

Press Releases: Joint Statement by the Governments of the United States of America and Kuwait on the Second United States-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue: “Continued Commitment to Long-Term Partnership”

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
September 8, 2017

U.S. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson and Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khaled al-Sabah co-chaired the second U.S.-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue on September 8, 2017, in Washington, D.C. Complementing the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah and his meeting with President Donald J. Trump at the White House on September 7, this dialogue advances our strategic partnership in defense, security, trade, investment, education, consular, customs, and border protection issues. Our two countries renewed their commitment to promote the stability and security of the region, including the defeat of ISIS and other violent extremists.

When we launched this dialogue we set out to strengthen a bilateral relationship that benefits both our peoples in tangible ways. This second session discussed specific areas of cooperation to develop this partnership, for the good of the United States and Kuwait, and for the stability and security of the Gulf region and the Middle East more broadly.

Political Cooperation

We discussed the most pressing regional political issues, including the ongoing rift amongst some members of the GCC and Egypt. The United States reiterated its gratitude for Kuwait’s mediation, and the United States and Kuwait call on all parties to reach a swift resolution through dialogue. Our two countries share the view of the importance of GCC unity in addressing the region’s many challenges.

We also look forward to working together as Kuwait assumes its non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council 2018-19.

Kuwait is a significant contributor to stability in the world's most troubled regions and has long been one of the world's most generous humanitarian donors. Kuwait continues to be a key source of direct assistance to internally-displaced persons, as well as to the refugees that are hosted in other countries. Secretary Tillerson expressed U.S. appreciation for Kuwait's offer to host a donors' conference for Iraqi reconstruction in early 2018.

Moreover, we have discussed the destabilizing behavior of Iran, ongoing war in Syria, conflict in Yemen, Libya, and the Middle East Peace Process.

Both countries called upon the international community to exercise further pressure on North Korea to stop its destabilizing activities in the region and implement UN Security Council resolutions. The United States praised Kuwait's positive steps in regards to implementing UN resolutions.

Defense Cooperation

The United States is proud to have contributed to the liberation of Kuwait over 26 years ago, and reiterates its commitment to Kuwait's security. Today, both countries work closely together to ensure that the Armed Forces of Kuwait are best equipped to defend their nation. The two sides agreed to do their utmost to expedite Kuwait's acquisition of needed U.S. equipment, including the latest efforts at enhancing Kuwait's defensive capabilities through the addition of the F/A-18 Super Hornet to Kuwait's Air Force.

The United States and Kuwait share the responsibilities of cooperation on defense and the joint fight against terrorism. As an enduring symbol of our commitment to carry the partnership into a secure future, we agreed today on the priority of moving forward with modernizing the military facilities in Kuwait, guided by our Joint Military Commission.

Security Cooperation

Both Kuwait and the United States know firsthand the need for constant vigilance in the face of global terrorist threats and are committed to take further steps to prevent the financing of terrorism. Recognizing the benefit in combining our resources to defeat this scourge, our nations agreed to coordinate taking specific steps to increase information sharing (e.g., biometric information) that will help deter terrorist attacks. Our growing security cooperation seeks to deny refuge or sanctuary to those who plot violence and murder.

The United States, Kuwait, and our other Global Coalition partners stand together in the shared fight against ISIS until it is defeated. We discussed the necessity of stabilizing those areas retaken from ISIS. Preventing the flow of foreign fighters has been a major part of our effort to defeat ISIS, and Kuwait is a co-lead of the Coalition Working Group on Foreign Fighters. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters to the region has declined significantly which emphasizes the importance of further cooperation

regarding foreign fighters returning from conflict zones to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into their society, but more must be done.

Kuwait took positive measures toward enhancing security in Kuwait International Airport toward meeting the international and partner organization requirements.

We also agreed today to prioritize the protection of our people, our national assets, and our infrastructure from the threat of cyber-attacks. The U.S. public and private sectors stand ready to support Kuwait as it implements its National Cyber Security Strategy. Those charged with cyber policy met here in Washington to strategize long-term cooperation in this critical field.

Trade and Investment

Two days before the Strategic Dialogue, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted a U.S.-Kuwait Economic Forum featuring leaders in industry and investment. The message of mutual investment and prosperity was underscored by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Commerce's Select USA and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority. The Kuwaiti side stressed its priority to take steps that facilitate doing business in Kuwait. The United States and Kuwait will seek to alleviate any hindrances to bilateral investment in our two countries.

The Educational Ties That Bind

Education is one of the sturdiest building blocks of the U.S.-Kuwait partnership. The United States Department of State and the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education signed a memorandum of understanding today that will encourage student exchanges and educational cooperation. Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the United States. Both parties seek to encourage more Kuwaitis to join the more than 15,000 Kuwaitis studying or preparing to study in the United States, and intend to cooperate more closely to explore ways to enhance the academic and professional success of students at quality educational institutions. The United States welcomed Kuwait's intent to establish additional chairs at American universities.

Consular Affairs, Customs, and Border Protection

We continue to expand our people-to-people contact. We reaffirmed our commitment to the protection of our nationals in Kuwait and the United States, solidifying our international obligations regarding consular notification and access to detained citizens. We signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement to improve information sharing, training, and enforcement of our customs and immigration laws. In the coming months, we will work to facilitate the secure travel of our nationals and further synchronize our border security partnerships.

Kuwait expressed to the U.S government its interest to become a pre-clearance border point to the United States, and explained to their American counterparts through numbers of meetings that the political will and resources are available to support that request.

Looking Ahead

This strategic dialogue process commits the United States and Kuwait to increased cooperation in the areas of greatest practical benefit to our governments and our peoples. Today, we set a roadmap for the advancement of our relations in the coming year. Individual working groups will be cooperating on numerous tasks in the coming months, including: modernizing military facilities; facilitating needed defense systems; extending counter-terrorism information sharing and cooperation, and stopping terrorist financing; expanding our trade and investment; taking effective measures to protect intellectual property; and broadening our educational and research connections; and facilitating travel procedures. We look forward to making progress in these areas when the Dialogue meets next in Kuwait in 2018.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.