in collaboration with the former president are an assault on the peaceful transition process in Yemen. They nullify the results of the national dialogue, confiscate the political legitimacy and breakdown the State institutions, and the most dangerous of all, they sow the seeds of a newly introduced hateful phenomenon in Yemen; political sectarianism.

The Ansar Allah militia movement and the former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, are responsible for the recent escalation.

Strenuous efforts have been made to invite the aggressors to join the Riyadh dialogue on the peaceful transition process, but the Houthis refused, and the former president tried to put forward preconditions. Then, in coordination with Saudi Arabia they were invited for dialogue in Doha, but they also refused. This is not just another mistake they made, but rather a behaviour that reflects a
systematic approach to impose a reality on the ground by arms force/through brutal force.

The legitimate Yemeni president has asked the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League to protect the brotherly Yemen, its people, institutions, and stability. Because of these circumstances and out of Arab solidarity, his request has been met.

We call on all parties and political forces to give priority to the interests of Yemen and its people and respect the legitimacy vested in President Hadi and his globally recognised government by withdrawing the militias form the state institutions and public places, and work to complete the implementation of the political process. We must all support Yemen’s legitimacy and reject attempts to impose a de facto situation on the ground in order to maintain the unity, security and stability of Yemen. The State of Qatar will spare no effort to realise this in cooperation with our brothers.

Our stance towards the latest developments in sisterly Libya is firm, and would remain supportive of the national dialogue between all parties. This stance is emanating from our vision that the only way out of the repercussions of the Libyan crisis must be through a political solution that would respect the will of the Libyan people and fulfil their legitimate ambitions in security and stability and creates the conditions for the building of the State and its institutions, with the participation of all the Libyan political and social forces without exclusion, marginalisation or foreign intervention.

In this regard, we reaffirm our backing and support for the efforts of the United Nations, and Libya’s neighbouring countries, aimed at activating the national dialogue between all the segments of the brotherly Libyan people to reach a political solution that would achieve its aspirations and hopes.

Additionally, it’s primarily the responsibility of Arab States to extend solidarity and support to Iraq to assist the country with the dangers it
is facing. by helping to launch an inclusive political process to achieve national reconciliation among all the segments of the Iraqi people to dedicate a new pattern of political and social relations that would eliminate all religious, sectarian and ethnic conflicts, and establish a new phase that would ensure the participation of all and respond to the aspirations of the segments of all Iraqi people in order to build a homeland where all Iraqis enjoy equal rights, full citizenship and decent living, and help it also to confront terrorism, and maintain its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

We look very positively to the international efforts to peacefully resolve differences with Iran over its nuclear program. This has always been our approach in supporting peace and stability in the Gulf region. On this occasion, I emphasise the good-neighbourly relations with Iran, which we consider an integral part of our region and our Islamic Umma, and we also emphasise that the good-neighbourliness is also based on the respect of the sovereignty of other States and non-interference in their internal affairs. The diversity of sects and creeds in our Arab nation is a source of cultural and civilisational richness. It is part of our compound Arab identity, and not a reason for interference in our own affairs.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

The development of our people is the fundamental basis for the independence of our will and our decision, and the guarantor for a dignified life for our peoples and their rightful place in the international community.

From this perspective we have to liberate the development of our countries from negative external pressures and influences and the
unfair globalisation order, which requires achieving real and actual economic integration among our Arab countries, especially in the fields of food security, integration of educational policies, and development of marginalised areas.

We have seen how other countries had merged in regional economic blocs to preserve their own interests, while our efforts so far have not lead to the aspired economic unity.

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses,

The convening of this summit marks the 70th anniversary of the Arab League. During those long decades, the Arab region and the world underwent developments, and was rocked by major events. There is no doubt that the Arab League has continued to fulfil its duties, in its capacity to inspire hope for the Arab peoples to achieve solidarity and unity. The faith in its role and status has remained a decisive factor for its survival and continuity. But the Arab League has not lived up to the level of hopes of the peoples, and the needs of the Umma at this historic stage.

It’s high time now to reform its structures, to make it capable of handling the challenges facing the Umma. Because historical turning points have proved that no one would stand with us, as Arabs, if we failed to help ourselves, and do what should be done.

I plead to Allah the Almighty that this summit leads to decisions that would serve the joint Arab action and elevate it to wider horizons which will help in achieving the ambitions pursued by the Arab peoples.

May Allah’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you all.