



KHALID BIN MOHAMMED AL ATTIYAH

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Thank you, Thierry. First of all, I would like to thank Mr Thierry de Montbrial and all of you honoured ladies and gentlemen for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. To begin, I would like to pay my condolences to the people of France and the government of France for the tragic act which took place in Paris recently. As we speak today, we are witnessing a new attack in Bamako. I hope that the situation gets under control and whoever is responsible for this attack gets the punishment they deserve.

There are so many things on my plate today. I want to speak about the situation in the Middle East, and when I say Middle East, I refer to the MENA region as a whole, from Morocco to Oman, and the importance of this region. I am sure most of you know the sensitivity of this area and the need for stability and prosperity as well. Today, regarding this region, I would not like to speak about statistics precisely, but about 70% of this region are youth and they are very [inaudible]. We have a big challenge to use their potential in good causes, and this is what we are trying to do in this respect.

Last week, we were in Vienna talking about the subject that concerns the entire world today because it is not only an internal issue for Syria or the Syrian people, but it is linked to the whole world. The escalation and the delay in finding a solution for Syria affects the whole world. I am not exaggerating. All of you are well-informed and you see how this is spilling all over the world, whether it is exporting terrorists or whether it is exporting refugees, and this is why we in Vienna were trying to find a political solution.

I will not discuss this in detail here. I will leave it for your questions if you want to address it, but I want to emphasise something very important for us. Our region is very important to the world. I want to speak precisely about our closer region, the GCC countries. Our stability and prosperity is important to each and every one of you here attending today, and to your countries, for so many reasons. It is not only us who have a strategic relation with your countries or with the Western hemisphere or the Far East hemisphere. Your country also has a strategic interest in our region, and this is how I visualise the strategic interest in our country.

Keeping our country prosperous and stable means number one, safe and smooth flow of energy, regardless of some countries that have sufficient production today, but at the end of the day, our region is supplying countries that are using the other country markets, so they have to keep this flow smooth and safe. Secondly, in our region, we are addressing over 1.5 billion Muslims around the world, so moderate language, moderate Islam should always be enhanced and this is what we call the moral power over Muslims around the world. This is another reason why we all have to work together to keep this region prosperous. Thirdly, with you, we are the most capable of fighting terrorists in the region and in the world.

Today, we are all in the same boat and we cannot make a hole in this boat by ourselves because otherwise we will all be in trouble. I would like to touch on this issue by opening the floor to you, ladies and gentlemen, and maybe I can address specific issues there. People are thinking about what is going on recently in Vienna. We met in Vienna and the second time was better than the first meeting. The only things that we came out with were a communiqué and a statement. The communiqué is not satisfactory for everyone on that table. People are just interested in the ceasefire itself, without linking the ceasefire to a political mechanism, which we all wanted to see.

We have to bear in mind that there are people in Syria. We should not let these people in the middle think about a choice between the tyranny of the regime or the brutality of the terrorists, so we have to keep an eye on these people. They people have been fighting on five fronts for five years now. They did not give up, so they have needs. We have to address their needs and we have to listen to them. This is what we are trying to encourage our colleagues to do. By mid-December, we will hold another meeting in Paris, hopefully. This meeting will be to put a political mechanism together, if we can.



We do not want to put the cart before the horse. A ceasefire, yes – all of us want a ceasefire, but we have to have a political roadmap so that everybody knows what the end game is. I do not want to take any more of your time. I will leave this to your questions and thank you again for having me with you today and thank you for giving this time to listen to me. Thank you, all.