

G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting *(Moscow, 29 June 2006)*

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

G8 Foreign Ministers met in Moscow on 29 June 2006 to discuss a range of global and regional issues of primary importance to the international community. The meeting focussed on Iran's nuclear programme and on the Middle East Peace Process. We exchanged views on issues of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, strengthening peacekeeping capacity in Africa, G8 partnership with the BMENA region, as well as discussed recent developments in Iraq, Afghanistan, Western Balkans/Kosovo, Sudan/Darfur, Northern Uganda, East Timor, Haiti.

Iran

We reiterate our commitment to a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, which remains a source of international concern, as highlighted by the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the Presidential Statement of the UN Security Council.

We endorse the Vienna Declaration as delivered by Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett on June 1. The Vienna meeting of the "six" resulted in far reaching proposals agreed by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and High Representative of the European Union for a long-term comprehensive agreement with Iran based on mutual respect and the establishment of international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. An agreement of this sort would allow the Iranian people to enjoy the benefits of modern civil nuclear power and would bring Iran many other long-term political and economic advantages.

We are disappointed in the absence of an official Iranian response to this positive proposal. We expect to hear a clear and substantive Iranian response to these proposals at the planned meeting of Javier Solana, the High Representative of the European Union, and Dr. Ali Larijani, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, on 5 July and to bring these discussions to a rapid conclusion.

We understand that Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and High Representative of the European Union will assess the situation before mid July.

Counter-Terrorism and Narcotics

We considered the draft G8 Declaration on Counter-Terrorism with the annexed G8 Statement on Strengthening the UN's Counter-Terrorism Program and endorsed its submission for consideration by the G8 Leaders at the St-Petersburg Summit. We welcomed the results of the International Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking Routes from Afghanistan that took place on 26-28 June 2006 in Moscow.

The Middle East

We reiterated our commitment for a negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. The G8 common goal remains the creation of a viable, democratic and sovereign Israel and Palestine living in peace and security side-by-side within internationally recognized borders.

Foreign Ministers acknowledge democratic, fair and free parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories in January 2006. We call on the Government of the Palestinian Authority to commit itself to the principles of non-violence, recognition of the right of Israel to exist, and acceptance of the previous Israeli/Palestinian agreements consistent with the Quartet statements as of January 30, May 9, and June 17 2006.

We welcomed Prime Minister Olmert's and President Abbas' pledge to negotiations and urge both parties to avoid unilateral measures which prejudice the final status of the Palestinian territories.

We call on the Palestinian government to bring terrorist violence to an end and to take immediate measures to liberate the abducted Israeli soldier. We condemn the extremist groups responsible for these acts and all those who jeopardise the prospects for peace.

We call on Israel to exercise utmost restraint in the current crisis. The detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature raises particular concerns.

We call upon all parties to protect all civilians and not to add to their suffering. We urge them to assume their full responsibility to restore security, allowing for the resumption of the peace process and for returning to the Road Map.

Concerns were expressed over the severe humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories. We reiterated firm commitment to continue providing assistance to the Palestinian people. Foreign Ministers expressed support for the temporary international mechanism and in this regard noted the Quartet Statement of June 17, which endorsed this mechanism, and encourage other donors, including other countries, to consider early and substantial contributions.

We agreed that movement and access are key, and in this regard we call on both parties to fully implement the Movement and Access Agreement of 15 November 2005.

Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their support for the restoration of the Israeli/Palestinian political dialogue in the spirit of the Roadmap and based on the UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515.

Western Balkans

We reaffirmed that the Contact Group remains actively involved in the Kosovo future status process with UNSC Resolution 1244, the Guiding Principles and the 31 January London Ministerial Statement being the basis of its activities. We expressed our support to the efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, which are within the scope of the abovementioned documents.

We welcomed the launch of direct Belgrade – Pristina talks and in this regard we urge the parties, including the Kosovo Serbs, to negotiate in good faith and make every effort to reach a negotiated agreement. We underlined that Kosovo must remain multi-ethnic. The Kosovo leadership should pay particular attention to implementing the standards for national minorities defined by the international community.

We note that the UN Security Council remains actively seized of the matter.

We also agreed on the necessity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue constitutional reforms.

Korean Peninsula

Foreign Ministers reiterated the G8 commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and expressed full support for the Six Party Talks. We urge North Korea to promptly return to the Talks without preconditions and to co-operate in implementing the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005 in good faith. We also discussed other security and humanitarian issues, including abductions, in North Korea, and urge the DPRK to address these concerns of the international community, and to respect existing security commitments.

African Peacekeeping Capacity Building

Foreign Ministers noted the report on strengthening Africa peacekeeping capacity, agreed upon at the meeting of the G8 officials and those from other key donor partners held in Moscow on June 8, 2006, and reaffirmed previous G8 commitments in support of the efforts of the African states to build a peaceful and stable Africa. We acknowledged progressive implementation of decisions taken at the Sea-Island and Gleneagles Summits. The G8 has been consistently increasing its contribution to the African peacekeeping capacity building, including through provision of coordinated technical assistance to the creation of African Stand-by Force as well as through setting up and making functional national peacekeeping training capacities regional training centers for African peacekeepers both in Africa and in other parts of the world (including the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units) in Vicenza, Italy.

We noted the steps taken so far bring us closer to the implementation of the Sea- Island commitments to train and equip about 75.000 peacekeepers mainly from Africa. We acknowledged the need to enhance African Logistics capacity, including through provision of equipment, equipment depots, and support for a transport and logistics arrangement.

Cooperation and future action in stabilization and reconstruction

Foreign Ministers discussed the draft G8 declaration of Cooperation and Future Action in Stabilization and Reconstruction, proposed by the United States. We agreed that the rapidly changing international environment and evolution of new threats and challenges demands more agile, adaptable responses from the international community. We underlined that the UN and its Security Council as well as the newly established Peacebuilding commission are primary actors in international peacekeeping and S&R operations. We welcomed the US Initiative and will remain seized of the matter.

BMENA

Foreign Ministers reiterated the G8 adherence to the comprehensive partnership with BMENA with a view to promoting peace, stability, freedom and democracy for all the peoples and nations in the region in accordance with the commitments made at the Sea-Island and in Gleneagles.

We agreed that the basis of our cooperation with the BMENA countries – peer-to-peer dialogue in the spirit of mutual respect for the cultural and religious peculiarities, social patterns, and traditions.

Foreign Ministers welcomed the commitments on modernisation and reform made at the Arab League Summits in Tunisia, Algeria and Khartoum, as well as recognized the role of the “Forum for the Future” as the central mechanism for sustaining the dialogue between the G8 and the BMENA region.

Iraq

Foreign Ministers reiterated the G8 commitment to Iraq’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We expressed the G8 support for the permanent Iraqi Government, commend its reconciliation initiative and urge it to continue active efforts towards achieving national accord, which is critical for improvement of domestic political situation, strengthening the public order and security, as well as for Iraq’s sustained socio-economic development.

We call on the international community, in particular the UN, international financial institutions, Iraq's neighbours and regional governments to respond to this new era in Iraq's development by offering broad support for Iraq’s new government and its people including in responding to the Iraqi government’s proposal for an International Compact.

Foreign Ministers strongly condemned the barbarian killing of the five members of the Russian Embassy in Iraq and demanded capture and fair punishment for the culprits of this villainy. This tragic event underlines the importance of improving security for all in Iraq.

Afghanistan

Foreign Ministers welcomed the successful holding of National Assembly and Provincial Council elections and formation of a new Government, and underlined the G8 support for effective implementation of the commitments made by the international community and the Afghan Government within the framework of the London Conference on Afghanistan, including the Afghanistan Compact, and taking into account that more responsibility for providing security, political and socio-economic recovery falls on the Afghan Government. Afghanistan can be fully confident that the G8 will continue providing all-round support and assistance to its formation of peaceful, independent and prosperous state, without taliban heritage, terrorism and narcotics.

We welcomed ISAF's expansion southward, to deal with ongoing security challenges, and call on regional states to contribute constructively. We also expressed support for the UN's continued role, including more robust monitoring and coordination. We condemn attacks by Taliban and Al-Qaeda terrorists on innocent civilians, Afghan Forces and officials and international military and civilian personnel. Foreign Ministers reiterated the G8 commitment to helping Afghanistan with governance, human rights and the rule of law.

Sudan

Foreign Ministers expressed support for the peacebuilding process in Sudan on the basis of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, political settlement of the conflict in Darfur and negotiated solution to other problems in Sudan.

We stressed the need to provide assistance to Sudan in order to ensure its post-conflict recovery and improvement of the humanitarian situation in the country, and in this regard we call on donors to fully implement their commitments made at the conferences in Oslo (April 2005) and in Paris (March 2006).

We welcomed the Abuja Agreement of May 5, 2006 as the basis for political settlement in Darfur. We also stressed the importance to ensure a sustainable peace in the region, and to this end we call on all parties to implement this Agreement, including ending of all atrocities, and urge all forces and groups operating in Darfur to join fully in its implementation. Foreign Ministers underlined the need for the international community to provide additional support to the AU to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities under Abuja. In view of the last decision adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council and the recent UNSC resolution 1679, we committed to do our utmost to implement these steps aimed at transforming the mandate of the AMIS to the UN-led peace-keeping operation in Darfur. We welcomed the joint AU/UN Technical Assessment Mission in Darfur. We call upon the Sudanese government to co-operate. We also call on the governments in Chad and Sudan to prevent clashes in the border districts, provide for the protection of the refugee camps in Chad, maintain good neighbourly relations and resolve emerging issues through dialogue and co-operation.

Foreign Ministers expressed support for the negotiation process between the Sudanese Government and "Eastern Front" aimed at a comprehensive political settlement in Eastern Sudan.

Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement

Foreign Ministers affirmed the support of the G8 for the mediation efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Russia, United States, France). We emphasized the need for the soonest agreement on basic principles of a peaceful settlement of the conflict to be reached still in 2006. We call on Azerbaijan and Armenia to show political will with the aim to reach an agreement this year and prepare their peoples for peace and not for war.

Northern Uganda

Concerns were expressed over the current situation in Northern Uganda, its serious humanitarian consequences. Foreign Ministers welcomed the steps taken by the Government of Uganda to improve the situation, including the recent creation of the Joint Monitoring Committee and cooperation with the Governments of the neighbouring DRC and Sudan in tackling the criminal acts of the Lord's Resistance Army, and put an end to the humanitarian crisis in Northern Uganda. We call on the international community, including the UN, to intensify efforts in providing support to overcome humanitarian problems, including assistance to the implementation of the Government's programme of resettlement of IDPs and to DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration).

Haiti

Foreign Ministers discussed the situation in Haiti, noted certain improvements after residential elections, as well as expressed concern about the persisting difficult humanitarian situation and security environment. We reiterated the G8 support for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) including its renewed and strengthened mandate and reaffirmed that long-term international commitment is required. We urge the international community to support the pledging conference on July 25 in Haiti.

East Timor

Foreign Ministers discussed the situation in East Timor, expressed their concerns and emphasized the need to help the Government of East Timor to restore stability, law and order in the country. In this regard we note the significant contribution and the quick response by Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal. The International community should expeditiously respond to the flash appeal of OCHA issued on June 12, 2006. We emphasized a major constructive role of the United Nations Office in Timor Leste (UNOTIL).

Other issues

There was a discussion on the issues related to Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria and Belarus, raised by some of the ministers.

We also discussed UN embargoes violations through illicit air transport of SALW.