

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.

A successful campaign against terrorism must be conducted by nations through bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation, and requires a multifaceted approach that employs law enforcement, intelligence, diplomatic, political, and economic actions. We stress that initiatives against terrorism must be conducted in an atmosphere of rule of law and with respect for universal human rights.

Recognizing the importance of multilateral counterterrorism efforts, such as those under the auspices of the United Nations, the Group of Eight, the European Union, the OSCE, the "Six Plus Two" group, and NATO-Russia, we encourage the further development of regional counterterrorism initiatives, including within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its cooperation with the United States, that improve information-sharing, law enforcement cooperation, and border security. Of these institutions, we note that the UN Security Council Counterterrorism Committee

plays a key coordinating role in the struggle against international terrorism. In support of regional cooperation, the United States is sponsoring a counterterrorism conference in June 2002 to include participation from the Central Asian and Caucasus states, Afghanistan, Turkey, China, and Russia.

We call upon all nations to implement fully the provisions of UN Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1368, 1373, 1377 and 1390, directed against terrorism, the Taliban, and al-Qaida, and to become parties at the earliest opportunity to the twelve international antiterrorism conventions, including the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The United States supports conclusion of the Russian-proposed nuclear terrorism convention, and joins Russia in urging other nations to enlist in the efforts to resolve the outstanding issues related to the text. We call upon all nations to take steps to comply with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations on money laundering and terrorist financing. We shall work to block the financial assets of named terrorists and their organizations without delay.

We underscore the need to bring to a logical conclusion efforts to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Afghanistan related to Usama Bin Laden, the al-Qaida organization, and the Taliban. Afghanistan should never again be a haven for terrorism. Reaffirming our support for the important role of the UN in efforts to implement successfully the Bonn Agreement, including the upcoming Loya Jirga, we share a vision of a stable, independent Afghanistan at peace with its neighbors and the rest of the world and on the road to a more prosperous future.

We recognize the links between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism and stress the importance of U.S.-Russia cooperation on counternarcotics. Both our countries are dedicated to continuing their support for regional initiatives, such as those of the "Six Plus Two" Working Group on Drugs, to encourage cooperation among member countries and to strengthen their counternarcotics capabilities. We both strongly support the Afghan Interim Authority's plan to implement its poppy ban.