

Statement by H. E. Dr. M. Javad Zarif
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Before
the meeting on the International Compact with Iraq

New York, 16 March, 2007
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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Secretary General,

Allow me to begin by extending our appreciation to you and to H.E Mr. Adel Abdul-Mahdi, the distinguished Vice-President of Iraq, for convening this important meeting and also for your informative statements. I also wish to thank Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Iraq, for briefing us today.

**Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,**

In the past several years, despite all the daunting challenges, the people of Iraq have been relentless in their endeavors to take their destiny in their own hands and to pursue their aspirations for a better future, resisting terrorist campaign to bring them disillusionment

and despondency. We commend the people of Iraq as we note that the benchmarks endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1546 for the political process of the country have been successfully met and a broad-based and constitutionally-elected Government with the participation of all segments of the Iraqi population has been established.

In the past several months, we have noted the serious efforts and concrete steps by Prime Minister Al-Maliki and his Government to promote national reconciliation and to improve the security situation in Iraq. Despite all these efforts, terrorists, insurgents, criminal groups and those who use violence and terrorism as a bargaining leverage have also redoubled their crimes to render the endeavors of the Iraqi people and Government ineffective.

We are alarmed by the increasing sectarian violence in Iraq, which is the legacy of the terrorist chief Zarqawi and which should have been buried with him. Preservation of Iraq's unity and restoration of its stability require that all Iraqi political forces work together to promote constructive engagement and cooperation among all segments of the Iraqi society from every religious or ethnic affiliation. It also requires positive regional contribution and we pledge our determination to cooperate actively in combating this dangerous menace which has long term implications for the region and beyond.

Undoubtedly, terrorist acts against civilians, deliberate targeting of religious sites and gatherings, abduction and killing of foreign diplomats and nationals and the spillover of insecurity into Iraq's neighboring countries as a result of the actions taken by terrorist that have found safe heaven in Iraq, are among the major challenges that mark the situation in Iraq today.

Mr. Secretary General,

The international community, led by the United Nations, should redouble its efforts to help the people of Iraq at this very demanding time to tackle their problems and to rebuild their devastated country. Such efforts should be directed to help enhance the capability of the Iraqi Government to effectively run the whole country, including its security. We are of the view that a clear timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq will dry up the fertile grounds for violence and insurgency and is thus imperative as it will contribute to the efforts of the Iraqi people and Government to surmount the insecurity and violence ravaging their country.

We agree with the view that the neighboring countries will benefit from stability in Iraq as they will immensely suffer from its insecurity. In fact, the region's best interest lies in a democratic and prosperous Iraq at peace with itself and with its neighbors. We have unreservedly supported the Iraqi political process over the past several years and have spared no efforts to assist Iraqis in their quest for peace, national harmony and reconstruction. Our efforts to help the Iraqi Government implement the International

Compact will continue unabated and our support in the endeavors to build Iraq will remain unreserved.

In our view, the International Compact with Iraq is a significant initiative that will establish a new partnership between Iraq and the international community. It will provide an opportunity for the countries in the region and beyond to be involved in Iraq's reconstruction as the Iraqis embark on their journey to development, economic growth, stability and security.

Iran has taken significant steps at the highest level to strengthen partnership and cooperation with Iraq. The two countries have established at the highest levels, a joint cooperation commission headed by Iraq's Prime Minister and Iran's first vice president. We have already implemented many short term programs and several long term projects aimed at promoting economic cooperation between the two countries in the areas of development, energy, education, health, industry, transportation, investment, trade, tourism and financing have been concluded or are being discussed with the Iraqi Government. Among the implemented or close to completion projects are several electrical power lines, as well as emergency provision of basic necessities such as heating oil, gas, electricity, medical items and the like.

The two countries are also following up agreements in different fields such as connecting rail ways, resuming passenger flights, laying down two oil pipe lines, and setting up further electricity transmission lines from Iran to Iraq. Iran has also pledged to grant \$10 million to Iraq's Reconstruction Fund. A line of credit of one billion dollars has also been allocated to cover the implementation of economic plans.

Iran's support for Iraq is also displayed through its active participation in the regional and international gatherings on Iraq, including the recent meeting held in Baghdad. In this context, Iran attaches great importance to the holding of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Iraq's neighboring countries in Baghdad in the near future.

I should not conclude without referring to a matter of high concern. The abduction of five Iranian consular officers by the US military forces in Erbil on 11 January 2007 and the abduction of another Iranian diplomat in Baghdad on 4 February 2007 not only constitute a flagrant violation of the basic principles of international law, but also a major impediment to Iraqi efforts to restore stability and normalcy and build their country. Such practices should cease and they should be released immediately.

I wish to close, Mr. Secretary General, by reiterating that as they go through this difficult juncture towards peace, stability and development, the people of Iraq will always find us beside them, offering our sincere cooperation and unqualified support.

Thank you