

Press Releases: Joint Statement of the Second United States-Qatar Strategic Dialogue: Forward Together

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

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The governments of the State of Qatar and the United States held the second Strategic Dialogue in Doha, Qatar on January 13, 2019. U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo co-chaired the opening session with Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. Senior U.S. officials came to Doha to engage with their Qatari counterparts on numerous aspects of the robust bilateral relationship, including: regional security and defense cooperation, education and culture, law enforcement and counterterrorism partnerships, commercial and energy cooperation, and labor issues.

The two countries welcomed this second annual Strategic Dialogue, the first in Doha, and reviewed the significant progress since the first Strategic Dialogue was held in Washington, D.C., in January 2018. They highlighted the strength of the bilateral relationship and the opportunities to further deepen our cooperation to benefit both countries. Today, the United States and Qatar signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Statements of Intent (SOIs) to advance cooperation in different areas.

Political Cooperation

Qatar and the United States expressed strong support for the expansion of bilateral relations evinced by high-level meetings in 2018 between: U.S. President Donald J. Trump and HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani; U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani; U.S. Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Khalid al-Attiyah; and an exchange of other minister-level visits to Washington and Doha. These high-level diplomatic engagements highlight the two nations' shared commitment to advance cooperation and promote global peace and prosperity.

The two governments expressed concern about the detrimental security,

economic, and human impacts of the Gulf crisis on the region. Qatar highlighted its appreciation for the constructive role played by the United States in support of the efforts of the Emir of Kuwait to resolve the dispute. Qatar and the United States affirmed their continued support for a strong and united Gulf Cooperation Council that is focused on promoting a peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of the region and on countering regional threats.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Arabian Peninsula and Regional and Multilateral Affairs Timothy Lenderking and Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi discussed potential mechanisms to address wider regional challenges beyond the Gulf, including establishing a Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) between the United States and its Gulf and regional partners.

The two governments discussed regional security, including: joint efforts to defeat ISIS, finding a lasting resolution to the conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, as well as political developments in Iraq; and efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The United States also recognized Qatar's active leadership and mediation to promote peace and reconciliation among all parties in Afghanistan and Sudan. The U.S. shared Qatar's concern about recent developments in Gaza and the need for tangible steps to improve humanitarian and economic conditions.

The United States acknowledged Qatar's generous humanitarian role bilaterally and multilaterally through the work of various UN agencies, in the form of a \$500 million multi-year assistance pledge, including \$8 million annually between 2019 and 2023 to support forcibly displaced populations, and assist refugees including millions of vulnerable young children and women.

Among the primary beneficiaries will be the UN Development Program, UNICEF, UNRWA, the World Food Program, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Special Purpose Trust Fund, the UNSC Counterterrorism Committee, and Department of Political Affairs, among others.

Defense Partnership

Qatar and the United States emphasized the vital contribution their defense partnership provides for the security and stability of the region. This strong and lasting partnership is key to successfully combating terrorism, countering violent extremism, and deterring external aggression. U.S. officials lauded Qatar's contributions in supporting the strategic U.S. military presence in Qatar under the U.S. Central Command.

Chairman of Military Cooperation Authority Brigadier General (Pilot) Fahad Al-Sulaiti, and U.S. Principal Director for Middle East Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense Jennifer Zakriski participated in sessions on defense cooperation. The two governments reaffirmed their commitment to the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation to promote peace and stability and counter the scourge of terrorism. The United States welcomed Qatar's generous

offer to expand critical facilities at bases used by U.S. forces in the country and to align operating procedures at these bases with NATO standards, thereby increasing the operational capability of U.S. and coalition forces based in Qatar. The U.S. and Qatar signed an MOU enabling deeper coordination on potential expansion at Al Udeid Air Base. Qatar's offers to fund capital expenditures and sustainment affords the possibility of a more enduring U.S. presence.

Both countries noted the recent expansion of the bilateral maritime partnership, including the visit by the largest U.S. naval ship to ever come to Qatar in October 2018. Qatar's Navy and Coast Guard represent the largest maritime contribution in the 33-nation Combined Maritime Force (CMF) Task Force-152 led by the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and continue to be high value partners and members. These missions increase regional security by providing a visible presence and deterrent to maritime crime in the Arabian Gulf.

The two governments discussed the \$26 billion Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program that currently exists between the United States and Qatar. Qatar highlighted the continued opportunity for U.S. partnership in developing Qatar's Expeditionary Amphibious Capability, Joint Special Forces expansion, as well as an improved ability to defend against external aggression and to better operate alongside U.S. and NATO military forces in coalition operations. In 2018, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps hosted a Qatar Naval delegation to the United States to showcase U.S. expeditionary amphibious operations, and both nations conducted amphibious exercise Eastern Maverick for the first time since 2012.

The two governments acknowledged their strong and lasting bilateral security partnership, and look forward to further discussions on the possibility of more enduring basing.

Education and Cultural Cooperation

U.S. Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs Marie Royce participated in sessions on culture and education cooperation with Qatari Under Secretary of Education Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh bin Khalifa al-Nuaimi. Both governments underscored the significance of cooperation in the fields of education and culture, as evidenced by their inclusion for the first time in the Strategic Dialogue and by the signing of the first bilateral MOU and SOI in education and cultural cooperation.

The U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani signed the MOU in the field of education to continue building and sustaining key partnerships in the fields of: primary, secondary, and higher education; English and Arabic language instruction; student advising; promoting academic exchange; and facilitating a wide range of study abroad options that enable students to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Both countries expressed the importance of continued mutual cooperation in these fields, agreeing to continue working through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Culture, Qatar's Ministry of Education and

Higher Education, and the Qatar Foundation. The U.S. also praised Qatar Foundation and its affiliates for their important work on joint educational, research and cultural programs with leading American institutions, both in Doha through Education City and in the United States.

In recognition of the bilateral cooperation in the field of culture, the two governments also signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to work together to enhance cultural understanding and people-to-people connections between the United States and Qatar, in order to foster mutual understanding, promote intercultural dialogue, and support the shared ideals of tolerance and appreciation for diversity. As a result of the SOI, both parties will encourage cultural programming, cultural dialogue, cultural and professional exchange programs, programs that support and engage youth, and both parties will support the work of individuals and organizations who are committed to enhancing cultural understanding between the United States and Qatar.

Counterterrorism & Law Enforcement Partnerships

U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Nathan Sales co-chaired a session on law enforcement and counterterrorism partnerships with Qatar's Chairman of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, Major General Abdul Aziz al-Ansari. Qatar emphasized the United States' significant role in the region and its contributions to countering terrorism and violent extremism.

The United States thanked Qatar for its continued efforts to counter terrorism, counter the financing of terrorism, and prevent violent extremism in all forms. Both sides intend to strengthen their security and counterterrorism (CT) partnership to eradicate terrorism and violent extremism. The United States welcomed Qatar's commitment to provide \$75 million over five years to the work of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, including its efforts to help Member States develop and implement advance passenger information and passenger name record systems in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2396.

They reviewed the positive progress made under the terms of the MOU on Counterterrorism signed on July 11, 2017, and the second bilateral CT Dialogue convened in Doha September 5, 2018, including the 2018 Joint Action Plan to implement provisions on border security, information sharing, countering the financing of terrorism, anti-money laundering, aviation security, cybersecurity, and judicial capacity building.

Qatar and the United States hailed the start of a robust slate of Anti-Terrorism Assistance training that began in November 2018 that will consist of 33 courses over the next four years and will provide the Ministry of Interior and Internal Security Forces with enhanced skills and abilities to detect and defeat threats from transnational terrorist and criminal organizations, with special focus on supporting Qatar's security preparations to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

The two governments also noted progress on a bilateral LOI on Cybersecurity Cooperation signed at the first Strategic Dialogue by Qatar's Ministry of Transport and Communications and the U.S. Department of State. The LOI

resulted in exchanges of Qatari and U.S. cybersecurity experts and officials in the last year, the participation of a U.S. cybersecurity expert in Qatar Central Bank's FinTech conference, and opened avenues for increased information sharing between Qatar's Computer Emergency Readiness Team (Q-CERT) and its U.S. counterpart.

Qatar and the United States reaffirmed the need to address violent extremism through preventive frameworks. They underscored the role that both countries play in supporting the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) as well as QFFD leadership in transparency of developmental assistance and Qatar's active membership of the Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF).

Trade, Investment & Energy Cooperation

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette and Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Frank Fannon participated in a session on energy cooperation with Qatar Petroleum Director for International Engagement Sheikh Mishal bin Jabor Al Thani.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Manisha Singh and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Treasury for Africa and the Middle East Eric Meyer participated in a session on commercial cooperation with Qatari Under Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry HE Sultan Bin Rashid AlKhater.

The two governments acknowledged the challenges facing Qatar as a result of the Gulf crisis. Qatar and the United States also stressed the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation, overflight, and unimpeded lawful commerce in accordance with international law. Both countries also underscored their commitment to boosting trade and investment and noted the growing strength of bilateral trade relations. Qatar confirmed that the United States is its top import partner, representing 18% of all imports to Qatar in 2018.

Qatar and the United States welcomed the role of U.S. companies in Qatar's development and of Qatari investment in U.S. firms and jobs. The Qatari delegation outlined successful implementation of reforms designed to attract foreign investment in Qatar, including free trade zones and expanding business ownership for non-citizens.

The two governments recognized Qatar Investment Authority's (QIA) previous commitment to invest \$45 billion in American firms, real estate, and jobs. QIA Chief Executive Mr. Mansour al-Mahmoud described plans to increase Qatari investments in American infrastructure.

The two governments expressed their mutual desire to build upon the momentum of their MOU to enhance cooperation between Qatar and the United States in the energy sector. Both governments recognized the importance of Qatar Petroleum's (QP) announcement of a planned investment in the United States over the next five years valued at \$20 billion. They also welcomed recent moves by a number of U.S. energy companies to establish offices in Qatar to support joint ventures with Qatargas and Nakilat.

Delegations from the two countries met separately to discuss civil aviation matters, during which they reaffirmed the commitments by both governments to financial transparency and to putting business with state-owned enterprises on commercial terms set out in the Understandings initially announced on January 30, 2018. Those Understandings sought to ensure healthy competition in the global aviation sector while preserving the Open Skies relationship between the United States and Qatar.

Labor

U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Labor for International Affairs Martha Newton participated in a session on labor issues with Qatari Under Secretary of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs Mohammad Hassan Al Obaidly. Both sides acknowledged recent progress and commitments made by Qatar on combating human trafficking and advancing labor rights. Under the framework of the U.S.-Qatar Anti-Trafficking MOU signed during last year's Strategic Dialogue, the State of Qatar and the Government of the United States have undertaken over a dozen joint initiatives to build capacity, raise awareness, and promote labor rights. To further bolster these positive developments, this year the two governments look forward to signing a MOU to expand collaboration with a specific focus on strengthening Qatar's labor inspectorate and helping to address the challenges facing domestic workers.

Forward Together

The United States and Qatar emphasize the importance of their continued partnership which benefits the interests of both countries, as well as the security and prosperity of the Gulf region.

This Strategic Dialogue process underlines the commitment of Qatar and the United States to increase cooperation in fields that provide the greatest mutual and practical benefit. Such cooperation includes the issues discussed today but also incorporates important work in the fields of health, food safety, intellectual property rights, nuclear safeguards and more. Qatar and the United States remain committed to dialogue and long-term cooperation on political issues, consolidating state-of-the-art defense facilities, combating terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms, countering the financing of terrorism, expanding their trade and investment partnerships, and enhancing educational and cultural cooperation.

To expand partnerships and advance mutual policy goals in those areas, the two sides agreed to hold the first working group in April of 2019. Qatar and the United States look forward to reviewing progress in these areas at the next Strategic Dialogue in Washington in 2020.

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