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Counter-ISIL/Da'esh Defense Ministerial Joint Statement on Counter-ISIL/Da'esh Cooperation

Brussels, Feb. 11, 2016

The text of the following statement was released by the defense ministers of Belgium, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States following a Counter-ISIL Defense Ministerial hosted by the United States, in Brussels¹. They were joined by senior representatives from the three nations who provide or intend to provide forces or other support to the campaign, Australia, the Czech Republic, and Singapore.

Today in Brussels, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter hosted a meeting of defense ministers from countries contributing troops to the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL/Da'esh to discuss the military campaign plan, to take stock of recent efforts to accelerate the Counter-ISIL/Da'esh operation in Iraq and Syria, to consider a shared approach against ISIL/Da'esh's global ambitions, and to ensure the protection of our citizens. We paid tribute to the efforts of all Iraqi Security Forces, including the Peshmerga and Sunni tribal forces, and moderate Syrian opposition forces who are fighting ISIL/Da'esh and have caused numerous tactical defeats of ISIL/Da'esh in recent months, and we acknowledged the Coalition Force Commander's assessment that these successes mark the transition of the Counter-ISIL/Da'esh campaign. However, we also acknowledged that significant work remains to be done to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIL/Da'esh and the restoration of stability in Iraq and Syria. We called on those states playing a counterproductive role in the fight against ISIL/Da'esh and the Syrian peace process to play a more constructive role.

Ministers provided broad support for the objectives of the Counter-ISIL/Da'esh Campaign Plan and reaffirmed our governments' unwavering commitment to work together against ISIL/Da'esh. We also agreed, as a matter of urgency, to accelerate and intensify the campaign, in order to deliver a lasting defeat to this barbaric organization as quickly as possible. We also recognized that recent battlefield successes provide an opportunity to gather additional momentum in our campaign as we enter the next phase of dismantling ISIL/Da'esh's operating capability throughout Iraq and Syria. To that end, coalition members highlighted the importance of turning ISIL/Da'esh's purported strengths into its greatest weaknesses. Coalition members underlined the importance of collapsing its two power centers in Raqqa and Mosul and continuing to target its underlying infrastructure, including its financial capability.

We took note of the substantial resources provided by coalition members that have enabled progress in the military campaign, and thanked those nations that have, from the start of the campaign, demonstrated leadership and support. We also welcomed the many countries that have increased their contributions since the horrific attacks in Paris, Turkey, and other locations since the last quarter of 2015. Ministers recognized the nations that have either joined the air campaign, increased commitments or extended operations to Syria and those that committed to restart flights in the near future. Ministers also noted that nations have committed additional

trainers, Special Operations Forces, personnel recovery assets, and additional material support. Ministers further noted that other nations were embarking on national conversations to increase in one or more of these categories, including additional police trainers to expand the current police training effort led by Italy.

In addition to what has been provided, we agreed on an enduring set of requirements that will be needed to expand efforts against ISIL/Da'esh -- and welcomed the Coalition Chiefs' of Defense Conference and the Coalition Force Generation Conference taking place in the next four weeks where these requirements will be explored in detail.

As part of that discussion, we agreed to review regularly the coalition's campaign plan and the progress in its implementation. To that end, ministers agreed to meet again before the end of the year.

We acknowledged that while the military campaign is an essential part of our overall effort to defeat and destroy ISIL/Da'esh, on its own is insufficient to ensure lasting success. We are committed to ensuring the coherence of our military actions with the comprehensive activities in the non-military lines of effort to set the conditions for sustainable political stability in the region.

We thank all of our partners who are helping us advance the military campaign against ISIL/Da'esh and its economic and industrial infrastructure. We recognize in particular the heroism, dedication, and steadfastness of all Iraqi Security Forces, including the Peshmerga and Sunni tribal forces, and moderate Syrian opposition forces who are fighting ISIL/Da'esh. We also thank the men and women deployed with coalition forces who are playing their part to degrade and defeat ISIL/Da'esh. We encourage others to contribute and join us in this noble effort.