Special Address by Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar at the World Economic Forum



Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar.

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Introduction by Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

Your Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar. Your Highness we are extremely honored to have you for the first time as our special guest at our annual meeting in Davos. For many years we have had strong cooperation with your country and in 2010 I remember when we jointly hosted the Global Redesign Summit in Doha to address the aftershocks of the 2007-2008 financial crisis under your leadership as the crown prince of Qatar and now as the Amir of Qatar your country has become a major force in global affairs. Small country, big influence. Today Qatar has established a reputation as a real partner in

international peace, diplomacy, and mediation. You have expanded Qatar's ties with your neighbors including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. You have successfully mediated conflicts in Africa, in the Middle East, and Asia, contributing substantially to international stability and the resolution of conflicts. The second war in Ukraine has highlighted the importance of Qatar, with countries in Europe and elsewhere looking to your country to meet energy needs. Soaring oil prices boosted the Middle East oil producers, especially your country, and this is at a time when Europe reduces energy imports. What has always impressed me is the forward orientation of your country, and your policies, particularly also in the area of education. You have six of the best global universities in Doha while Qatar University has established a reputation as a center of excellence. Finally, Your Highness, you played a major role in shaping Qatar's contribution to the world of sports. Qatar has started to play a leading role as a global sports destination hoisting the country Qatar. Of course, we all are looking forward to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Please join me all in welcoming His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani.

Address by Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen. The current session of the World Economic Forum is of exceptional importance for it is happening in the midst of economic challenges and geopolitical turmoil. Before we can hope for economic prosperity we must first examine, prepare and enforce our framework for peace. And we need to send a reassuring message to the people around the world that only through unity can we overcome the conflicts that divide us. I can tell you after years of peace facilitation through mediation that we can never give up hope. We should never give up trying to bring parties together as long as we believe our efforts could save even a single life, our efforts to mediate will be worth it. Our united efforts need to be based on the principles already agreed on, the United Nations Charter on international law, and respecting each other's sovereignty. In recent decades we have witnessed the marginalization of the role of the United Nations, the transgression of the rule of law and international relations, and the breakdown of basic respect for one another's independence. Solving disputes through aggression is on the rise and it has reached one of its peaks in the war in Europe. We are in touch with all parties concerned in the Ukrainian crisis and I am ready to contribute to every international and regional effort to find an immediate peaceful solution to the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Qatar firmly rejects aggression on the sovereignty of states and any act that would constitute a violation of international law. We stand in solidarity with the millions of refugees

who are victims of this European war and the victims of all other wars taking place right now, victims of every race, nationality, and religion. I want us to help all of them. As we rightly apply laser focus to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis, I hope we can equally give much attention and effort to resolving all those forgotten or ignored conflicts. They all deserve peace, security, and dignity. The clearest example is in Palestine, which has been an open wound since the establishment of the United Nations. Those families have been occupied for decades with no relief in sight. The escalation and illegal settlement aggression have been relentless and the same goes for the continued attacks against the Palestinian people. I keep praying that the world wakes up to the injustice and the violence and finally acts. Shireen Abu Akleh, a Christian Palestinian American journalist was killed two weeks ago in Palestine and then robbed of a dignified burial. Shireen was covering the suffering of the Palestinian people for decades and our hearts are broken. Her death was just as horrific as the seven journalists killed in Ukraine since March of this year and 18 other journalists killed in Palestine since 2000 and many other journalists killed in the line of duty in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. In the 21st century, we should not tolerate these aggressions and we should not accept a world where governments have double standards about the value of people based on their religion, region or race. We consider the value of each European life to be just as precious as someone from our region.

Distinguished audience, as a small state, maintaining international peace and security constitutes a special priority for the state of Qatar. We work tirelessly to help manage, solve and mitigate conflicts including our ongoing efforts in Afghanistan. We were honored to help in the evacuation efforts in Afghanistan and it was only possible thanks to the years spent investing in peace keeping, expert mediation, state of the art military and special forces, search and rescue teams ranked as some of the best in the world, and the countless hours of sweat, and tears of so many. All those years of investment, training, building strategic partnership paid off. At a time when we were needed to step in and rescue people, I am so grateful for all your sacrifices.

My friends, I also consider protecting the environment to be the responsibility of all of us. Qatar has placed sustainability front and center, and focus our resources to develop emission reduction technologies and cleaner energy. We intend to play an active role in developing regional and international policy development surrounding both energy and environment. We have all seen over the past months what happens when we don’t work together. At this critical moment in time, we must

wisely balance the need to take care of the environment and simultaneously provide energy security for the world. This will take all the nations intense collaboration between all governments, companies, stakeholders and every one of us because every one of us needs energy and right now almost one billion people are still without a reliable energy source. As one of the producers of Liquified Natural Gas in the world, Qatar invested in energy expansion efforts for years, understanding that energy is a critical base load energy source needed during transition which is already taking place. Increased energy production can provide the world with a cleaner, safer, more reliable and flexible energy. Achieving global energy security will lead to market security and reduce the economic effects of the current energy crisis.

Ladies and gentlemen, as most of you know, for the first time in the Middle East, Qatar will be hosting the FIFA World Cup end of this year. We are working hard so that this major sport event can allow our entire region to host the world. For decades now the Middle East has suffered from discrimination and I have found out that such discrimination is largely based on people not knowing us and, in some cases, refusing to get to know us. Even today there are still people who cannot accept the idea that an Arab-Muslim country would host a tournament like the World Cup. These individuals, including many in positions of influence have launched attacks at a pace never seen before when a mega sporting event was hosted by other countries in a different continent despite the fact that each of those countries has its own particular problem and challenges. Qatar is just like your own country, not perfect, constantly trying to improve and full of hope for a brighter future. We are so proud of the development, reform and progress we have made and we are grateful for the spotlight the World Cup provided, which fired us to make these changes at a lightning speed. I assure everyone listening that this edition of the World Cup will be a special one. We believe that sport is a tool for positive change, promote tolerance and respect, empowers youth and inspires unity. We stand by that belief and I hope you will join us to discover the beautiful game as it is played in our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, our common interest, our common responsibility and the common destiny of all humanity requires partnership so that we can all live together in peace. Thank you very much.



Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

Klaus Schwab – Your Highness thank you very much for sharing with us your principal ideas. I would like to follow up with some questions. You were recently hosted by President Biden in the White House in January 2022. During the visit President Biden designated Qatar as a major non-NATO ally. Some weeks later you were in China, where you visited President Xi. You also discussed the Belt and Road Initiative. How do you balance the relationship in this conflictual world typically between the US on the one side and China on the other side?

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani – We have a great relationship with US where we have a very strategic partnership and this designation is a recognition of the role of Qatar in the Middle East and all around the world. After that as you mentioned Professor, I as a member of the International Olympic Committee, had the chance to visit Beijing for the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games and I had the chance to visit President Xi and have a meeting with him. This recognition of Qatar is because of the role as I said we have been doing in the last couple of years in peace facilitation, humanitarian aid and also, we work very closely with our allies in America and in Europe as well to counter terrorism. We have this great understanding. As I said we are doing a lot in peace facilitation and one important chore we are doing is humanitarian aid. We are very proud and happy that we are helping educate more than 12 million people around the world. This is very important and also in our region we are helping create jobs by helping the youth to create their own business. We work very closely with our allies to counter terrorism. Our duty as we are blessed with resources, to work in parallel to give the youth in

our region hope through good education and create jobs because this is very important to prevent any extremism or terrorism.

> *Sometimes it is very difficult and you want to run away from it, but you should never give up. Keep on going because this line of communication is very important*

We have a very good relationship with China. We have a very strong economic relationship with China and we supply China with gas. We don't want to see the world polarized between two superpowers. This is not in the interest of all of us including many countries in the West as well. Being a peace facilitator for many decades we believe that the only way to solve conflicts is through dialogue. We understand that there are conflicts and differences, but we should never give up hope. I think the only way is for them to sit together and try to solve all those disputes.

Klaus Schwab – I would like to take up what you said that Qatar is the second largest exporter of gas; 77 million metric tons per year. You are helping the world in its energy transformation and reach energy independence. You have received particularly visitors from Europe. To what extent do you feel that the gas created by your country can fill the gap that is arising in Europe?

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani – That's the topic that everyone is speaking about now. We have to understand that this energy crisis isn't due to the war in Europe, it was way before that. But of course, the war in Europe may have made it more difficult. We took the risk years ago to invest in energy expansion understanding that this energy is needed for the transition period. We are exploring markets. We understand that there is a need and demand for gas. Qatar is a reliable partner. We do a lot in energy and the environment, which is very important in our mission. With all the expansion we make sure that we have state of the art technology to make sure the progress in energy will reduce any issues concerning the environment. The technology is very interesting and fascinating the way things happen. It's a very technical issue as much as our Minister of Energy tries to explain to me it's so complicated but it's very interesting how flame reduction is working out. We have been making a lot of investment in that. Instead of sending out the flame we try to reduce the pressure for which we have the technology. Even with new technology

on the new ships, where instead of letting the flame out, the gas comes back into the ship and helps fuel the energy for the ship. As much as we do gas expansion, we make sure it's sustainable and protects the environment.

Klaus Schwab – Your Highness you referred to the mediation role you have taken on. To my mind comes how you facilitated talks between the US and the Taliban. You mentioned some of your engagements. You just visited last week, if I'm not mistaken Iran and you are acting as an important intermediary between the parties to revive the 2015 nuclear accord. Could you say some words about it and would you also say that if you look at the global landscape where mediation is needed what would be your priorities at this moment?

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani – As I mentioned, our geostrategic role in our region is for peace facilitation and also energy security as well. So, we've been playing this role for decades now. We understand that the best way and the only way to solve disputes and conflict is to sit at a table for negotiation. You mentioned about Afghanistan. Yes, we have been working closely with our allies in negotiation in Afghanistan and it paid off. We're still very far away. We still have issues and problems we understand but maintaining this dialogue is very important.

In Iran as I said we are not playing an official role to mediate between the West and Iran, but Iran is our next-door neighbor. We have a good understanding and a good relationship with Iran and our role is to try to help and encourage the parties to come back to this agreement. So, that was the message to the Iranians. We encouraged them to come back to this agreement.

Klaus Schwab – Your Highness we need so much bridge building in the world and the World Economic Forum is trying to be a bridge builder in our conflictual world. Can you share the secret to be successful in bridge building?

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani – There's no secret or magic, but we are grateful that when people come and ask us, they trust us. We have a track record of being honest and bringing people together and you should never give up. Many negotiations were so difficult and at some point, you feel that you are not going to go forward. But you should never give up. We are a very small country playing this role and we will continue playing this role. As I said any contribution for peace and stability in the region or in any part of the world we will not hesitate when we are

asked to do so.

Klaus Schwab – It means trust, openness and persistence.

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani – Sometimes it is very difficult and you want to run away from it, but you should never give up. Keep on going because this line of communication is very important.

Klaus Schwab – To conclude our session Your Highness on behalf of all the participants I want to thank you and I want to wish you to continue with your important task. I wish you courage, persistence and success.