



# National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

## U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER AND US – QATAR BUSINESS COUNCIL HOST QATAR'S AMBASSADOR IN CHICAGO

### *Luncheon for Chicago Business Community Coincides with Launch of New Qatar Airways Flights Between Doha and Chicago*

#### ***“You Have an Open Door in Qatar,” Says Ambassador Mohamed Al-Rumaihi***

The Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, DC, in partnership with the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the US-Qatar Business Council, participated in a series of events in Chicago this week in support of Qatar Airways' new nonstop service from Doha to Chicago. The events included a launch ceremony at O'Hare International Airport on Wednesday, April 10, a luncheon featuring Qatar's Ambassador to the United States on Thursday, April 11, as well as a Qatar Airways gala event for more than 650 Chicago community leaders at Chicago's Field Museum.



Commissioner Rosemarie Andolino presents H.E. Akbar Al Baker with a gift of appreciation from the City of Chicago.

The launch ceremony, which took place upon arrival of Qatar Airways' inaugural flight from Doha, included speeches by His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways, Rosemarie Andolino, Commissioner in the Chicago Department of Aviation, and Mr. Don Welsh, CEO of Choose Chicago. According to Commissioner Andolino, the new route will generate in excess of \$200 million in economic benefits for the City of Chicago. In his remarks, H.E. Al Baker noted, "Chicago is a key route for business and leisure travelers alike, connecting them from destinations across India, Africa, Middle East, and Asia Pacific with a one-stop service via Doha to the Midwest." He continued, "As Qatar Airways continues its aggressive



# National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

expansion, we are pleased to finally offer another gateway in the United States, this time to the 'The Windy City' of Chicago, five years after we began operations to North America."

\* \* \*

The luncheon, organized by the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce and the US - Qatar Business Council in partnership with the Embassy of the State of Qatar, focused on raising awareness of potential areas of economic cooperation between the City of Chicago and the State of Qatar. Attended by leaders

from Chicago's business and political communities, the luncheon was held at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in downtown Chicago, highlighting a successful American-Qatari business venture. Co-owned by Qatari company, Al Faisal Holding, and Chicago's Magellan Development Group, the hotel represents a first-of-its-kind investment in the United States by a Qatari firm. H.E. Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al-Thani, Chairman and CEO of Al Faisal Holding, served as lead sponsor for the luncheon.

Mr. David Hamod, President & CEO of the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC), characterized the Qatar Airways launch and the investment by Al Faisal Holding as "creating a direct connection between the Middle East and the Middle West." He noted, "Growth opportunities like these play an important role in expanding the respective economies of Qatar and the United States, and generating new jobs in both nations."



H.E. Mohamed Bin Abdulla Al-Rumaihi, Qatari Ambassador to the United States, speaks about Qatar's National Vision 2030.

Ambassador Patrick N. Theros, President of the US-Qatar Business Council, highlighted Qatar Airways' new service as a means to increase business connections, promote closer cultural ties, and expand the bilateral relationship between the United States and the State of Qatar. Ambassador Theros spoke to the importance of Chicago to the building of economic ties between the US and Qatar. He noted that foreigners



## National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

overlook Chicago's vital importance as one of the preeminent American financial and economic centers. Ambassador Theros highlighted the many similarities and potential areas of congruence between the two cities. He concluded, "The inauguration of direct Doha-Chicago air service by Qatar Airways will play a key role in bringing the two cities together."

The keynote speaker, H.E. Mohamed Bin Abdulla Al-Rumaihi, Qatar's Ambassador to the United States, noted that Qatar is investing hundreds of billions of dollars in education, infrastructure, cyber security, aviation, and numerous other sectors ahead of the country's hosting of the FIFA World Cup in the year 2022. "We are planning more than 3,500 projects in the approach to 2022," he noted, "consistent with Qatar National Vision 2030," the nation's long-term strategy and development plan. As Qatar diversifies its economy, with investments both at home and abroad, the ambassador suggested, Chicago-area firms are well positioned to benefit from these opportunities. Ambassador Al-Rumaihi reviewed the mutual importance of Qatar to the United States. He cited the presence of the largest US air force facility abroad at Qatar's Al-Udeid Airbase, and at least \$50 billion dollars of US investment in Qatar oil and gas.



Ambassador Al-Rumaihi talked about some of the things that Chicago and Doha have in common: iconic architecture, proximity to vast bodies of water that have shaped the history of both communities, and the vital role that each city plays as a regional hub. He drew attention to the importance of sports as a way of fostering diplomacy and relationships, and he wished Chicago every success in its next bid for the Olympics. (Chicago has never hosted the Olympics, but it was short-listed for the 2016 Games before losing out to Brazil.)

Sponsors of the luncheon support Ambassador Al-Rumaihi (center) and H.E. Akbar Al Baker (left of center) and include (from left to right, back row): Marty Bentrott, Boeing Company; Ambassador Patrick Theros, U.S.-Qatar Business Council; David Hamod, NUSACC; Mohammed Dobashi, Al-Faisal Holding; (front row): Joel Carlins, Magellan Development Group; Rick Weaver, PAT Engineering; and Talat Othman, Arab American Business and Professional Association.

The luncheon concluded with remarks by Mr. Mohammad Dobashi, representing Qatar's Al-Faisal Group, the lead sponsor of the lunch. Mr. Dobashi noted the Group's investment in the Radisson Blu





## National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

Aqua Hotel as the first significant Qatar private sector investment in the United States. He also presented a short film about the worldwide activities of the Group and its Chairman and Founder, Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al-Thani.

\* \* \*

The luncheon was made possible through the generous support of its sponsors: Al-Faisal Holding, Boeing, PAT Engineering, and Raytheon. Chicago-based partners that supported the luncheon included the Arab American Business and Professional Association, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Chamber of Commerce, International Trade Association of Greater Chicago, the U.S. Export Assistance Center (part of the U.S. Department of Commerce), and World Business Chicago.

\* \* \*

The festivities in Chicago concluded with a gala dinner at the Field Museum for more than 650 VIPs from the Chicagoland area.

The non-stop service is Qatar Airways' fourth gateway in the United States, following daily operations to New York (JFK), Washington (IAD), and Houston (IAH). The Doha-based airline began operations in the United States over five years ago and, according to CEO Akbar Al Baker, it is expanding aggressively. Qatar Airways currently has orders worth over \$50 billion for more than 250 aircraft, including Boeing 787s and 777s, as well as Airbus A350s, A380s, and A320s. Under CEO Al-Baker's stewardship, Qatar Airways has grown from five airplanes in 1995 to more than one hundred twenty operating today.



Qatar Airways' inaugural flight QR 991 touched down at O'Hare Int'l Airport with a traditional water cannon salute.

In addition to winning Skytrax's prestigious Airline of the Year in 2011 and 2012, Qatar Airways was named "Best Airline in the Middle East" for the seventh year in a row and its Premium



## National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

Terminal at Doha International Airport received the "Best Premium Service" award for the second consecutive year in 2012.

\* \* \*



Officials taking part in the VIP Reception at O'Hare Int'l Airport included: (right to left): Ray Conner, President & CEO, Commercial Airplanes, Boeing; Amb. Patrick Theros, U.S.-Qatar Business Council; H.E. Akbar Al Baker, CEO, Qatar Airways; H.E. Mohamed Al-Rumaihi, Qatari Ambassador to the U.S.; and David Hamod, President & CEO, NUSACC.

The State of Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup in the year 2022, the first Arab country ever to do so. Preparations for this event are helping to drive Qatar's infrastructure development, contributing significantly to growth in U.S. exports to that nation. According to research conducted by the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce, U.S. goods and services to Qatar will grow from \$8.39 billion in 2012 to \$16.32 in 2015.

This represents almost a doubling of exports over this three-year period, with services (\$10.6 billion) expected to be produce roughly twice as many revenues as merchandise (\$5.72 billion) by the year 2015.

"As today's luncheon suggests, Qatar is fully engaged when it comes to investment opportunities in the United States," said Ambassador Al-Rumaihi. "You have an open door in Qatar, and we look forward to welcoming you to Doha."