News Release

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Kissinger Calls on United States and Russia to Cooperate on Solution for Syria and Cautions Israel over Unilateral Action against Iran

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- America and Russia must cooperate in defining joint objectives to solve the tragedy emerging in Syria
- Unilateral action by Israel against the Iranian nuclear threat would be a desperate last resort
- Lasting peace in the Middle East requires significant sacrifices from Israel and reciprocity from Arabs
- The theme of the 43rd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting is *Resilient Dynamism.*
  For more information, visit http://wef.ch/Davos

Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 24 January 2013 – In a wide ranging address to business leaders participating in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Henry Kissinger, Chairman, Kissinger Associates, USA, called on the United States and Russia to work together to solve the crisis in Syria. He advocated “an American-Russian understanding as a first step towards defining what the objective is”, adding that “the Syrian problem would best be dealt with internationally by Russia and America not making it a contest of national interest”.

The Syrian conflict, initially seen as a fight of democracy against dictatorship, has transformed into a conflict between various ethnic groups, leaving the international community with a dilemma: “The outside world finds that if it intervenes militarily, it will be in the middle of a vast ethnic conflict; and if it doesn’t intervene militarily, it will be caught in a humanitarian tragedy,” said Kissinger. While a number of outcomes are possible – Assad staying in office, a total Sunni victory, or an emergence of a loose federation of various ethnic groups – what is clear is that “the more the outside world competes, the worse it gets,” concluded Kissinger.

Turning to the threat of nuclear proliferation in the region, Kissinger cautioned: “I believe unilateral action by Israel would be a desperate last resort. One should give these negotiations a real chance.” He said that “there is no challenge to Iranian national identity or Iranian development” either from America or from countries in the region, but added that if Iran keeps using the negotiations to buy time to pursue their nuclear programme, this could compel other countries in the region to adopt “similar programmes”. He expected “Iran to be high on the agenda” for the new Obama administration and issued a chilling warning of the consequences of failure to contain Iran: “If nuclear weapons keep spreading in the region…where political passions are so great… some sort of nuclear conflict might arise. That would be a turning point in human history.”

Addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Kissinger said that while a consensus has developed over the desired outcome, “no one has been able to determine how to get there”, how to get negotiations started or even how to define its parameters. He added, however, “there is no doubt that any settlement will require significant sacrifices on the Israeli side from the position they now hold… [while] there has to be some reciprocity from the Arab side other than uttering the word ‘peace’”.

The 43rd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting is taking place from 23 to 27 January under the theme ***Resilient Dynamism***. More than 2,500 participants from over 100 countries are taking part in the Meeting. Participants include nearly 50 heads of state or government and more than 1,500 business leaders from the Forum's 1,000 Member companies, as well as Social Entrepreneurs, Global Shapers, Young Global Leaders and representatives from civil society, media, academia and the arts.

The co-chairs of Annual Meeting 2013 are: Frederico Curado, President and Chief Executive Officer, EMBRAER, Brazil; **Muhtar A. Kent**, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, The Coca-Cola Company, USA; **Huguette Labelle**, Chair, Transparency International, Germany; Global Agenda Council on Responsible Mineral Resources Management; **Andrew N. Liveris**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The Dow Chemical Company, USA; **Atsutoshi Nishida**, Chairman of the Board, Toshiba Corporation, Japan; and **Axel A. Weber**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, UBS, Switzerland

Notes to Editors

More information about the Annual Meeting 2013 is available at http://wef.ch/davos2013

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