

Joint Statement of the U.S.-GCC Foreign Ministers Meeting

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson
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August 3, 2015

The following is the text of a Joint Statement released by the U.S. – GCC foreign Ministers Meeting in Doha, State of Qatar on August 3, 2015.

Begin Text:

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry joined Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and the Secretary General of the GCC in Doha today, August 3, 2015, to discuss progress and chart out next steps on GCC-U.S. strategic partnership and areas of cooperation announced at Camp David on May 14, 2015. The delegations reviewed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the P5+1 and Iran, the conflict in Yemen and the necessity of a political solution there based on the GCC Initiative and National Dialogue Outcomes, and discussed regional challenges as outlined below. The Ministers also previewed the agenda for the fifth session of the GCC-U.S. Strategic Cooperation Forum (SCF), to be held in New York in late September.

The Ministers discussed the JCPOA in considerable detail, including its restrictions, transparency, safeguards, access to any declared or undeclared nuclear facility, enforcement mechanisms, and its regional implications. Reiterating the position expressed at Camp David 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 Ministers agreed that, once fully implemented, the JCPOA contributes to the region’s long-term security, including by preventing Iran from developing or acquiring a military nuclear capability. The Ministers called for Iran to strictly honor its obligations under the JCPOA and its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Ministers reaffirmed the commitments made at Camp David that the United States and the GCC states share a deep and historic interest in the security of the region, including the political independence and territorial integrity, safe from external aggression, of GCC member states. The United States reiterated its commitment to working with the GCC to prevent and deter external threats and aggression. 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.

Expressing concern about recent statements by some Iranian officials, GCC member states and the United States reiterated their opposition to Iran's support for terrorism and its destabilizing activities in the region and pledged to work together to counter its interference, particularly attempts to undermine the security of and interfere in the domestic affairs of GCC member states, most recently in Bahrain. The Ministers stressed the need for all countries in the region to engage according to the principles of good neighborliness, non-interference, and respect for territorial integrity.

The Ministers welcomed the return of Ministers and representatives of the legitimate Government of Yemen to Aden and called for an immediate end to the violence by the Houthis and forces of Ali Abdullah Saleh and a resumption of a fully inclusive, Yemeni-led, peaceful political dialogue based on relevant UN resolutions, including UNSCR 2216, and consistent with the framework of the GCC Initiative and the National Dialogue Conference. The Ministers underscored that all of Yemen's communities have important roles to play in the country's peaceful governance. The Ministers called for swift delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to all parts of Yemen without interference, impediments or delays in order to respond to the urgent needs of all the Yemeni people.

The Ministers strongly condemned the violent and destabilizing attacks by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Da'ish, noting that these groups are capitalizing on instability in Yemen and posing threats to Yemenis and the region.

Expressing solidarity with all the people of Iraq as they combat the terrorist organization Da'ish, the Ministers agreed to intensify support to and cooperation with the Government of Iraq as it strives to address the needs of all its communities. The Ministers acknowledged the integral importance of an effective and inclusive Iraqi government, stressed the importance of implementing the reforms agreed to last summer, emphasized the need for capable security forces in the fight against Da'ish, and agreed to take steps to maintain Iraq's security and stability. The Ministers reiterated the importance of supporting humanitarian programs to assist those affected by the conflict.

The Ministers reaffirmed their call for a managed political transition in Syria, noting that President Assad has lost all legitimacy. They stressed the necessity of a new Syrian government that reflects the aspirations of the Syrian people and advances national unity, pluralism, and human rights for all Syrian citizens. The Ministers noted the regime has demonstrated neither the will nor the capability to confront terrorist safe havens in Syria. The Ministers also noted the regime's relentless violence against its own people, including the use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons. The Ministers also reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, whose lives have been deeply affected by this crisis, and called upon the regime to permit all needed deliveries of such assistance.

The Ministers condemned the barbaric crimes perpetrated by Da'ish, including attacks on places of worship, and agreed that the campaign against Da'ish is not a religious or sectarian issue, but rather a fight against terrorism and brutality. They agreed to map out concrete steps to defeat Da'ish and establish security and stability, including by cutting the group's sources of revenue, blocking travel of foreign fighters, and sharing information.

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 Ministers welcomed the July 11 initialing of a draft Libyan political agreement in Skhirat, Morocco, and praised the draft agreement as a credible road map to a national unity government in Libya, urging all parties to continue to engage constructively to reach a negotiated settlement within the UN framework led by Special Representative of the Secretary General Bernardino Leon. The Ministers call upon all Libyans to work toward a unified government that can combat the threat of transnational terrorist organizations and guarantee security and prosperity for all Libyans.

Applying the historic importance of the Camp David summit, the Ministers vowed to continue working in collaboration to ensure peace and security in the region. They welcomed progress on urgent implementation of the full range of items agreed in the Annex to the U.S.-GCC Camp David Joint Statement, including ballistic missile defense, maritime security, cyber security, arms transfers, military preparedness, counterterrorism, and critical infrastructure protection. They agreed to continue building on the already strong foundation of military cooperation by improving coordination through joint exercises and military training. They expressed satisfaction at the results of their senior officials' meeting, convened at the GCC in Riyadh on 9-10 June 2015, and noted upcoming working group meetings and military exercises to further advance shared goals and objectives, and stressed the need for integrated, whole-of-government approaches in achieving Camp David goals. The Ministers looked forward to reviewing progress at the fifth session of the GCC-U.S. Strategic Cooperation Forum (SCF) in September, and using the SCF mechanism to inform all U.S.-GCC engagements. The Ministers reaffirmed the vital role that the SCF plays in strengthening the participants' collective capability to meet challenges to regional security.