



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

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U.S. - ARAB CHAMBER WELCOMES NEW QATARI AMBASSADOR

“Through Education, Art, Culture, and Science,” Says H.E. Mohammed Jaham Al Kuwari, “Qatar Strives to Create an Atmosphere of Understanding”

With a New Investment Office in Washington and Plans to Invest \$200 Billion at Home and Abroad, Qatar is Working to Ensure That Non-Hydrocarbon Sectors Will Make Up More Than Half of the Nation’s GDP by 2015

The National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) hosted a welcome luncheon this week for H.E. Mohammed Jaham Al Kuwari, Qatar’s Ambassador to the United States. Upwards of 200 private sector and government leaders attended the event, held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, to introduce the new ambassador to the U.S. business community. Ambassador Al Kuwari, who arrived in Washington after serving for a decade as Qatar’s Ambassador to France, presented his credentials to President Barack Obama on March 10, 2014.



President Barack Obama received Ambassador Al Kuwari's credentials in the Oval Office of the White House.

“Our Chamber has a rich history of introducing new Arab ambassadors to the American business community, and we were pleased to continue that tradition,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC. “Ambassador Al Kuwari has been a good friend of the United States for more than three decades, and I’m confident that he will be very well received by U.S. business and the American people.”



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

In his remarks, Ambassador Al Kuwari noted, “It is a privilege to be able to say that Qatar’s existing commercial, financial, and economic relations with the United States have been constant, productive and mutually enforcing. We believe that investment and shared stakes in each other’s economies provide a strong foundation on which to further develop the quality and scope of our relationship.”

The new ambassador delivered a strong message to the assembled business leaders: “With Qatar hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, we intend to spend up to \$200 billion on infrastructure and the creation of a knowledge-based economy in the next few years. Some of our new projects include the new Hamad International Airport, the expansion of Qatar Airways and Qatar Rail, the new Doha Port, a state-of-the-art Science & Technology Park, ‘Education City’, new investments in the ICT infrastructure and, finally, expansion of the healthcare sector.”



Ambassador Al Kuwari remarked: “Qatar is a society that embodies the shared universal values of the freedom of expression, social progress and democratic ideals.”

He continued, “These mega-projects present considerable opportunities for U.S. business since Qatari officials in charge of these mega-projects have shown a strong preference for contracting with American companies. These contracts have resulted in the use of American standards and specifications, opening the door to future contracts with other American businesses.”

The U.S. Ambassador to the State of Qatar, Hon. Susan Ziadeh, conveyed a similar message at NUSACC’s [Ambassadors Forum](#), held at the U.S. Department of State on March 13. “In Qatar, the infrastructure, education, information communications technology, and healthcare sectors are all seeing significant development as Qatar works toward achieving its 2030 National Vision and preparing for the 2022 World Cup,” she noted. “The United States offers cutting edge technology, unparalleled services, and time-tested know-how in a



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

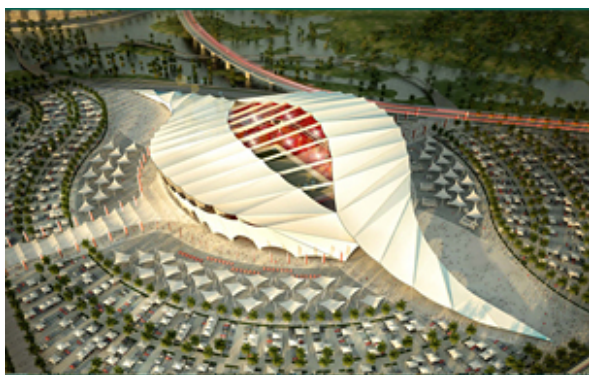
very competitive market, and I am gratified to see the increasing partnerships between U.S. and Qatari firms.”

The U.S. Ambassador has led two “Qatar Road Shows” to the United States in the past year in partnership with Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. The goal of these Road Shows – one to the [West Coast](#) and one to the [East Coast](#) – has been to provide U.S. businesses with a better understanding of Qatar’s needs for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Qatar: Punching Above Its Weight

For a small nation, Qatar has been punching well above its weight. In recent years, Qatar’s annual GDP growth has been among the highest in the world, outpacing China, and the World Economic Forum has named Qatar as the most competitive economy in the Middle East for three years in a row. Qatar is the world’s richest country by per capita income – estimated at over \$105,000 in 2013 – and through at least the year 2016, Qatar will be the third largest market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for U.S. goods and services, according to the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce.

U.S. merchandise exports to Qatar grew 39 percent from 2012 to 2013, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and these exports are doubling every four to five years. According to NUSACC forecasts, U.S. goods exports are on track to double from approximately \$5 billion in 2013 (\$4.96 billion) to approximately \$10 billion in 2018 (\$9.832 billion).



One of the new FIFA 2022 stadiums planned for construction in the city of Al-Khor.

Qatar’s infrastructure expansion, consistent with the National Vision 2030 master plan and the 2022 FIFA World Cup, is laying the groundwork for an influx of tourists. The Qatar Tourism Authority plans to invest about \$20 billion toward the hospitality industry in coming years. Tourist arrivals are expected to grow at a rate of 15.9 percent compounded annually, according to Deloitte, eventually reaching 3.7 million tourists by 2022.



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

This anticipated surge in tourism will help generate business in coming years in such sectors as hotels, healthcare, education, and financial services, to include wide-ranging opportunities in commercial, retail, and residential fields. Qatar plans to add as many as 150 hotel properties between now and 2022, for example, to accommodate the more than 600,000 fans who are expected to visit Qatar for the FIFA World Cup.

Qatar's ambitious plans to serve as a center of hospitality, sports, and tourism are underpinned by Qatar Airways, a world-class airline that has been named "Airline of the Year" on multiple occasions by Skytrax. Qatar Airways currently serves four cities in the United States – Washington DC, New York, Houston, and Chicago – and it is scheduled to open up three new U.S. destinations in coming months: [Philadelphia](#), Miami, and Dallas/Ft. Worth.

[Qatar Airways](#) was one of four companies that served as sponsors for this week's luncheon. Others included [Parsons Brinckerhoff](#), [Rockwell Collins](#), and [TiME Qatar](#) (Turner International).

Sitting atop the North Field, the world's largest non-associated natural gas field, Qatar controls approximately 15 percent of the world's proven gas reserves, which will help to promote economic growth and development in Qatar for generations to come.



Gas production platform in the Qatar North Field.

"By now, it is well known that Qatar is the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), and LNG has been both the lifeblood of Qatar's economy and the driver for our diversification," noted Ambassador Al Kuwari. The 2030 National Vision "provides a framework for a knowledge-based economy and a country that will be able to sustain its own development," he continued, "such that non-hydrocarbon sectors will account for more than half of Qatar's GDP by the end of 2015."



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

Pillars of the U.S. – Qatar Relationship

Ambassador Al Kuwari pointed out that economics is one of the pillars in Qatar’s relationship with the United States, but there are other pillars as well.

“We have always been a nation with a vision of active participation in the international community,” he noted. “I not only would like to emphasize Qatar as a significant market opportunity for American businesses, but also as a country that shares America’s values and is committed to rethinking a global standard very seriously.”



Ambassador Al Kuwari (center) is welcomed by (from left to right): William McGuire, Global Elite Group; Ambassador Patrick Theros, U.S.-Qatar Business Council; Bart Vos, Qatar Airways; David Hamod, NUSACC; Ambassador Marisa Lino, Northrop Grumman; Ambassador Richard Schmierer, U.S. Department of State; Robert Hager, AmCham Qatar; and Ambassador Joseph LeBaron, Patton Boggs.

Ambassador Al Kuwari extolled the virtues of globalization, but he also cautioned against the dark side of globalization, which “divides us through fragmentation along ethnic, tribal, and sectarian lines – a danger that is creating a great deal of confusion.” During these times, he said, it is important that nations “try to formulate a policy that affirms the centrality of the human being – irrespective of race, religion or color.”



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

He continued, “Through education, art, culture, and science, Qatar strives to create an atmosphere of understanding, to celebrate diversity, and to renew the long-standing struggle against the causes of division.” In that way, he suggested, “we safeguard our investment in peace and human development.”

In this spirit, Ambassador Al Kuwari suggested, the nation’s investments ensure that Qatar is “able to build upon a substantive role in international peace and security.” During the year 2012, he said, “Qatar’s developmental and humanitarian aid was nearly a billion dollars in government and nongovernmental assistance to almost 100 countries, totaling around seven percent of Qatar’s annual budget.”

Questions & Answers

In the Question & Answer period that followed Ambassador Al Kuwari’s prepared remarks, he took questions from the floor.

In response to a question about Qatar’s investment strategies in the United States, the ambassador pointed out that Qatari investments in France went from virtually nil to more than 15 billion euros. He suggested that Qatar’s



Ambassador Al Kuwari took questions from the audience after his prepared remarks. His welcome reception was held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, in downtown Washington DC.

investment in the United States will likely eclipse that amount, and the opening salvo is the recent announcement by the Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company – part of the Qatar Investment Authority – that it is opening an office in Washington, DC to guide its investments in the United States.



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

“Qatar will continue to ensure that its investment is diversified,” noted Ambassador Al Kuwari. “We are looking at banks, companies, the arts, museums, and even cinema and movies. In 2015, we hope that our revenues from investments will surpass that of natural gas.”

Qatar is a prominent investor in [CityCenterDC](#), widely seen as the most ambitious urban development project ever undertaken in the District of Columbia. Spread over ten acres in the heart of Washington DC, CityCenterDC is composed of 2.5 million square feet of condominiums, apartments, offices, public spaces, hotels, restaurants and shops.

In response to a question about whether Qatar is likely to increase LNG production, Ambassador Al Kuwari said that Qatar is interested in contributing to global energy stability. “We are open to discuss any issues that need to be addressed in order to enhance energy cooperation with the United States,” he said.

Finally, in response to a question about challenges that Qatar currently faces from some of its neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Ambassador Al Kuwari noted, “Qatar is a society that embodies the shared universal values of the freedom of expression, social progress and democratic ideals.” The GCC nations “can be unified strategically and share common interests,” he said, “yet be diversified in our views.” The goal should be to “enrich the region,” he concluded, “and ideas must be fought with other ideas, not with force.”

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Arab world, is in touch with business communities across the United States and serves as the U.S. point of contact for the national chambers of commerce in the 22 Arab nations. On a daily basis, NUSACC works closely with leaders throughout the Arab world, as well as high-level decision makers in the U.S. business community, public policy research centers, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, media, and the U.S. Government.