

in accordance with its terms and that its provisions will provide the foundation for providing confidence, transparency, and predictability in further strategic offensive reductions, along with other supplementary measures, including transparency measures, to be agreed.

The United States and Russia agree that a new strategic relationship between the two countries, based on the principles of mutual security, trust, openness, cooperation, and predictability requires substantive consultation across a broad range of international security issues. To that end we have decided to:

- establish a Consultative Group for Strategic Security to be chaired by Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers with the participation of other

senior officials. This group will be the principal mechanism through which the sides strengthen mutual confidence, expand transparency, share information and plans, and discuss strategic issues of mutual interest; and

- seek ways to expand and regularize contacts between our two countries' Defense Ministries and Foreign Ministries, and our intelligence agencies.

The President of the
United States of America:
George W. Bush

The President of the
Russian Federation:
Vladimir V. Putin

Moscow
May 24, 2002.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint declaration.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin on the Situation in the Middle East *May 24, 2002*

Mindful of the responsibility the United States of America and the Russian Federation as co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, we believe that there is an opportunity to move away from the current unacceptable situation of terror and violence towards a resumption of meaningful negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. We are agreed that we have to move aggressively to help the parties take advantage of this opportunity. In the Middle East, neither conflict nor peace is inevitable. Peace will not come to the Middle East on its own. We must do all we can for the attainment of peace.

In that spirit, the United States and Russia pledge their maximum efforts to realize the vision of a negotiated settlement, including two states, Israel and Palestine, living in peace and security within recognized borders. This should become part of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli

dispute based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the Madrid principles, and the principle of land for peace, and existing agreements and understandings. We share these approaches, which were reflected in UN Security Council resolution 1397.

We reaffirm our unequivocal condemnation of all terrorist acts, considering terrorism and any form of violence an absolutely unacceptable means for achieving political goals. At the same time, recognizing the legitimate right of Israel to fight terrorism, we urge the Israelis and Palestinians to consider carefully the consequences of any actions they may take and to work to create and sustain an environment in which the parties can return to a serious political dialogue. We urge the parties to move forward on a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians along the lines of the goals outlined by the President of

the Russian Federation in his March 26 message to the Arab Summit in Beirut and by the President of the United States at the UN General Assembly last November and advanced by him in his April 4 statement on the Middle East.

The United States and Russia are encouraged by several recent signals that have created a window of opportunity: the peaceful resolution—with the cooperation of the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority—of the standoffs in Ramallah and Bethlehem and the recent Israeli withdrawals from Palestinian areas; the Arab League's endorsement of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative; and the May 12 joint call by the Saudi, Egyptian, and Syrian leaders in Sharm el-Sheikh for a negotiated solution and an end to all forms of violence. The Arab states have an essential role to play in the search for a just peace.

We believe that the parties themselves and the international community should seize this opportunity by pursuing a comprehensive strategy that includes the following parallel steps: security and freedom from terror and violence for both Israelis and Palestinians; serious and accelerated negotiations leading to a just political settlement; and efforts to address urgent humanitarian needs and help promote the rebuilding of strong, accountable, democratic, and

market-oriented institutions as the basis for a vibrant Palestinian state. This will require vigorous efforts by the Palestinian leadership and action by all parties concerned to create an environment in which progress can be made in all the above mentioned directions.

The United States and Russia reaffirm their commitment, expressed most recently at the April 10 and May 2 meetings of the "Quartet," composed of the United States, Russia, European Union, and United Nations, to undertake all efforts to help Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the achievement of these goals. We are prepared to provide humanitarian and economic assistance to the Palestinians at this time of urgent need. We are also prepared to assist in the reconstruction of Palestinian institutions, including those of the Palestinian Authority, in order to lay the foundation of a future Palestinian state worthy of the Palestinian people and able to live as a good neighbor in peace with Israel.

The United States and Russia are committed to using an international meeting this summer to create serious momentum to move forward on our comprehensive strategy for peace in the Middle East.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin on Counterterrorism Cooperation *May 24, 2002*

Reaffirming our commitment expressed on October 21, 2001 to fight terrorism in all its forms wherever it may occur, we commend the efforts of the worldwide coalition against terrorism since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The member nations of the coalition must continue their concerted action to deny safe haven

to terrorists; to destroy their financial, logistical, communications, and other operational networks; and to bring terrorists to justice. We note with satisfaction that U.S.-Russia counterterrorism cooperation is making an important contribution to the global coalition against terrorism.