

Gulf Cooperation Council Joint Statement at 33rd Summit in Bahrain, December 2012.

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Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Abdullatif bin Rashid Al- Zayani read this joint statement to conclude the 33rd GCC Summit in Bahrain on December 25, 2012.

The Supreme Council welcomed the opening of the International Excellence Center for Curbing Violent Extremism (Hidayah) in Abu Dhabi where experts and expertise are pooled from various countries in order to combat all sorts and phenomena of violent extremism.

The Supreme Council expressed gratitude and appreciation for the efforts of the consultative body and ratified its views pertaining to youth strategy, boosting of the spirit of citizenship, the strategy of employment in the GCC states in the governmental and private sectors and referring these views to the relevant ministerial committees in order to set up implementation mechanism for this purpose.

The Supreme Council decided that the Consultative Body shall assume the following tasks during its sixteenth session:

- 1- Studying the creation of a regulatory authority for food and drug in the GCC states.
- 2- Studying the creation of a joint GCC specialized center for public and preventative health .
- 3- Studying and appraisal of the media strategy of the GCC states and developing it.
- 4- Mechanisms to combat corruption and remove obstacles before development in the GCC states and its relation with the set of values.
- 5- Assessing the reality of children's cultural programs and how to develop them.

The Supreme Council instructed implementation of what has already been agreed during joint meetings with countries and economic blocs in order to achieve common interests of the GCC and its partners.

The Supreme Council reiterated its firm stance as per previous statements rejecting the Iranian occupation of the UAE's three Islands namely: (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa), asserting the right to supremacy on the three islands and regional territorial waters, airspace and continental shelf and free economic zone which form an integral and inseparable part of the United Arab Emirates. The Supreme Council expressed sorrow because no positive results could be reached through communications with the Islamic Republic of Iran as to culminate in a solution for the issue of the three UAE's islands so as to contribute into boosting the security and stability of the region.

Any acts or practices implemented by Iran on the three islands will be deemed null and void and should not entail any change in legal or historic status of the Islands which confirm the right of supremacy of the United Arab Emirates over its three Islands.

The Supreme Council did not rule out considering all peaceful means which could lead to reinstating the right of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, inviting the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the UAE's efforts to solve the issue through direct negotiations or resorting to the International Court of Justice.

The Supreme Council rejected and denounced continual Iranian interference in the GCC states' internal affairs and urged Iran to immediately stop these practices for good and to refrain from policies and acts which increase tension or threaten regional security and stability. The Supreme

Council emphasized the need for Iran's full compliance with the principles of good neighborliness and mutual respect and non-intervention in internal affairs and solving disputes by peaceful means without resorting to force or threats.

The Supreme Council asserted that the Iranian nuclear program does not only threaten regional security and stability but also international security and stability, urging Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (the IAEA), and renewed the GCC firm stance regarding the significant need for Iran's compliance in order to make the Middle East region, including the Arabian Gulf region, free from weapons of mass destruction as well as from nuclear weapons, praising international efforts aimed to solve the Iranian nuclear program through peaceful means.

The Supreme Council affirmed the right of countries, including Iran, to harnessing peaceful nuclear energy on condition of responsibility of the operating country for the safety of its nuclear facility whilst taking into consideration environmental safety in the large geographic region and the need to fully comply with standards of safety and security and non-nuclear proliferation. Now that Iran began operating the Bu Shehr reactor, the GCC countries urge Iran to maintain full transparency vis-a-vis this matter and to join the agreement on nuclear safety and enforce maximum safety standards in its facilities.

The Supreme Council reviewed latest developments on the Syrian arena, under continually deteriorating conditions and the human suffering of the brotherly Syrian people. The Council expressed utmost pain and grief towards continuous bloodshed and loss of innocent lives, destruction of cities and infrastructures which necessitates a speedy political power transition. The Council urged the international community to move seriously in order to promptly stop these massacres and blatant violations which contradict with all heavenly commandments, international laws and human values.

The Supreme Council asserted its support to the Syrian National Coalition which is the sole lawful representative of the Syrian people formed in Doha in November 2012 under the kind patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa the Emir of the State of Qatar and auspices of the Arab League, urging the international community to urgently provide all sorts of humanitarian assistance to the brotherly Syrian people who suffer from harsh living conditions.

The Supreme Council expressed its support to the mission of the UN Arab Envoy to Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, provided that this gains consensus from the UN Security Council especially its permanent members, in accordance with the powers and responsibilities of the UN Security Council in maintaining international security and stability.

The Supreme Council explored latest developments of the Palestinian issue, asserting that permanent fair and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved except after Israel's full withdrawal from Arab territories it has occupied since 1976 in Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and Lebanon and the establishing of an independent Palestinian State whose capital should be in eastern Al-Quds, which are the same principles embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant UN resolutions.

The Supreme Council congratulated the brotherly Palestinian people on winning the status of a UN nonmember observer state, and hoped that this will be a step forward towards creating the Palestinian State with its capital in eastern Al-Quds, urging the Palestinian factions to unite their ranks and end the divisions in order to serve the highest interest of the Palestinian people.

The Council condemned Israeli colonial policies aimed to change the geographic and demographic condition on Palestinian territories which constitute inhumane unethical crime and a serious breach of international laws which should not entail any legal impact in favor of Israel.

The Council welcomed the ceasefire in Gaza brokered by the Arab Republic of Egypt and called to boost this agreement in order to avoid any recurrence of hostile Israeli acts and urged the world community to ensure provision and delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to the besieged people of Gaza Strip.