Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Meeting of Senior Officials of the 'London 11' Core Group of the Friends of Syria, 10 November 2014

2014-11-10

Representatives from the ‘London 11’ Core Group of the Friends of Syria met today with Syrian National Coalition President Hadi al-Bahra to demonstrate collective and united support for the moderate opposition led by the National Coalition, as they fight a two-front war resisting the brutality of the Assad regime and fighting extremists including Daesh.

The Core Group underscored their commitment to a genuine political transition based on the Geneva Communiqué. It is the essential basis for addressing the legitimate grievances of the Syrian people, and ultimately defeating Daesh and the extremist ideology they promote. The moderate groups in Syria are a vital element of both a future political settlement and the fight against Daesh. We agreed to co-operate closely with and support UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura as he develops his plans. These should include ways and means to bring about a political settlement in accordance with the Geneva Communique. The Group affirms the importance of preserving Syria’s territorial integrity.

The Core Group remains gravely concerned in particular about the situation in Aleppo and condemns the Syrian regime’s attempts to besiege the city and threaten the safety of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Syrian civilians. The regime must end its air attacks. We also condemn the attacks against moderate groups in Idlib by Jabhat Al-Nusra and other groups. We agreed to step up efforts to support moderate forces to resist the regime and Daesh across all of Syria.

The Core Group emphasises the role of international coalition airstrikes in degrading Daesh networks that have sought to hijack the revolution, threaten Syria’s national identity and target moderate Syrian forces.

We agreed to strengthen further the National Coalition, the Interim Government and affiliated groups, in order to help stabilise areas under their control and deliver services and protection to the Syrian people. We call on them to work for the unity of all moderate opposition groups and fighters in the interests of the Syrian people.

The Core Group underlined their continued support for the US-led train and equip programme for moderate elements of the opposition armed groups which would constitute part of comprehensive efforts towards strengthening their presence on the ground against

extremism and tyranny. Many members underlined their commitment to contribute to this programme.

The Core Group is deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation and refugee crisis which threaten stability in the region. They underlined the need to further increase and improve humanitarian aid and access to help those most in need, including through renewing the mandate in UNSCR 2165. They welcomed the commitment to strengthen support for the neighbouring countries as expressed in the Berlin Declaration of 28 October 2014.

Recognising the Syrian regime’s contempt for a negotiated political settlement and its continued violence against its own people, we agreed further to strengthen pressure on and measures against the regime, including to do all we can to restrict its access to oil and military hardware.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meeting-of-senior-officials-of-the-london-11-core-group-of-the-friends-of-syria-10-november-2014