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Joint Statement by the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council

May 14, 2015

President Obama and Heads of Delegations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, the Secretary General of the GCC, and members the President's Cabinet met today at Camp David to reaffirm and deepen the strong partnership and cooperation between the United States and the GCC. The leaders underscored their mutual commitment to a U.S.-GCC strategic partnership to build closer relations in all fields, including defense and security cooperation, and develop collective approaches to regional issues in order to advance their shared interest in stability and prosperity.

The United States shares with our GCC partners a deep interest in a region that is peaceful and prosperous, and a vital interest in supporting the political independence and territorial integrity, safe from external aggression, of our GCC partners. The United States policy to use all elements of power to secure our core interests in the Gulf region, and to deter and confront external aggression against our allies and partners, as we did in the Gulf War, is unequivocal.

The United States is prepared to work jointly with the GCC states to deter and confront an external threat to any GCC state's territorial integrity that is inconsistent with the UN Charter. In the event of such aggression or the threat of such aggression, the United States stands ready to work with our GCC partners to determine urgently what action may be appropriate, using the means at our collective disposal, including the potential use of military force, for the defense of our GCC partners.

As with Operation Decisive Storm, GCC states will consult with the United States when planning to take military action beyond GCC borders, in particular when U.S. assistance is requested for such action.

In this spirit, and building on the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, the leaders discussed a new U.S.-GCC strategic partnership to enhance their work to improve security cooperation, especially on fast-tracking arms transfers, as well as on counter-terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and ballistic missile defense. They reviewed the status of negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran, and emphasized that a comprehensive, verifiable deal that fully addresses the regional and international concerns about Iran's nuclear program is in the security interests of GCC member states as well as the United States and the international community. The United States and GCC member states oppose and will work together to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region and stressed the need for Iran to engage the region according to the principles of good neighborliness, strict non-interference in domestic affairs, and respect for territorial integrity, consistent with international law and the United Nations Charter, and for Iran to take concrete, practical steps to build trust and resolve its differences with neighbors by peaceful means.

The leaders decided to enhance their counter-terrorism cooperation on shared threats, particularly ISIL/DAESH and Al-Qa'ida, to deter and disrupt terrorist attacks with a focus on protecting critical infrastructure, strengthening border and aviation security, combating money laundering and terrorist financing, interdicting foreign fighters, and countering violent extremism in all its forms.

The leaders, furthermore, discussed how best to address regional conflicts and defuse growing tensions. In this context, the leaders discussed the most pressing conflicts in the region, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, and what could be done to advance their resolution. They decided on a set of common principles, including a shared recognition that there is no military solution to the regions' armed civil conflicts, which can only be resolved through political and peaceful means; respect for all states' sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs; the need for inclusive governance in conflict-ridden societies; as well as protection of all minorities and of human rights.

With regard to Yemen, both the United States and GCC member states underscored the imperative of collective efforts to counter Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, and emphasized the need to rapidly shift from military operations to a political process, through the Riyadh Conference under GCC auspices and UN-facilitated negotiations based on the GCC initiative, National Comprehensive Dialogue outcomes, and the Security Council's relevant resolutions. Taking into consideration the humanitarian needs of civilians, they welcomed the start of a five-day humanitarian pause to facilitate delivery of relief assistance to all those in need and expressed hope it would develop into a longer, more sustainable ceasefire. They expressed their appreciation for the generous grant of $274 million provided by Saudi Arabia for the UN humanitarian response in Yemen. The United States reaffirmed its commitment, in partnership with GCC member states and other members of the international community, to seek to prevent the resupply of Houthi forces and their allies in contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

The United States and GCC member states further affirmed their commitment to assisting the Iraqi government and the international coalition in their fight against ISIL/DAESH. They stressed the importance of strengthening ties between GCC member states and the Iraqi government, based on the principles of good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for state sovereignty. They encouraged the Iraqi government to achieve genuine national reconciliation by urgently addressing the legitimate grievances of all components of Iraqi society through the implementation of reforms agreed upon last summer and by ensuring that all armed groups operate under the strict control of the Iraqi state.

The leaders committed to continue working towards a sustainable political resolution in Syria that ends the war and establishes an inclusive government that protects all ethnic and religious minorities, and preserves state institutions. They reaffirmed that Assad has lost all legitimacy and has no role in Syria's future. They strongly supported increased efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL/DAESH in Syria and warned against the influence of other extremist groups, such as Al-Nusrah, that represent a danger to the Syrian people, to the region and to the international community. They expressed deep concern over the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria and condemned the prevention of aid distribution to the civilian population by the Assad regime or any other party.

The leaders decided to move in concert to convince all Libyan parties to accept an inclusive power-sharing agreement based on proposals put forward by the UN and to focus on countering the growing terrorist presence in the country.

The United States and GCC member states strongly affirmed the necessity of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a just, lasting, comprehensive peace agreement that results in an independent and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel. To that end, the United States and GCC member states underscored the

enduring importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and the urgent need for the parties to demonstrate—through policies and actions—genuine advancement of a two-state solution, and decided to remain closely engaged moving forward. The United States and GCC member states also recommitted to continue to fulfill aggressively their pledges made for Gaza's reconstruction, to include pledges made at the October 2014 Cairo Conference.

The leaders expressed their concern over the delay in electing a new president of Lebanon, called on all parties to strengthen Lebanese state institutions, and emphasized the critical importance of Lebanon's parliament moving forward to elect a president of the Lebanese Republic in accordance with the constitution. The leaders also emphasized their determination to support the Government of Lebanon in its resistance to ISIL/DAESH and Al-Nusrah which threaten Lebanon's security and stability.

The leaders pledged to further deepen U.S.-GCC relations on these and other issues in order to build an even stronger, enduring, and comprehensive strategic partnership aimed at enhancing regional stability and prosperity. They agreed to meet again in a similar high level format in 2016, in order to advance and build upon the US-GCC Strategic Partnership announced today.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement. The joint statement referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. It also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The Office of the Press Secretary also released an annex to this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Gulf Cooperation Council.

Names: Asad, Bashar al-.

Subjects: Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : Terrorism, sponsorship; Iraq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Iraq : Political unrest and violence; Iraq : Reconciliation efforts; Lebanon : Democracy efforts; Libya : Democracy efforts; Libya : Political unrest and violence; Middle East : Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; Middle East : Gulf Cooperation Council; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Syria : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Syria : Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization; Syria : President; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; United Nations : Security Council; Yemen : Political unrest and violence.

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