

**“Towards Dialoguing Just World Order: An Arab
Perspective”**

Speech by:

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At the

The Fondazione Mediterraneo

“Mediterranean Foundation”

Naples, Italy

September 12, 2015

In the Name of God the Merciful, the

Compassionate

May God's Peace and Blessing be upon you

I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Prof. Arch. Michele Capasso for his kind invitation to join you in “Maison des Alliances” and to speak to such a distinguished audience in such an esteemed institution.

Let me first commend the tireless efforts of The Mediterranean Foundation in supporting and promoting dialogue between West and East and

West and Arab- Islamic world, and in pursuing the noble cause of world peace. It is an honor accepting your esteemed award “Mediterranean Award for Diplomacy 2015”. I thank the foundation for this award which on my part, I dedicate to the memory of my beloved brother the late HRH Prince Saud AlFaisal, the former Saudi minister of foreign affairs for the last forty years He was a champion of diplomacy and world peace all along his life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dialogue between nations, cultures, religions, and civilizations is a noble endeavor. It is the best means for promoting understanding between different people of different creeds. Therefore, dialogue must be promoted and supported. In the last fifteen years dialogue became a fad. Too much ado but without tangible results that reflected on people's welfare and in world politics. However, without dialogue the world would be in a worse situation. A higher kind of dialogue is necessary

and needed in order to have all peoples, all cultures, and all civilizations working together on an equal footing for a peaceful and prosperous world. A new world order.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The questions of restructuring or reordering the world order and the place or position of certain states and regions in such an order are legitimate and pressing ones. Calls to reform the UN system, which is a metaphor of the waning international order, have been on the agenda of the international

community since the early nineties of the last century. Alas, all calls fell on deaf ears despite the continuing talk of the need for such restructuring to reflect the new realities of the world. Failing to do so led the world to the state of uncertainty that we are witnessing today. Therefore, I find myself in agreement with Henry Kissinger's statement in his latest book "World Order" that: "A reconstruction of the international system is the ultimate challenge to statesmanship in our time".

Needless to say the world of today is not the world of 1945 when victors of World War II envisaged an international order that guarantees their prominence and dominance while working to preserve “peace and security of the world”. In realpolitik terms this was understandable and acceptable as a matter of fact, and as a reflection of the balance of power and the reality of the world at the time. It is fair to state that this order, unlike the ones that preceded it, has sustained itself and has succeeded in becoming a system for world

governance and global politics for the last 70 years. This order was able, despite its shortcomings, to rid the world of wars between great powers which was the norm of international affairs in previous centuries; it has successfully integrated almost all states of the world into an international community of states; it has contributed to freeing many countries and societies from the plight of colonialism and subjugations; it has helped in organizing global life into many successful international bodies that deal with all

kinds of international issues that touch upon humanity: peace keeping, health, education, environment, refugees, development. Above all, it consolidated the principles of equality between states, the right of self-determination, and the primacy of International Law. This does not mean that the world has rid itself of all diseases and overcome all threats facing humanity.

The cold war lasted almost four decades and made the world order into bipolar system, where the United States of America and the Soviet Union

enjoyed almost all political, economic, military, and cultural influence, internationally and regionally. That order divided the world and brought it on many occasions to the brink of total war. Thank God, total war was avoided. But it was unfortunate that millions of people's lives in many countries were lost under that bipolar system. A country like Afghanistan is still suffering from that time. Certain regional problems were left without real resolution; pending international justice and

international conciliation. The issue of Palestine is a standing manifestation of such failure.

The cold war ended with the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and bipolarity transformed into “unipolarity” where the United States solely enjoyed almost all political, economic, military, and cultural influence on the world stage. The world was hopeful that such grand transformation in the international order would lead to a more equitable international order that reflects the principles that the USA was preaching during the

cold war: Rule of Law, Self-determination, Human Rights, Freedom and Equality. This hope was consolidated by freeing Kuwait from Iraqi occupation and afterwards by the announcement of President George Bush in 1991 that: “Until now, the world we’ve known has been a world divided – a world of barbed wire and concrete blocks, conflict and cold war. Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a new world order. In the words of Winston Churchill, a “world order” in

which “the principles of justice and fair play....protect the weak against the strong....A world where the United Nations, freed from cold war stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. a world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations”.

This could have been the ideal for the international community that was becoming more global, more interdependent, more interlinked. In another word, the oneness of the world was closer

than ever before. This hope was dashed by the reality in the field. The forces of nationalism in the Balkans and the Caucasus regions, and the scourge of global terrorism were unleashed. The failure of the international community to act jointly in facing such threats and the outstanding issues of peace in the Middle East constituted a crisis for the United Nations system. And with the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, unipolarity became unilaterality that disregards the dictates of being part of an international order. It goes without

saying that the dust of unrestricted wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and their ramifications have buried unipolarity and, I hope, unilaterality, in issues of war and peace. In short, unipolarity is not less than bipolarity in increasing people's suffering in many parts of the world. The question arises as to whether multipolarity is the suitable formula for managing world affairs? It is a fad now talking about this issue but, if we look into the history of world order since the Westphalia arrangements of 1648, multipolarity was behind colonization,

division of the world into spheres of influence, great powers' competition, great power wars. However this was in the past. There is no guarantee that greed and self-interest in international politics is obsolete. In fact, signs of such retreat from the ideals of world order to the principles of power politics in international relations are crystal clear. The strains in American and European-Russian Relations over Ukraine, the inability of the Security Council of the UN to act in solving the tragic Syrian crisis and other regional

crises are good examples of such a slide toward power politics on the world scene.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International order needs restructuring to be fair, inclusive, and reflective of international reality, where power, in all its aspects, is shared by many power centers. The world is so conscious of unfairness of the present order and sees it as an outdated structure and not being able to tackle the issues of the day. This consciousness was correctly captured by Zbigniew Brzezinski when he wrote:

“For the first time in history almost all of humanity is politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive. Global activism is generating a surge in the quest for cultural respect and economic opportunity in a world scarred by memories of colonial or imperial domination”. In this kind of situation, how can we understand that one billion and a quarter Indians; one billion and a half Muslims: Arabs, Turks, Iranian, and others; close to a billion Africans and more than half a

billion Latin Americans are without effective representation at the helm of such a structure?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world does not need a world war to have a new world order to prove that world orders in history are byproducts of major wars. The advancement of humanity in all aspects of life, the realization that we share a common destiny, the belief that peace and security is a common goal for all on earth, and the achievements of the last 7 decades of dealing with all issues affecting human

lives, dictate that all of us must work seriously to reform the UN system for it to be fair, inclusive, reflective and up to the aspirations of the people of the world. It is unfortunate that all recommendations that deal with restructuring the UN organs were ignored by the permanent veto members of the UN Security Council. This must not be the end to calling for democratizing the UN system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No region in the world has ever suffered from the unfairness of the international order, when bipolar and when unipolar, more than the Middle East region, particularly the Arab World. Our region has been the altar of the principles of the international order. By the same principles that were behind the creation of the State of Israel, the Palestinians were deprived of their homeland and denied their basic rights of self- determination and statehood. For almost seven decades our region has

been going from one war to another, from one catastrophe to another, and from one UN Resolution to another; and justice is still elusive. Hypocrisy on the part of great powers that are at the helm of world order and the “vanguards” of its basic principles becomes crystal clear when it comes to Arab, Muslim, or Middle Eastern issues.

The inaction of the UN Security Council to stop the killing and mass massacres in Syria and the irresponsible use of the veto by Russia and

China is another case to prove that calling for restructuring the world order is a legitimate cause.

Saudi Arabia calls for and supports all efforts to reform the UN system, including reforming the Security Council to be more representative and truer to the basic principles of the UN, and for the General Assembly to have an international legislative power that cannot be vetoed if the veto is to be preserved under any restructuring of the Security Council.

Reforming the UN requires new thinking by all member states including the five permanent veto members. The sustainable international order that can preserve peace and security in the world and that can meet the pressing challenges and threats facing humanity must be an equitable one. The whole world has a special responsibility to realize this noble goal.

Thank you
