

# [Press Releases: Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad Hosts Counterparts for Dialogue on Afghan Peace Process](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 20, 2019

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Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad will host his counterparts Presidential Special Representative Ambassador Zamir Kabulov of Russia, Special Envoy Ambassador Deng Xijun of China, and Special Envoy Ambassador Roland Kobia of the European Union at the Department of State for talks on March 21 and 22. Discussion topics include: international support for the Afghan peace process, the role each party can play in bringing an end to the war, and progress to date in peace talks.

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# [Press Releases: Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

Remarks  
Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State

Prime Minister's Office  
Jerusalem  
March 20, 2019

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**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Secretary Pompeo, Mike, it's good to see you –

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's good to be with you

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** – in Jerusalem, back in Jerusalem. I have to say that we meet in every holiday. We met on Hanukkah and now we meet in Purim, and these are all celebrations of our history, and part of it is the tremendous alliance between Israel and the United States. And I know you've been an extraordinary champion of the U.S.-Israel alliance, and I want to thank you and President Trump for everything that you've been doing to support this partnership which I think is exceptional.

First of all, I think it's supported by the broad swath of the American people. We appreciate that, the fact that we have a broad base of support in the United States, but we also know that our alliance in recent years has never been stronger. It's an unbreakable bond that's based on shared values of liberty and democracy and shared interest to fight the enemies of democracy, the enemies of our way of life, the terrorists that plague – that prowl our airspace and prowl our countries. And I think that working together, we've been able to achieve an enormous amount.

Under President Trump, that alliance has also brought a historic recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the moving of the American embassy to

Jerusalem. David doesn't have to travel up a – the traffic jams from Tel Aviv, which we're trying to un-loose – loosen up anyway. But I think also the unequivocal commitment to Israel's security, the support that you give us in international forums, all of that is deeply appreciated.

I think that no less historic is the President's decision to walk away from the disastrous nuclear deal with Iran. He said he would do it; he did. And he said that he would reimpose tough sanctions on Iran, and he did. And what we see is that this pressure is working. We need to increase it; we need to expand it. And together, the United States and Israel are working in close coordination to roll back Iranian aggression in the region and around the world. Secretary and I just spent the first part of our meetings discussing exactly how to do that, and I think there are ways that will intensify the pressure even more. Rolling back Iran is in the interest of peace and security and stability for Israel, for our neighbors, and for the world.

I also appreciate the fact that the United States gives Israel the full backing to defend ourselves against Iranian aggression. I want to use this opportunity and say that we will continue to take action as needed against the attempts of Iran to entrench itself militarily with dangerous weapons in Syria. There is no limitation to our freedom of action, and we appreciate very much the fact that the United States backs up our actions as we do them.

Just last week, we uncovered efforts by Hizballah, an Iranian proxy, to build a terror network in Syria on the Golan Heights. And I can say that all of you can imagine what would have happened if Israel were not in the Golan. We would have Iran on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. I think – for this reason, and for many more – I think it's time that the international community recognize Israel's stay in the Golan, the fact that the Golan will always remain part of the state of Israel.

Mr. Secretary, you're a stalwart defender of the truth, and I appreciate your important statement last week regarding the International Criminal Court. We share the concern of the U.S. and many other states that this court has lost its way. Instead of dealing with mass atrocities, the court engages in unwarranted and politicized efforts to target the states that are committed to the rule of law and that have not joined the court. It's exact opposite of what it should be doing. And therefore, the fact that you spoke out against this, I think, is – against this, I think, is of stellar importance. I thank the United States for taking the moral and necessary steps to protect the citizens of both our countries against this outrageous distortion of international law.

Israel has no greater friend than the United States, and the United States has no greater friend than Israel. I look forward to our discussions, and I look forward to my visit next week to Washington, where I will meet with President Trump. And I believe that we can carry this relationship even stronger – it's getting stronger and stronger and stronger, and may we continue to do so. Thank you.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. You know that Israel has no greater friend than the United States of America. The Israeli people can have confidence that President Trump will maintain this close bond. I know that you and the President have an outstanding working relationship. He sent me here to build upon that and to represent him here. Israel has a special place in my heart as well. My very first trip as Secretary of State included a visit here. I'm proud to be here again not only as America's top diplomat, but also as a man of faith that is always newly inspired when I get the chance to travel to Israel.

Now to the business at hand. In just a few minutes, the prime minister and I will participate in a meeting with Greece and Cyprus to promote energy security and diversification in the Eastern Med. I will also discuss our efforts to counter Iran, Russia, and China. We had a chance to talk about those a few minutes ago as well.

This meeting is part of our effort to continue to build out the regional alliances. Last month, representatives of more than 60 countries met in Warsaw and had a historic conference, which the prime minister attended. Arab and Israeli leaders discussed ways to end the war in Yemen, to manage refugee crises, to confront radical Islamic terrorism, and to stop Iran's regional rampage. We're working to build the Middle East Strategic Alliance and to enhance cooperation on economic, energy, and security matters.

It's fundamentally our view that this region needs a candid dialogue and open exchanges of ideas, especially as we seek to make progress towards a comprehensive and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Mr. Kushner and Mr. Greenblatt recently met with regional leaders to find ways to provide economic opportunity for those regions.

I know today that at sundown, right about now, the Jewish people will begin the celebration of Purim, a commemoration of when Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from destruction centuries ago. I wish the prime minister and all who are celebrating a happy Purim.

Of course, I remember when he addressed the joint session of Congress right before Purim. I was there sitting in the auditorium almost exactly four years ago. On that day, you spoke about the grave threat that the Jewish people face, the threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran, which seeks the absolute destruction and annihilation of Israel. The ayatollahs have spent four decades spewing hatred, supporting terrorist violence, and pursuing nuclear weapons for a war against a neighbor that wishes nothing more than to live in peace. The ayatollah has declared that the annihilation and destruction of Israel is his primary goal.

With such threats, a daily reality of Israeli life, we maintain our unparalleled commitment to Israel's security and firmly support your right to defend yourself. Under the 10-year MOU that we signed in 2016, we provide \$3.8 billion annually for security assistance to Israel. And with Israel threatened by rockets and missiles from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere, we are proud to deploy the THAAD anti-missile batteries here.

The Trump administration, too, is dedicated to monitoring and combatting anti-Semitism. Our Special Envoy Elan Carr was recently here to discuss how we could deepen our commitment to battle this odious prejudice and all other forms of intolerance. With the dark wave of anti-Semitism rising in Europe and in the United States, all nations, especially those in the West, must go to the barricades against bigotry. Our challenge is especially urgent as the hot rhetoric of prejudice cloaks itself in the language of the academy or of diplomacy or public policy. Sadly, we in the United States have seen anti-Semitic language uttered even in the great halls of our own Capitol. This should not be.

Tomorrow, my wife Susan and I will take a full day of activities to get a deeper sense of Israel and its storied history. We'll visit our new embassy in Jerusalem, which we were proud to open last year. I'm eager to see more of the timeless country, and I thank the prime minister and the people of Israel for what I know will be a productive and memorable visit. Thank you.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you, Mike. Welcome.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you.

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## [Press Releases: Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President of the Republic of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades, and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras](#)

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

David Citadel Hotel  
Jerusalem  
March 20, 2019

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**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Good evening. I want to welcome to Jerusalem our dear friends the president of Cyprus, President Anastasiades, Nicos; the prime minister of Greece, Prime Minister Tsipras, Alexis; and the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. It's good to see you all here.

This is the sixth summit meeting between Israel, Cyprus, and Greece. We began this a few years ago and it's blossomed into one of the best regional associations in the world. We cooperate in everything, from firefighting now to energy. We are planning to lay down a pipeline called the EastMed pipeline from Israel, through Cyprus, through Greece, to Europe. Something that will benefit our economies greatly, provide stability for the region and prosperity to our peoples, but also we think would diversify the energy supplies to Europe.

The fact that we are joined in this meeting by the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo I think is significant. It signifies the fact that the United States supports this regional effort, and it has many, many facets that we're going to discuss, and I think that it says that this is something for the long haul. Obviously, we would welcome the association not only of the United States but other countries, something that we're going to discuss as soon as we complete the open part of this meeting.

So welcome, friends. It's good to see you again. And we're planning our next meeting as we speak.

Nicos, please.

**PRESIDENT ANASTASIADES:** This is indeed a great moment, and I want to thank my very good friend the prime minister of Israel, Netanyahu – Benjamin Netanyahu, my dearest friend Bibi, for convening this very historic meeting in Jerusalem. We are delighted to have the American Secretary of State, Mr. Mike Pompeo, joining us today. His presence is a tangible proof that our three countries constitute reliable partners to the United States, particularly in the fields of energy and security, and an anchor of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Our region (inaudible) of an Eastern Mediterranean energy corridor is an excellent example in this respect. I want to assure Cyprus unwavering commitment to this reliable and strong partnership that aims through tangible actions to generate much-needed security, stability, and prosperity in our (inaudible) in the region. This is our grand-scale vision, and we are extremely happy that the Secretary of State is here to endorse its geopolitical value on behalf of the United States, and I look forward to a

productive discussion of issues of common interest such as energy security with respect of sovereign rights and the protection of energy and marine activities, and of course diversification of energy.

Once again, thank you, Bibi.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you. Thank you.

**PRIME MINISTER TSIPRAS:** So I want to thank Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is not the first time – I cannot count how many times I have been in Jerusalem. This is the sixth time that we're meeting together in this strategic trilateral cooperation. So I'm feeling so familiar here in Jerusalem. I think that in the last few years, the role of our countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, together and individually, has become stronger. Our cooperation has become strategic – our trilateral cooperation has become strategic – and particularly in the fields of energy and security.

The participation of Secretary of State Mr. Pompeo in the alliance, the United States support in our strategic cooperation, and his participation, I think that it will strengthen our efforts and our dialogue, especially on the field of energy but not only – security and economy as well – are challenges that we have ahead, and I think that the region have a lot of challenges but also important opportunities.

Our basic ideas – idea is very simple but very significant as well. The idea is to create a safe and secure network to transport the energy resources of the region of the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe through Israel, through Cyprus, through Greece, to Europe. And I think that the establishment of the EastMed pipeline can help both security dialogue and economic development of the region.

So I look forward to our discussions in this regard, and I think that our discussion could be beneficial not only in the energy field, but about security, safety, stability, and the economic development of the region. Thank you.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for hosting us here in Jerusalem. I'm looking forward to our discussion. Prime Minister Tsipras, President Anastasiades, you don't know but about a week ago I spoke in Houston, Texas, to a big group of energy leaders from all around the world, talking about opportunities and projects just like this, about how energy connects up with our security interests in America and how the opportunities to create energy in places that we hadn't had it before and transport it and create the infrastructure in places that we've not had it before is an enormous benefit. I think this is incredibly timely. Revisionist powers like Iran and Russia and China are all trying to take major footholds in the East and in the West, and we view the United States and Israel and the Republic of Cyprus and Greece as great, key partners in security and prosperity.

So I'm very much looking forward to our conversation this evening. As we cooperate on these important energy issues, I know we'll improve our security

and prosperity even more broadly between our four nations. We believe this deeply. When free countries with free markets act together and work to develop infrastructure for energy, greater security always follows. And I know this too: If we do this right, we will attract the investment that will maximize these resources in a way that good infrastructure and open markets always do.

I'm looking forward to cooperating with each of you in this opportunity in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thank you for allowing me to be here tonight.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you. Thank you, Mike, and thank you all. Thank you.

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## [Press Releases: Joint Statement of the Third United States-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue: “Enhancing Our Strategic Partnership”](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 20, 2019

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The governments of the State of Kuwait and the United States held the third U.S.-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, the first such dialogue hosted in Kuwait, on March 20, 2019. U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah co-chaired the opening session. These dialogues produce concrete advances in



our strategic partnership in defense, security, trade, investment, education, consular affairs, customs, border protection, and health issues. Today's dialogue builds on the September 2018 meeting between President Trump and His Highness Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the White House and represents a year's progress of the Strategic Dialogue's working groups. Our two countries took the opportunity of this Dialogue meeting in Kuwait to renew their shared commitment to promote the stability and security of the region.

Secretary Pompeo expressed the appreciation of the American people for the outpouring of affection and tributes from the leadership of Kuwaiti people on the passing of President George H.W. Bush.

This dialogue process, begun in October 2016, has materially benefitted both nations; today, we are taking further steps to serve our peoples. Secretary Pompeo and Deputy Prime Minister al-Sabah signed a document formalizing the structure of the Strategic Dialogue and affirming both countries' intent to continue broadening our relationships to meet mutual interests.

### **Political Cooperation**

The United States and Kuwait discussed the most pressing regional political issues, including the ongoing GCC dispute. The United States reiterated its appreciation for the Amir's extraordinary efforts to help reach a settlement, and the United States and Kuwait renewed their call for a resolution. Our two countries share a common view of the need for GCC unity in effectively confronting the region's many challenges and in promoting a peaceful and prosperous future to the region.

We discussed our productive coordination as members of the UN Security Council in 2018 and our priorities for the year ahead. We look forward to continuing our close collaboration in the Council in 2019 to address issues affecting international peace and security, such as countering terrorism and the use of weapons of mass destruction.

The United States and Kuwait recognize the importance of the establishment of the Middle East Strategic Alliance among the United States, the GCC member states, Egypt, and Jordan. Both countries welcomed the discussions on January 9 in Muscat, Oman, on the economic and energy pillars, and the consultations on February 21 in Washington, D.C., on the political and security pillars of the Alliance. We look forward to further coordination on the establishment of the Alliance, which will enhance multilateral cooperation between the United States and the participating States and address threats to our shared vital interests in regional stability, security and prosperity.

The United States recognizes the continuous efforts taken by Kuwait towards maintaining security and stability in Iraq, as well as supporting the Government of Iraq in the process of reconstruction, by hosting the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq on February 12-14, 2018, which resulted in \$30 billion in pledges to Iraq.

We welcomed the constructive dialogue that took place at the Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East in Warsaw, Poland on February 13-14. The United States appreciates Kuwait's significant contributions to peace and security in some of the world's most troubled regions and its willingness to serve as a key source of direct assistance to internally displaced persons, as well as to refugees hosted in other countries. The United States welcomes Kuwait's recent announcements of additional humanitarian assistance for Yemen and Syria.

The United States and Kuwait expressed their support for UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths and reiterated the need for all parties to implement the agreements reached in Stockholm during the December 2018 meeting and to continue working to advance the political process.

Particularly as co-members of the UN Security Council at this time, our delegations reiterated the need for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 to help end the Syrian conflict and bring lasting stability to that country.

We discussed and reviewed efforts to promote Middle East Peace and resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We also discussed other regional issues, such as Syria, Libya, and the destabilizing behavior of Iran.

Both countries welcomed the February 6 ministerial meeting in Washington, D.C., of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/DAESH and re-affirmed the Coalition's commitment to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS.

Both countries called upon the international community to fully implement UN Security Council resolutions regarding North Korea.

## **Defense Partnership**

The United States reiterated its commitment to Kuwait's security. Today, both countries continue to work together closely to ensure that the Armed Forces of Kuwait are effectively equipped to defend their nation through the acquisition of U.S. systems such as the F/A-18 Super Hornet and the M1A2 tank, and by expanding U.S. comprehensive professional training programs.

We discussed our future defense cooperation and the priority of moving forward with modernizing the military facilities in Kuwait used jointly by our forces, as guided by our Joint Military Commission. We discussed future cooperation and the integration of our Armed Forces to enhance the defense of Kuwait in the most efficient and cost effective manner. The Joint Military Commission will continue considering opportunities for such integration, which both sides agree will enhance the defense of Kuwait.

The Kuwait and U.S defense partnership plays an important role in regional security and stability, and it extends to areas of combating terrorism and deterring external aggression. The U.S appreciates Kuwait's efforts in hosting the Armed Forces Chiefs of Staff Meeting of GCC countries, Egypt, Jordan, and the commander of the U.S. Central Command in September 2018. Kuwait and the U.S are looking forward to the multinational exercise "Eagle

Resolve” to be held in Kuwait in 2020 with participation from GCC countries and the United States, to enhance the military capabilities and deterrence force.

Today, we signed an agreement that will allow the U.S. Department of Defense to provide defense articles, training, including counter-terrorism training, and materials to Kuwait on a grant basis.

Both countries welcome the recent dedication of the site of the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield War Memorial in Washington, DC, and look forward to the future opening of this memorial. It will commemorate and honor those who participated in the liberation of Kuwait through their active duty service in support of Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield.

### **Security Cooperation**

The United States and Kuwait are strong partners in the fight against terrorism. Together, we are making the Kuwaiti and American people more secure. We agreed to expand this cooperation in order to thwart potential terrorist attacks. The United States reiterated its appreciation for Kuwait’s cooperation and its facilitation of the effort to ensure a lasting defeat of ISIS.

Both countries remain committed to take further steps to confront global terrorist threats and cut off the financing of terrorism. Recognizing the benefits from combining our resources to defeat this scourge, our nations are taking specific steps to increase information sharing that will help deter terrorist attacks; our growing security cooperation seeks to deny refuge or sanctuary to terrorists and criminals. Training of Kuwaiti prosecutors and regular workshops provided by the United States will help the Kuwaiti government bring those engaged in the support or financing of terrorism to justice. This collaboration will continue.

The United States welcomes Kuwait’s future engagements in the U.S. government’s Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program, which have recently been agreed to by both countries. In implementation of this agreement, the United States will provide training to Kuwait’s law enforcement personnel to build their counterterrorism capabilities and skills.

Today, the United States and Kuwait completed agreements to improve our cooperation to identify high-risk travelers that threaten both countries’ security. This will make all flights more secure.

The United States and Kuwait discussed the dangers to society posed by narcotics trafficking. We signed today a memorandum of cooperation to enhance the counter-narcotics cooperation between the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Kuwaiti Drug Control General Department. This will enhance our ability to disrupt transnational criminal organizations.

The United States and Kuwait recognize the critical importance of cybersecurity and agreed on the need for close cooperation to prevent cyber threats. Cybersecurity cooperation between the United States- and Kuwait is

growing across the public and private sectors. The governments of the United States and Kuwait signed a Letter of Intent on Cybersecurity Cooperation in September 2018. Today, we discussed further avenues for this cooperation. Both sides look forward to enhanced collaboration, including joint efforts to fight cybercrime and to further an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable, cyberspace. The United States welcomes Kuwait's decision to join the 24-7 High Tech Crime Network, which facilitates point-to-point contact for investigations involving electronic evidence that require urgent assistance from member nation law enforcement partners.

## **Trade and Investment**

Increasing trade and investment ties between Kuwait and the United States have contributed to the growing prosperity of both countries. Two-way trade rose to more than \$8 billion in 2017. Bilateral investment positions remain strong. Other cooperative actions underway focus on better managing risks associated with travel and the trade in goods, preserving the integrity of financial transactions and raising the level of cybersecurity. During the Strategic Dialogue, both countries pledged to seek ways to continue reducing barriers to trade and investment.

Growing commercial relations between the United States and Kuwait complement our close official bilateral relations. During the second annual U.S.-Kuwait Economic Forum on January 14, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a memorandum of cooperation to foster collaboration between the two. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is preparing to launch a first-ever U.S.-Kuwait Business Council, to be composed of corporate members from both countries. Yesterday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) held a roundtable with business leaders to discuss ways to increase trade and investment between the two countries. These developments follow important business-to-business exchanges during the year, including Kuwait's strong participation at the Select USA Investment Summit in Washington, D.C. in June 2018, and Kuwait's successful Investment Outreach Roadshow in Silicon Valley in November 2018.

Kuwait has been an active long-term investor in the U.S, mainly through the Kuwait Investment Authority where the majority of its investments are allocated in the U.S. or in U.S. dollars. The United States recognizes the efforts of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority in facilitating investment procedures in Kuwait. Kuwait Vision 2035 provides potential fertile ground for direct investment in Kuwait.

Today, our two sides signed a memorandum of understanding between the Kuwait National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development and the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business development. Formalizing this relationship supports Kuwait's effort to further develop the private sector and to diversify its economy.

The United States and Kuwait welcome the recent agreement between Boeing and

the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority to deploy for the first time in Kuwait training solutions for the next generation of Kuwaiti pilots.

## **Educational and People-to-People Ties**

Education remains a solid building block of the U.S.-Kuwait partnership and a lasting bond between our peoples. Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the United States. Both countries continue to encourage more Kuwaitis to join the nearly 10,200 Kuwaitis studying for academic credit, and an additional 2,500 in intensive English language institutes in the United States. These numbers are expected to rise.

We will continue to cooperate closely to prepare Kuwaiti students to succeed at quality U.S. educational institutions, including through enhanced coordination in English language teaching and college admissions advising. In recognition of the unparalleled quality and diversity of U.S. institutions of higher learning, our two sides will endeavor to expand the number of U.S. institutions and fields of study available to Kuwaiti scholarship recipients, and the number of universities in Kuwait with U.S. affiliations. We also will work together to facilitate an increase in the numbers of U.S. students and scholars studying or conducting research at universities in Kuwait.

In recognition of the importance of bilateral cooperation in the field of culture, the two governments signed a Statement of Intent to work together to enhance cultural understanding and people-to-people connections between the United States and Kuwait, in order to support the shared ideals of tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity. As a result of this Statement of Intent, both parties will encourage partnerships between U.S. and Kuwaiti cultural institutions, professional exchange programs, a diverse range of cultural programs, and programs that support and engage youth.

During the 2017 Strategic Dialogue, the United States and Kuwait signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the field of higher education. That agreement has already resulted in many productive academic and professional exchanges. In the next few months, a Fulbright Specialist in student advising for U.S. college admissions will work with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Higher Education to ensure that Kuwaiti students have the most accurate and complete information about U.S. institutions.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Education and the U.S. Embassy will also be jointly funding an intensive English course for Kuwaiti public school teachers in spring 2020. Finally, the U.S. Embassy will fund a new afterschool English course for underprivileged students in Kuwait, beginning in fall 2019.

During today's dialogue, we also discussed opportunities for increased collaboration, training, and exchange between our countries in the fields of education and academic research.

The United States and Kuwait welcome the reinvigoration of the American Kuwaiti Alliance, which works to expand people-to-people exchanges, increase business, investment and trade, and foster cross-cultural understanding.

## **Consular Affairs, Customs, and Border Protection**

We reaffirmed our commitment to the protection of our nationals in Kuwait and the United States and around the world, solidifying our international obligations to provide consular notification and access to detained citizens and expanding our efforts to assist our citizens during crises. The United States and Kuwait are working to improve our communication and partnership to prevent and resolve international parental child abductions according to the laws and regulations in both countries. Kuwait and the U.S. affirmed their intention to establish a mechanism for prisoners' transfer.

Kuwait's National Assembly recently ratified our Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement to improve information sharing, training, and enforcement of our customs and immigration laws. The entry into force of this agreement marks a significant milestone in collaboration on security and trade facilitation between the two countries. We welcome the cooperation agreement signed in September 2018 between our two governments that set up efforts to prevent the trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials, and we recognize the importance of mutual training and exercises. We also completed a comprehensive review of visa reciprocity to ensure fair treatment of our citizens in both countries.

We also signed an agreement between KGAC and CBP that will enhance security and protect the international supply chains through data sharing that will identify high-risk cargo shipments.

Kuwait and the United States welcomed the recent resumption of the Kuwait Airways direct flight to New York City; this was done in coordination between our two governments. This will have positive effects on all fields including business and tourism. The United States and Kuwait look forward to closer collaboration between the U.S. Transportation Security Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Kuwait reiterated its interest in becoming a pre-clearance border point to the United States.

## **Health Cooperation**

The United States and Kuwait are strengthening their bilateral relationship in the area of healthcare and healthcare management. We have begun negotiations on a memorandum of understanding between the Kuwait Ministry of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that will identify areas of mutual collaboration.

## **Looking Ahead**

The United States and Kuwait commit to further increasing cooperation in all of the areas of greatest practical benefit to our governments and to our peoples, as we formalized today in the signing of the overarching Strategic Dialogue agreement.

Today, we set a roadmap for the advancement of our relations in the coming

year. Bilateral working groups will work together to: facilitate systems that will defend Kuwait; modernize jointly-used military facilities; extend information sharing and cooperation to thwart acts of terrorism, including the financing of terror; enhance cybersecurity; expand trade and investment; protect and enforce the intellectual property rights of Kuwaitis and Americans; broaden our educational and research linkages; cooperate to provide high quality, cost-effective health care; and facilitate travel procedures between our two countries. We look forward to making progress in these areas when the Dialogue meets next in the United States.

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## **Press Releases: Tunisia National Day**

Press Statement  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
March 19, 2019

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On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, I offer congratulations to the Tunisian people on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of Tunisia's independence.

Tunisia's impressive democratic transition continues to serve as an inspiration to the world. We commend the Tunisian people for your dedication to peaceful dialogue, consensus building, and reform through democratic means. The United States will continue to support Tunisia's efforts to strengthen its security and develop its economy.

This is a day to reflect on and celebrate the unity, resolve, and resilience of the Tunisian people. I extend to Tunisians my sincere wishes for a

productive and prosperous year ahead.

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