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EVENT: THE PLENARY SESSION ENTITLED HOW THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM
WILL CHANGE THE WORLD AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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TIME:

What is obvious is that the fight against terrorism has already changed the world.

2. We were carefree before, criss-crossing the world in jet planes for pleasure and for business. The world had become a village, every part of it accessible in less than 24 hours from any other part. Not only were the towns almost identical in terms of buildings and facilities but we expected and we knew we could get the same food and drinks, hotels and shops and branded goods in every country across the world.

3. But we were not satisfied. We wanted identical political and economic systems, namely democracy and deregulated free trade with identical laws and uniform practices as well. We wanted globalisation in a standard environment. Everyone must conform or be economically strangled.

4. We believe that there are far too many corporations in the world in each business. Most were financially weak and inefficient. We should get rid of all the small businesses and have only a few super-giant so-called multi-national corporations to take over everything, from retailing noodles to producing and selling aeroplanes. Who needs papa-mama shops when hypermarkets can supply everything we need in life.

5. But there are countries which insist on protecting their little inefficient banks and industries. They must be eliminated. Sanctions should be applied. Markets should be closed to their products. And where they had somehow survived and developed their countries, undermine their currencies and destabilise them.

6. And so whole regions were made poor, forced to borrow from the rich, and become permanent debt slaves, completely compliant to the demand that they conform and accept globalisation.

7. It looked like things would go according to plan. The whole world was becoming a huge standard market place for the standard products and services of the

consolidated, amalgamated, merged giant banks and corporations. There could be only greater growth and more wealth for the rich proponents of free trade and globalisation.

8. Yes the poor would also benefit. They would provide cheap labour. Still automation and robots would throw most of them out of work. But that is the price we all have to pay for the technology which has made cheap and better products possible. The dole will take care of the unemployed. Too bad if the governments of the poor countries have no unemployment benefits. That is their problem. Free trade must be upheld at any cost.

9. Many people all over the world lived in abject poverty. And many live in fear of terror attacks. The Palestinians of course deserved to lose their country. For two long years the world watched in the comfort of their homes, 200,000 Bosnians being slaughtered. Bombs were periodically rained on Iraq, killing innocent civilians. In Northern Ireland, Protestants and Catholics live in fear of the next bomb. And in many parts of the world there were constant fears of terror attacks.

10. The world accepts that these people deserve what they got. They live in terror because they did not know how to protect themselves; to take security measures. Those who know and have the means would always be safe, watch terror from a safe distance.

11. Then literally out of the blue terror came to the wealthy and the protected. After September 11 no one is safe. And everyone anywhere can be the victims of terror attacks.

12. Unfortunately having ignored terrorism as something that can only happen to others, the people most capable of tackling terrorism do not know how to tackle it. They can only think of improving their defenses with more stringent security measure and more sophisticated weapons. 1.3 billion Muslims were identified as the potential enemy. They must be harassed, restrained, detained indiscriminately. Their shoes have to be examined. No pen-knives, paper cutters, metal cutlery on aircrafts. Every ship has to be thoroughly examined. Every port in the world must be checked constantly. Marshalls with weapons on very aircraft. And many, many more security measures.

13. All these have strained relations between many countries and people, affected economic development of the world adversely and domestic politics as well. Everyone is frightened of flying or travelling to certain countries, frightened of living at home, of investing, of receiving parcels, of large gatherings,

of high rise buildings and parked vehicles. The tourist industry, the hospitality industry, the airlines have seen bankruptcies galore.

14. Against these enormous losses and the huge outlay on defence and security, the cost of mounting the attack such as on September 11 is minimal. No costly missiles. Just a dozen people in hijacked aircrafts can create havoc.

15. The question is, how long can all these defence/security measures be kept up. How long can we live in fear; how long can we withstand economic downturns? How long can the fight against terrorism be allowed to blight our life, to change the way we live?

16. So what should we do? The Israelis have the most thorough defence against terrorist attacks but the attacks are still going on. Abroad, the Israelis are sitting ducks. So are the other targets of the terrorists. Terrorising the terrorists as the Israelis have done has not reduced the number of terrorist. In fact they seem to increase. Attacking Iraq and getting rid of Saddam Hussein is most likely to create more anger and increase the recruits for terror attacks.

17. For as long as there are people who are oppressed, whose land has been expropriated, whose sufferings have been ignored; for whom there is no justice, there will be terrorists and acts of terror. It only cost them their lives, something they seem to care very little about. The bombs can be made cheaply and the delivery vehicles hijacked.

18. Today, the whole world is suffused with hatred and anger. No one is seeking for anything else except revenge. Both sides are saying "they will pay a heavy price for this".

19. Giving fancy reasons for the acts of terror will only result in our not taking the right actions. Is it true that Islam teaches its followers to terrorise non-Muslims? Is it true that Muslim poverty is at the root of their dastardly behaviour? Is it true that they envy the freedom and the democracy of the West?

20. September 11 was the work of people who were neither poverty-stricken, nor ignorant, nor even directly suffering from oppression. They were apparently ordinary people with families, sufficient income and enjoying a comfortable life. They were not Palestinians or Afghans or Libyans, Sudanese, Iraqis or Iranians, all of whom have good reasons to hate their western detractors. Yet they were prepared to die a horrendous death. Given the opportunity, there will be others who will do it again.

21. It is time that we examine the true causes of terrorism. It is time that we remove the causes, If we don't, if we continue to delude ourselves then the fight against the terrorists will never end and the change in the world caused by terrorism will remain permanent.