
Gulf Cooperation Council - Plus-Two Ministerial Joint Settlement

Media Note Office of the Spokesman Washington D.C.

[The following are excerpts from a media note issued jointly by participating Foreign Ministers following the Gulf Cooperation Council, plus-two ministerial meetings on January 16, 2007, in Kuwait City, Kuwait.]

Motivated by their shared vision of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Middle East, and acting within a framework of partnership consistent with the principle of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Egypt, Jordan, and the United States, with the participation of the Secretary-General of the GCC, met today in Kuwait City to affirm their commitment to continue their cooperation to promote regional security and peace. The participants affirmed the value of these meetings as a means to consult and exchange views and to consider common approaches to key issues of the day.

Agreeing that the peace and security of the Middle East including the Gulf Region are critical to the health of the global economy and international stability, and its destabilization would threaten the vital national interests of all, the participants resolve to continue their long-standing cooperation against such threats. The participants affirmed that disputes among states should be settled peacefully and in accordance with international norms, and that relations among all countries should be based on mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, and on the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations.

The participants reiterated their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and reaffirmed the February 2005 Riyadh Declaration, which calls for the following:

Fostering the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, coexistence, pluralism and the rapprochement between cultures. For fighting any form of ideology that promotes hatred, incites violence, and condones terrorist crimes, which can by no means be accepted by any religion law.

The participants agreed on the following principles on Iraq: that a stable, prosperous, and unified Iraq, based on respect for Iraq's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty is in the interest of all countries: that efforts to achieve national reconciliation that encompasses all elements of Iraqi society without excluding any group should be strongly supported: that sectarian violence aimed at undermining the ability of the Iraqi people to live in peace and security should be condemned; and that all militia should be disarmed and dismantled. In this vein, the participants, expressed their collective desire to prevent Iraq from becoming a battleground for regional and international powers and urged all to help end sectarian violence in Iraq. The ministers expressed the hope that the Iraqi government will actively engage all components of the Iraqi people in a real political process and act in a manner that ensures inclusiveness and paves the way for the success of national reconciliation. The participants consider that pursuing these objectives is the responsibility of the Iraqi government and called for amending the constitution accordingly, and expressed their readiness to support its efforts in this regard. The participants welcomed the commitment by the United States as stated in President Bush recent speech to defend the security of the Gulf, the territorial integrity of Iraq, and to ensure a successful, fair and inclusive political process that engages a all Iraqi communities and guarantees the stability of the country.

The participants agreed that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains a central and core problem and that without resolving this conflict the region will not enjoy sustained peace and stability. The participants affirmed their commitment to achieving peace in the Middle East through a two-state solution to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, and noted that the foundation for such an outcome includes the Arab Peace Initiative, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, and 1515, and the Road Map. The participants called on the parties to abide by and implement previous agreements and obligations, including the agreement on movement and access and to seek to fulfill their obligations under the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings of 2005. The participants expressed their hope that the December 2006 meeting between the Palestinian President and the Israeli Prime Minister will be followed by concrete steps in this direction. The participants welcomed the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, and hope that it would lead to a full resumption of negotiations aiming at reaching a comprehensive peace agreement between them as a step towards achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The participants affirmed their commitment to support development of the Palestinian economy, building and strengthening the institutions of the Palestinian state.

Recognizing the importance of a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon, the participants pledged their political and financial support to Lebanon, and underscored their commitment to full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701. They called for the respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon and for the non-interference in its internal affairs. The participants look forward to a successful Paris III meeting, which will support Lebanon's long term development and fiscal stabilization. Finally, the participants strongly condemned all terrorist attacks in Lebanon since October 2004, including the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and most recently of Minister Pierre Gemayel, and affirm that all those involved in these attacks must be held accountable.