

Joint Statement of the Third U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue

MEDIA NOTE

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The following is the text of a joint statement by the Governments of the United States of America and Qatar.

Begin text:

The Governments of the United States and the State of Qatar held their third Strategic Dialogue on September 14-15, 2020. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo co-chaired the opening session in Washington with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The United States and Qatar welcomed this annual meeting and reviewed progress made since the conclusion of the last Strategic Dialogue, held in Doha in January 2019. The two sides highlighted the strength of the bilateral relationship, opportunities to further deepen cooperation to benefit both countries, and the sustained implementation of previously signed agreements and arrangements.

The 2020 Strategic Dialogue addressed regional and global affairs and built on robust bilateral cooperation in the areas of health, humanitarian assistance, international development, labor, law enforcement, counterterrorism, commerce, culture, and education. The United States and Qatar

signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on education, culture, and sports in addition to a Statement of Intent (SOI) designating 2021 as the U.S.-Qatar Year of Culture and an Announcement of Intent for Qatar to host an investment forum in the United States in 2021. Both sides plan to sign an MOU on international development and humanitarian assistance the week of September 18.

Regional and Global Affairs

The two countries discussed opportunities to advance their robust bilateral relationship. This was illustrated by high-level visits in the past year, including the visit by His Highness the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to the United States in July 2019 for meetings with President Donald Trump and visits to Qatar by Secretary Pompeo and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin in 2020. A large U.S. delegation led by Secretary Mnuchin also traveled to Qatar for the Doha Forum in December 2019.

The two governments expressed concern about the detrimental security, economic, and social impacts of the Gulf crisis on the region and affirmed their continued support for a strong and united Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) focused on promoting a peaceful and prosperous future for all in the region and on countering regional threats.

The State of Qatar thanked the United States for supporting Kuwaiti mediation efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and independence of the State of Qatar.

Both sides discussed the need to employ diplomatic means to resolve the current tensions in the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. The two governments discussed issues of regional security, including joint efforts to defeat ISIS; working toward peace and an end to the conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen; political developments in Iraq; and prospects for a negotiated resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as outlined in the U.S. Vision for Peace.

The United States also recognized Qatar's active leadership and mediation to promote peace and reconciliation among all parties in Somalia and Sudan. The United States shares Qatar's concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the need for tangible steps to improve living and economic conditions. The United States thanked Qatar for its indispensable role in bringing Taliban representatives to the negotiation table and for hosting the signing of the historic U.S.-Taliban Agreement in February and the start of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations in September.

The United States applauded Qatar's generous bilateral and multilateral humanitarian efforts through the work of various UN agencies, including a \$500 million multi-year assistance pledge that will provide \$8 million annually between 2019 and 2023 to support forcibly displaced populations and assist refugees, including millions of vulnerable women and young children.

The Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) discussed their respective strategies and objectives in the fields of international development and humanitarian assistance and acknowledged their shared commitment to international cooperation. An MOU will be signed the week of September 18 that aims to establish the framework for strengthening and expanding the existing collaborative relationship.

Health Cooperation

The United States and Qatar stand together in support of global health security and a world safe and secure from infectious disease threats, such as COVID-19, that pose a threat to the security and prosperity of both countries. To achieve this vision, the two countries will redouble their bilateral and global commitments to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases, a worldwide threat that knows no borders. Qatar noted its commitment of \$88 million to support the COVID-19 pandemic response to over 80 countries worldwide. The United States noted its commitment of \$20.5 billion to benefit the global COVID-19 pandemic response. The United States and Qatar plan to work together to support capacity-building in at-risk countries, through hosting workshops at conferences held in Qatar and the United States.

Bilaterally, the United States and Qatar intend to cooperate in the exchange of technical expertise on topics related to global health security, such as field epidemiology training and preparedness for large-scale gatherings, including FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The United States has shared expertise with Qatar via the Embassy Science Fellows program and a visit of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) specialists to Qatar's inaugural 2019 Public Health Conference in November 2019. Both countries plan to explore platforms for enhanced cooperation on topics of mutual concern, such as zoonotic disease, environmental health, immunization, disease surveillance, points of entry, and health emergency preparedness. In order to support sustainable and meaningful progress, the United States and Qatar aim for durable dialogue on these topics and may consider a Memorandum of Understanding or other document to formalize this arrangement.

Labor Issues and Partnerships

Both sides acknowledged recent progress and commitments made by Qatar in combating human trafficking and advancing labor rights. Under the framework of the U.S.-Qatar Anti-Trafficking MOU signed in 2018 and the U.S.-Qatar Labor MOU signed during the 2019 Strategic Dialogue, Qatar and the United States implemented joint initiatives to build capacity, raise awareness, and promote labor rights.

The United States recognized the significant progress Qatar has made toward enacting labor reforms and efforts to combat human trafficking, including abolishing exit permits for workers. In addition, the United States praised Qatar for issuing legislation mandating a minimum wage law and abolishing the “No Objection Certificate” law.

The two sides plan to expand previous collaboration and implement MOUs with a focus on strengthening Qatar’s recent reforms.

Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Partnerships

Qatar expresses appreciation for the United States’ contributions to the bilateral security partnership, including in the areas of law enforcement cooperation, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 security preparations, aviation and visa security, countering nuclear smuggling and violent extremism, and combating terrorism and the financing of terrorism.

The United States thanks Qatar for its continued efforts to combat terrorism and the financing of terrorism (CFT) and prevent violent extremism in all forms. Both sides intend to strengthen their security and counterterrorism (CT) partnership to eradicate terrorism and counter violent extremism. The United States welcomes Qatar’s commitment to provide \$75 million over five years to the work of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNCT), including its efforts to help Member States to use Advanced Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 2178, 2396, and 2482. Qatar renewed its commitment to its UN obligations, including those related to countering terrorist financing and terrorism information sharing.

The two governments share respective cybersecurity approaches to protecting the COVID-19 response efforts. Both sides are committed to greater coordination and cooperation towards bolstering cyber resilience, combatting cybercrime, and strengthening critical infrastructure protection measures. They are reviewing progress on information-sharing initiatives such as the Homeland Security Information Network and reaffirm the need to continue efforts to prevent terrorist radicalization and recruitment. They underscore the role both governments play in supporting the Global

Counterterrorism Forum and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. They also acknowledge the Qatar Fund for Development's leadership in ensuring transparency of developmental assistance, Qatar's active membership in the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center, and Qatar's support of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's Programming on the Role of Parliaments in Addressing Terrorism and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism. The United States also thanks Qatar for its continued efforts to address the threat of nuclear smuggling, and the two governments are working to finalize an arrangement concerning the prevention of illicit smuggling and trafficking in nuclear and other radiological material.

As Qatar prepares to host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the United States intends to continue close cooperation with Qatari counterparts in support of a safe and successful tournament.

Commercial and Aviation Cooperation

The two governments highlighted the marked increase in bilateral trade, which grew by 30.7 percent between 2018 and 2019. U.S. exports to Qatar also increased by 39 percent over the same period, accounting for 21 percent of all imports to Qatar in 2019. The United States remains Qatar's largest foreign direct investor and largest trading partner.

The United States and Qatar also reviewed progress on the Understandings on Civil Aviation signed on January 29, 2018. They welcomed their shared and ongoing commitment to the principles of fair competition in providing international air transportation governed by the U.S.-Qatar Air Transport Agreement signed in Washington on October 3, 2001 and to maintaining the Open Skies relationship between them. The U.S.-Qatar Air Transport Agreement entered into force on August 27 via an exchange of diplomatic notes. This agreement creates greater legal certainty for the governments and air carriers of each nation.

The two governments affirmed their mutual desire to enhance cooperation in the energy sector, as noted in the 2019 Strategic Dialogue. They also welcomed recent moves by U.S. energy companies to establish offices in Qatar to further strengthen their relations with their Qatari counterparts.

The U.S. delegation recognized Qatar's successful implementation of reforms designed to attract foreign investment into Qatar, including the creation of free zones, the expansion of business ownership rights for non-citizens, and the establishment of an Investment Promotion Agency. The Qatari delegation highlighted the constructive role U.S. companies play in developing Qatari investments in U.S. firms and employment, and both sides acknowledged Qatar Investment

Authority's (QIA) 2019 pledge to invest \$45 billion in the United States, concentrated in the infrastructure sector, with total Qatari investment in the U.S. exceeding \$200 billion. The State of Qatar and the U.S. plan to work together to promote further bilateral investment, including through trade missions and forums such as SelectUSA.

The Qatar Investment Authority, with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, are enhancing cooperation on investment in developing countries to create opportunities that enhance sustainability and social empowerment. As part of its strategy, the Qatar Investment Authority is looking to further expand in developing countries.

Recognizing the positive outcomes of the Bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement signed in 2004, and citing the success of similar events in 2018, the United States welcomed Qatar's plans to conduct an economic roadshow in the United States in 2021, which will target more diverse sectors to maximize mutual economic benefit. Both parties will work to explore avenues of cooperation and information exchange in the global food and agribusiness sector.

Energy Cooperation

As major energy producers, the United States and Qatar welcomed the opportunity to reaffirm their mutual efforts to support access to affordable and reliable energy, while working collaboratively to reduce barriers to energy trade on a global scale. Promoting a transparent and market-based energy sector around the world is a win-win for consumers and producers.

The abundant energy reserves of our two countries enable us to pursue, through energy policy, partnerships that promote economic growth and prosperity around the world. Regional integration creates shared opportunities for consumers and producers and promotes regional stability and cooperation. Both sides agreed to continue to advance their shared priorities during the ministerial-level Strategic Energy Dialogue and its working groups, in particular in developing the global conversation around the natural gas trade and energy investment.

Education and Cultural Cooperation

Both governments underscored the importance of strengthening people-to-people ties and reviewed progress on implementing the MOU on Educational Cooperation and the SOI on Cultural Cooperation that were signed in 2019.

Secretary Pompeo and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani signed a Statement of Intent to declare the year 2021 as the U.S.-Qatar Year of Culture. Both governments plan to partner and collaborate on cultural programming and exchanges to strengthen ties between the people of the United States and Qatar.

The two governments noted several important steps that were decided upon in the MOU on Educational Cooperation to continue building and sustaining key partnerships in the fields of education and academia. They also discussed further areas of collaboration including increasing professional and academic exchanges through Education and Cultural Affairs programs such as the Fulbright Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Speakers' Program, and the Stevens Initiative.

The United States and Qatar Foundation announced that two U.S. Fulbright Scholars will spend a semester in Qatar to conduct research and teach on hydrology and the application of artificial intelligence in civil and environmental engineering, as well as treatments for Alzheimer's disease.

NASA and Qatar Foundation announced an agreement between NASA and Hamad bin Khalifa University's Qatar Energy and Environment Research Institute to formulate a study on the detection of underground water aquifers.

Qatar Foundation, Qatar Museums, and the Smithsonian Institution also announced a Memorandum of Understanding on educational, cultural, and sports collaboration.

Military Cooperation

The two governments reaffirmed their commitment to the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation to promote peace and stability and counter terrorism. The U.S. delegation outlined plans to expand the operational capability of Al Udeid Air Base and commended Qatar's generosity in upgrading critical facilities and infrastructure at the base. Both governments committed to continuing discussions on the evolution of enduring basing in Qatar. Together with further changes to align operating procedures with NATO standards, the upgrades at Al Udeid Air Base will increase the capability of U.S. and coalition forces based in Qatar.

Both governments noted the recent expansion of the bilateral maritime partnership, which included a continuing increase in operations by U.S. naval vessels in Qatari ports in 2019 and 2020. Qatar's Navy and Coast Guard represent the largest maritime contribution to the 33-nation Combined

Maritime Force Task Force-152 and continue to be high-value partners. These missions, together with the strong partnership between Qatari maritime forces and the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, boost regional security by providing a visible presence and deterrent to unlawful maritime activities.

The two sides discussed the \$26 billion Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, which continues to increase the capability and capacity of the Qatar Armed Forces. The FMS program forms the cornerstone of security cooperation between U.S. and Qatari forces, and both sides acknowledged the strong and lasting bilateral security partnership.

Forward Together

Qatar and the United States remain invested in dialogue and long-term cooperation and look forward to reviewing progress in these areas at the next Policy Working Group meeting in Washington D.C. in the first quarter of 2021.