

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 14, 2015

**Annex to U.S. - Gulf Cooperation Council Camp David Joint Statement**

President Obama and Heads of Delegations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states came to Camp David to reaffirm and deepen their close partnership, make progress on a shared set of priorities, confront common threats, and work to resolve, or at a minimum de-escalate, regional crises and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. The United States has worked with its GCC partners over six decades on matters of mutual interest, including confronting and deterring external aggression against allies and partners; ensuring the free flow of energy and commerce, and freedom of navigation in international waters; dismantling terrorist networks that threaten the safety of their people; and preventing the development or use of weapons of mass destruction. In recent years, we have made significant progress, under the framework of the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, to work cooperatively on security and political issues of regional importance. Today, the United States and GCC member states recognize the need to consolidate and develop this relationship based on friendship and cooperation to more effectively address the challenges we face.

At Camp David, the leaders of the GCC states and President Obama reaffirmed the longstanding U.S.-GCC partnership and pledged to further enhance the relationship between the United States and GCC member states. This partnership is based on a shared commitment to the stability and prosperity of the region, mutual interest in confronting the threat of terrorism and other destabilizing activities, and resolving regional conflicts through political means. The leaders underscored their mutual commitment to the U.S.-GCC strategic partnership to provide for closer relations in all fields, including defense and security cooperation, and to develop collective approaches to regional issues in order to advance their shared interest in stability and prosperity.

The U.S.-GCC strategic partnership involves both enhanced cooperation between the United States and the GCC collectively and between the United States and individual GCC member states in accordance with their respective capacities and interests. It establishes a common understanding on mutual assurances and heightened cooperation, including efforts to build collective capacity to address the threats of terrorism and other regional security threats.

As part of this new partnership, the leaders of the United States and the GCC decided on the following steps to enhance their cooperation:

## Security Cooperation

The U.S.-GCC security relationship remains a major pillar of our strategic partnership and a cornerstone of regional stability. Our existing cooperation, including basing, information sharing, joint military exercises, and provision of sophisticated military equipment and training are a testament to the sustained value we place on our shared security interests. The leaders decided at Camp David to enhance security cooperation in the following areas:

**Security Assurances:** At the core of the partnership is our shared interest in a region that is peaceful and prosperous. At Camp David, we have recommitted to the importance of this vision. President Obama affirmed that 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.

The United States and GCC member states also decided to set up a senior working group to pursue the development of rapid response capabilities, taking into account the Arab League's concept of a "unified Arab force," to mount or contribute in a coordinated way to counter-terrorism, peacekeeping and stabilization operations in the region. The United States and GCC member states also affirmed their strong support for the efforts of the P5+1 to reach a deal with Iran by June 30, 2015, that would verifiably ensure that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon, noting that such a deal would represent a significant contribution to regional security.

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.

**Ballistic missile defense:** GCC member states committed to develop a region-wide ballistic missile defense capability, including through the development of a ballistic missile early warning system. The United States will help conduct a study of GCC ballistic missile defense architecture and offered technical assistance in the development of a GCC-wide Ballistic Missile Early Warning System. All participants decided to

undertake a senior leader tabletop exercise to examine improved regional ballistic missile defense cooperation.

**Military Exercises and Training Partnership:** Building on their extensive existing program of military exercises and training activities, the United States and GCC member states decided to establish a new, recurring, large-scale exercise emphasizing interoperability against asymmetric threats, such as terrorist or cyber-attacks, or other tactics associated with hybrid warfare. The United States will also dispatch a military team to GCC capitals to discuss and decide on ways to increase the frequency of Special Operations Forces counter-terrorism cooperation and training.

**Arms Transfers:** In order to ensure that GCC member states are able to respond quickly to current and future threats, the United States and GCC member states will take steps necessary to ensure arms transfers are fast-tracked to GCC member states contributing to regional security. To that end, President Obama will dispatch a senior team to the region in the coming weeks to discuss specific modalities. The United States and the GCC will work together to set up a dedicated Foreign Military Sales procurement office to process GCC-wide sales, streamlining third-party transfers, and exploring ways the United States could accelerate the acquisition and fielding of key capabilities.

**Maritime Security:** To protect shared maritime security interests and freedom of navigation, the GCC member states decided to increase their participation in international maritime task forces on counter-terrorism and counter-piracy. They also decided to take further steps to exchange information about and, as appropriate, interdict illicit arms shipments to conflict areas. The United States committed to provide additional training and technical assistance for coastal security, protection of offshore infrastructure, and counter-smuggling.

### **Counter-terrorism**

Building on a shared commitment to address the acute threats posed by Al-Qa'ida, ISIL/DAESH and their affiliates, the United States and GCC member states will pursue initiatives to further build their capacity to track, investigate, and prosecute those engaged in terrorist activities within their borders, as well as to contain and deter transit, financing and recruitment by violent extremists. The United States and the GCC will hold a second U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum Working Group on Counter-terrorism and Border Security to follow up on previous efforts to cooperate on border security, countering the financing of terrorism, cybersecurity, and critical infrastructure protection. Leaders also decided to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation in the following areas:

**Foreign Terrorist Fighters:** The United States and GCC member states will bolster their joint efforts to identify and share information on suspected foreign terrorist fighters

(FTF). In response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), the United States and GCC member states will work together to implement traveler screening systems and enhanced biometrics collection capability, and share best practices to make it more difficult for terrorists to avoid detection at any GCC airport.

**Counter-Terrorist Financing:** The United States and GCC member states will increase efforts to cut off terrorist financing, including through enhanced intelligence exchange and enforcement efforts to freeze assets of individuals and entities designated under relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, especially in the region. The United States will organize a public-private sector banking dialogue in the fall of 2015 to facilitate discussions on anti-money laundering and terrorist financing.

**Critical Infrastructure and Cybersecurity:** The United States and GCC member states will consult on cybersecurity initiatives, share expertise and best practices on cyber policy, strategy, and incident response. The United States will provide GCC member states with additional security assistance, set up military cybersecurity exercises and national policy workshops, and improve information-sharing.

**Countering Violent Extremism:** Recognizing the need to counter recruitment by extremist groups from at-risk youth and vulnerable communities, the United States and GCC member states will provide financial support for multilateral initiatives to counter violent extremism (CVE) aimed at strengthening resilience in vulnerable communities, including support for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. In addition, GCC leaders offered to host a CVE religious leaders conference aimed at boosting efforts that will expose the true nature of ISIL/DAESH and other terrorist organizations.

**Counter-proliferation:** The GCC member states determined to accelerate efforts against the proliferation of WMD, the means of their delivery, as well as advanced conventional weapons, by enhancing national controls on proliferation-sensitive items and technologies.

### **Regional Security**

The United States and GCC member states reaffirmed their shared interest in de-escalating regional tensions, resolving regional armed civil conflicts, and addressing the critical humanitarian needs of populations affected by conflict. The leaders made clear their belief that the conflicts in the region, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, are eroding state structures, creating ungoverned spaces, and promoting sectarianism, all of which serve as fodder for terrorists and other extremist groups and directly threaten their shared security interests.

The leaders set out core principles that, in their view, must govern efforts to resolve regional armed civil conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya, including:

- the respect for state sovereignty;
- a shared recognition that there is no military solution to the regions' civil conflicts, and that they can only be resolved through political and peaceful means; and
- the importance of inclusive governance; and respect for, and protection of, minorities and human rights.

The leaders also held in-depth discussions on the most pressing conflicts in the region and steps they decided should be taken to help resolve them.

**Iran:** The United States and GCC member states oppose and will cooperate in countering Iran's destabilizing activities in the region and continue consultations on how to enhance the region's security architecture. As part of this effort, the United States will work in partnership with GCC member states to build their capacity to defend themselves against external aggression, including in terms of air and missile defense, maritime and cybersecurity, as GCC member states take steps to increase the interoperability of their military forces and continue to better integrate their advanced capabilities. At the same time, the United States and GCC member states reaffirmed their willingness to develop normalized relations with Iran should it cease its destabilizing activities and their belief that such relations would contribute to regional security.

**Yemen:** The United States and GCC member states expressed deep concern over the situation in Yemen and its destabilizing impact on the region. Leaders 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. Leaders emphasized the importance of working with the international community to prevent the provision of weapons to designated Yemeni parties or those acting on their behalf or at their direction in contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

The United States also reaffirmed its assurance to help GCC member states defend themselves against external threats emanating from Yemen and emphasized its particular support for Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity. The leaders underscored that

Yemen's political transition should be in accordance with the GCC Initiative, National Dialogue outcomes and UNSC resolutions. Furthermore, leaders stressed the imperative of collective efforts to counter the shared threat from Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, which is exploiting the crisis.

**Iraq:** The United States and GCC member states reiterated their support for the Iraqi government in its efforts to degrade and defeat ISIL/DAESH. 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. GCC member states recommitted themselves to reestablishing a diplomatic presence in Baghdad and to working with the Iraqi government to support efforts against ISIL/DAESH, including in Anbar and other provinces.

**Libya:** Noting growing concern about political deadlock at a time when violent extremism is expanding, the United States and GCC member states decided to coordinate their efforts more closely on Libya's political transition. They will press all parties to reach a political agreement based on proposals put forward by the UN and to urgently establish a national unity government before Ramadan, and stand ready to substantially increase their assistance to such a government. Leaders committed to seek to stem illicit arms flows into Libya, and called on all Libyans to focus on countering the growing terrorist presence, including that of ISIL/DAESH, instead of fighting their political rivals.

**Syria:** The United States and GCC member states reaffirmed the importance of a genuine, sustainable political solution as soon as possible to end the war in Syria and prevent the further suffering of its people. All affirmed that Assad had lost all legitimacy and had no role in Syria's future. They affirmed their commitment to working towards a post-Assad government that is independent, inclusive, and protects the rights of minority groups. The United States and the GCC member states committed to increasing support to the moderate opposition. GCC member states decided to intensify efforts to combat extremist groups in Syria, notably by shutting down private financial flows or any form of assistance to ISIL/DAESH, Al Nusrah Front, and other violent extremist groups, and to intensify efforts to prevent the movement of foreign terrorist fighters in and out of Syria. They expressed their determination to work together to mobilize the international community for post-Assad reconstruction of Syria. All affirmed their commitment to continue to support Syria's neighbors as they face the immense challenges posed by the ongoing conflict and to work together to strengthen the stability and security of these countries.

**Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:** 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.

**Lebanon:** 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.

#### **U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum:**

The leaders pledged to further deepen U.S.-GCC relations on these and other issues, to build an even stronger, enduring, and comprehensive strategic partnership and work together for the same, aimed at enhancing regional stability and prosperity.

To ensure continuity of those efforts, and speedy implementation of decisions expressed in the Camp David Joint Statement of 14 May 2015, they directed their respective administrations to strengthen the framework of the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, to include more frequent ministerial and technical meetings for foreign affairs, defense, security, economic and other areas relevant to the Forum’s activities. 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.