



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

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## U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER NAMES JORDAN'S DINA KAWAR AS 2018 “AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR”

*Jordanian Diplomat “Translates King Abdullah’s Vision into Action”*

*Celebrating 70 Years of Diplomatic Ties Between Jordan and the United States*

**Washington, DC** – This week, the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) recognized H.E. Dina Kawar, Jordan’s Ambassador to the United States, as the 2018 “Ambassador of the Year.” The award ceremony and luncheon, held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington DC, brought together more than 100 leaders from the business, government, and NGO communities.

“Our Chamber is proud to recognize Ambassador Kawar for her work in promoting America’s exceptional relationship with Jordan, a relationship based on shared values and mutual respect,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC. “Thanks to His Majesty King Abdullah’s leadership and commitment to regional peace and stability, the strategic relationship between our two countries continues to thrive and grow. Ambassador Kawar’s work in Washington D.C. has helped to translate King Abdullah’s vision into action.”



H.E. Dina Kawar (center), Jordan’s Ambassador to the United States, accepts the Ambassador of the Year award from David Hamod (left) and Nancy Ziuzin Schlegel (right), NUSACC Board Member and Vice President of International Government Affairs at Lockheed Martin.

In accepting the award, Ambassador Kawar noted, “I am humbled by your kind words. Thank you for celebrating the special trade partnership between Jordan and the United States, a partnership that has been solidified through the work and tireless efforts of NUSACC throughout the years. I look forward to continuing to build on this solid and promising relationship.”

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The award luncheon was made possible through the generous support of corporate sponsors, including: [Amazon Web Services](#), [Arab Bank](#), [Black & Veatch](#), Comet International Corporation, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, PBI Aqaba Industrial Estate, [Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America \(PhRMA\)](#), and [The Pragma Corporation](#).



H.E. Dina Kavar (center) with some of the sponsors and other VIPs. From left to right: Amb. Edward Gnehm, George Washington University; Dr. Paul Davis, Pragma Corporation; Iram Ali, Amazon Web Services; Rep. Jane Harman, The Wilson Center; David Hamod, NUSACC; Ambassador Kavar; Nancy Ziuzin Schlegel, Lockheed Martin; Sarah Kemp, U.S. Department of Commerce; Fawaz Bilbeisi, World Bank Group; Amb. Joan Polaschik, U.S. Department of State; H.E. Fareed Yasseen, Iraq's Ambassador to the United States; Ahmed Selim, Northrop Grumman Corporation.

## A Tradition Started in 2004

The “Ambassador of the Year” award, begun in 2004, is given annually to a member of the Arab diplomatic corps for his or her outstanding contributions to U.S. - Arab commercial relations. Over the years, Ambassadors from 11 Arab nations have been recognized for their leadership.

“This is the 15th anniversary of the award,” stated Hamod. “In a sense, we have come full circle. Our first recipient, in 2004, was a member of the Kavar family in Jordan (H.E. Karim Kavar). Fifteen years later, we are once again recognizing the accomplishments of a member of the Kavar family in Jordan (H.E. Dina Kavar).”

The annual award ceremony and luncheon has become one of NUSACC’s signature events, attracting high-level representation from around the United States. Testimonials this year were delivered in person by seven representatives of America’s public and private sectors, and written testimonials flooded in from around the world. (For a sampling of testimonials, please read on.)



More than 100 leaders from business, government, and the NGO communities attended the award luncheon, held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Washington DC.

### **Words of Appreciation for Ambassador Dina Kawar**

“From one ambassador to another, I am pleased that the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce is celebrating Ambassador Dina Kawar for her remarkable contributions. Ambassador Kawar has worked to ensure that U.S. officials better understand the complex challenges facing Jordan and the region and align the policies of our two countries, from playing a vital role in countering the threat of ISIS to supporting a peaceful political transition in Syria.”

**- Amb. David Hale, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State**

“Earlier this year, Ambassador Dina Kawar’s efforts were instrumental in the signing of the memorandum of understanding in which the U.S. committed to seeking \$6.375 billion in security and economic assistance for Jordan over the next five years. This MOU is a testament to the commitment of the United States to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to Ambassador Kawar’s leadership in strengthening the ties between our countries.”

**- Amb. Joan Polaschik, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State**

“As a former U.S. Ambassador to Jordan and a thirty-year veteran of the State Department, I have had the honor to observe Ambassador Dina Kawar’s extraordinary dedication and tradecraft over many years. To me, she represents the gold standard for professional diplomacy. No one has been more influential than she in ensuring that the U.S. Government supported Jordan through a period of humanitarian crisis. Her persistent efforts have boosted both development and humanitarian aid to Jordan, which has saved and improved the lives of millions of refugees, as well as Jordanians.”

**- Amb. Stuart Jones, Regional President for Europe and Middle East, Bechtel**



## A Remarkable Bilateral Relationship

In February 2019, Jordan and the United States will celebrate 70 years of diplomatic ties. The two nations share a remarkable bilateral relationship.

“The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been a close friend, invaluable ally, and indispensable partner to the United States and to me personally,” noted Hon. David Hale, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan from 2005 to 2008, and current Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. “Jordan was the first in the Arab world to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, in 2000. Economic and commercial cooperation between the United States and Jordan is an enduring American priority.”



Hon. David Hale, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan from 2005 to 2008, and current Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

“Ambassador Kawar has expanded these ties,” Hale continued, “and she understands the impact of strengthening these commercial and people-to-people connections and how they reinforce the strategic U.S. - Jordanian partnership. This is a challenging task in a country as large and diverse as the United States, but Ambassador Kawar has traveled around the country advocating for enhanced U.S. - Jordan commercial relations.”



Hon. Joan Polaschik, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Hon. Joan Polaschik, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, commended the Jordanian diplomat for her role in enhancing the bilateral commercial relationship.

“Earlier this year, Ambassador Kawar’s efforts were instrumental in brokering the signing of a U.S. - Jordan Memorandum of Understanding, in which the United States committed to seeking \$6.375 billion in security and economic assistance for Jordan over the next five years,” noted Polaschik. “This MOU is a testament to both the commitment of the United States to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to Ambassador Kawar’s leadership in strengthening the ties between our countries.”

She concluded, “The U.S. relationship with Jordan goes beyond our two governments, and Ambassador Kawar should be commended for her efforts to promote closer economic and commercial cooperation.”

Hon. Stuart Jones, a former U.S. Ambassador to Jordan and a thirty-year veteran of the State Department, is now a senior executive at Bechtel. He noted, “I have had the honor to observe Ambassador Kawar’s extraordinary dedication and tradecraft over many years . . . . My favorite experiences with Ambassador Kawar have been our collaborations to address the economic challenges that face Jordan.”

He continued, “No one has been more influential than she in ensuring that the U.S. Government supported Jordan through a period of humanitarian crisis. Her persistent efforts have boosted both development and humanitarian aid to Jordan, which has saved and improved the lives of millions of refugees, as well as Jordanians.”

Ambassador Kawar replied humbly: “This would have not been possible without the visionary and supportive leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, who has always been the strongest advocate and voice for our bilateral ties on every level.”

“To the Jordanian companies working toward entering the U.S. market,” she said, “it is a pleasure to support you. To the U.S. companies eyeing the Jordanian market, you have excellent business acumen and your shareholders will be very pleased with your commitment to increasing the bottom line. And to NUSACC, thank you for dispelling any inaccuracies about doing business with our part of the world and for highlighting the Arab world as the strong business partner that it is.”



Hon. Stuart Jones, a former U.S. Ambassador to Jordan and a thirty-year veteran of the State Department, is now a senior executive at Bechtel.

#### **Words of Appreciation for Ambassador Dina Kawar**

“Ambassador Dina Kawar is efficient, gracious, and highly accomplished. I am delighted to have worked with her when we served together in Paris, while she was the Ambassador of Jordan to France. She is an exceptional ambassador and friend.”

**- H.E. Fareed Yasseen, Ambassador to the United States, Republic of Iraq**

“We are proud of the work that Ambassador Dina Kawar has done to promote bilateral commerce, a reflection of Jordan’s deep commitment to the peoples and economies of both countries.”

**- H.E. Nael Al-Kabariti, NUSACC’s MENA Co-Chairman and Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

“Ambassador Dina Kawar’s efforts have helped to showcase Jordan as an important commercial destination for U.S. companies. Her efforts to build bridges to the American business community, coupled with her dedication to advancing Jordan – U.S. interests, has helped to distinguish Ambassador Kawar among members of the diplomatic corps representing the Arab world.”

**- Mr. Don De Marino, NUSACC’s American Co-Chairman**

## Jordan: Punching Above its Weight

“I like to refer to His Majesty’s description of how Jordan deals with challenges and hurdles,” noted Kavar. “He would say, ‘Jordan has always punched above its weight.’”

“It doesn’t escape any of you that the economy of the Arab world is diverse,” said Kavar. “The potential is enormous, and so are the challenges. Within this vast market, Jordan, despite its modest resources, is a beacon and a success story, one with a highly resilient economy. Now, how do we do it? We do not believe that citing our ‘meager resources’ is a justifiable excuse.”

Kavar continued, “Today, Jordanian businesses are hailed in the region and internationally for numerous achievements, of which I would like to name a few. Jordanians produce the bulk of the Arabic language content online in a predominantly English-language Internet. We are pioneering financial technology solutions in response to the limited funding available to SMEs in the Middle East.”



H.E. Dina Kavar (center), David Hamod (left), NUSACC’s President & CEO, H.E. Fareed Yasseen (right), Iraq’s Ambassador to the United States.

“Our population, 60 percent of whom are under 35, is leading the way in IT, design, and construction, not to mention pharmaceuticals, where companies like Hikma have factories in Europe and the United States,” she pointed out. “Last week, NASDAQ received a new member to its trading floor, Jerash Holdings, a Jordanian textile company. I could keep going but, suffice it to say, Jordan’s businesses are growing steadily.”

“Furthering our economic growth is our main goal,” said Kavar. “The 2019 International Forum on Jordan’s Growth and Opportunity, expected to take place in London this February, will address our issues

and offer concrete projects and a road map for our economy. Women’s empowerment in the market will be central to this road map.”

## Resilience: Jordan Lives in a Tough Neighborhood

Jordan is largely landlocked, bordering Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Despite the turmoil in the region, Jordan has been a pillar of stability, serving as a commercial and humanitarian gateway to its neighbors.

Ambassador Joan Polaschik affirmed U.S. policy: “We are aware of the threats that Jordan faces, particularly from the remaining pockets of ISIS fighters in Syria and Iraq, the aggressive regional ambitions of Iran, and the irresponsible actions of the Syrian regime. The United States remains committed to partnering with Jordan to confront these challenges.”

She went on to say, “Ambassador Kavar has been instrumental in ensuring that U.S. officials understand the complexities of these challenges and aligning U.S. and Jordanian policy in the region, from Jordan’s contributions to the coalition to defeat ISIS to its leadership in supporting a responsible resolution of the Syrian conflict to its advocacy for a lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.”



H.E. Ambassador Salah Sarhan, Chief Representative of the Arab League.

For her part, Kavar stated, “There’s an undeniable and symbiotic relationship between stability and trade, and it is one that we are all compelled to nurture, especially in today’s political climate. Our region has seen turbulent times. From the start, Jordan opened its doors to incoming refugees who sought a safe haven from the conflicts in their own countries.”

#### **Words of Appreciation for Ambassador Dina Kavar**

“On behalf of Lockheed Martin and the NUSACC Board of Directors, I want to thank Ambassador Dina Kavar for her terrific service. Lockheed Martin has been in Jordan for 50 years, starting in 1967. We are proud to partner with Jordan and Ambassador Kavar to help build peace and security within the region.”

**- Ms. Nancy Ziuzin Schlegel, NUSACC Board Member and Vice President of International Government Affairs, Lockheed Martin (a Platinum Plus member of NUSACC)**

“The challenges facing Jordan are not in the news, and that’s a very good thing. This has a lot to do with the skillful leadership of the country by His Majesty King Abdullah, but I know that it has a lot to do with the skillful management of the messaging of his country by Ambassador Dina Kavar. Her quietness and confidence are very much noticed, and she sets the gold standard for public service.”

**- Rep. Jane Harman, President & CEO, The Wilson Center**

“My sincere congratulations to Ambassador Dina Kavar for the well-deserved recognition. She has had a uniquely distinguished career while being a champion for women’s rights and a role model in the MENA region and beyond. At Pragma, we are happy to have made Jordan home to one of our major regional offices.”

**- Dr. Paul Davis, President & Chief Operating Officer at Pragma Corporation (a Platinum Plus member of NUSACC)**



### Words of Appreciation for Ambassador Dina Kavar

“As a Board Member of NUSACC, and on behalf of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), an international trade association which represents the world’s leading research-based biopharmaceutical companies, I would like to thank Ambassador Dina Kavar for her outstanding contributions to the U.S. – Arab commercial relations and record of achievements.”

**- Mr. Samir A. Khalil, NUSACC Board Member and Executive Director of the Middle East & Africa at Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), a Platinum member of NUSACC**

“It seems to me that to be a successful diplomat, it requires skill, professionalism, a high character, wisdom, and discernment. Indeed, it’s those qualities that personify Ambassador Dina Kavar very precisely. I salute her for her consummate skills as a diplomat, and on a personal note, her warmth and kindness define her as a very special person.”

**- Amb. Edward Gnehm, Vice Dean, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University**

In recent years, she said, Jordan’s population has “increased by 21 percent, our energy spending by 500 percent. This has placed enormous pressure on Jordan’s limited resources, its infrastructure, and its public utilities. Today, we are seeing a steady annual growth at the rate of 2.2 percent. However, this is not much, and its impact is felt daily by the Jordanian citizen. Considering the incredible strain to the economy, this is a huge feat, and it is our claim to resilience.”



H.E. Dina Kavar (right) and Amb. Sean Lawler (left), Chief of Protocol for the U.S. Department of State.

“February 2019 marks 70 years of diplomatic ties between Jordan and the United States,” Kavar noted. “As we approach this significant marker in our partnership, and as we celebrate international trade today, I would like to urge all of you to consider Jordan as your partner for any future business growth. As His Majesty always says, ‘Investing in Jordan is in reality an investment in resilience, stability, and hope for those in my country and the region.’”

### Ambassador’s Closing Remarks

“In my four years in the United States,” said Kavar, “I have had the privilege of traveling throughout your beautiful and vast country from its busy cosmopolitan cities to its scenic and quaint rural towns. I also had the privilege of meeting, through my travels, members of the American business community and witnessing firsthand the ingenuity which is applied across many platforms and in a variety of products and services.”



“Every one of those trips serves as an eye-opener and a potential new avenue,” she noted. “A small country like Jordan can learn from the United States and also serve as a strong partner in many fields and practices.”

“NUSACC has played an instrumental role in facilitating these partnerships,” she continued. “The relationship we share with the Chamber has extended for many years. Together, we have forged strong commercial ties, connected businesses with both the public and private sectors, and enhanced the overall trade relations between our countries. Thank you to everyone at NUSACC for so diligently representing the region’s business interests.”



“Thank you all for coming on this cold December day,” Kavar concluded. “I am truly warmed by your friendship, hospitality, and kind gesture.”

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#### **Words of Appreciation for Ambassador Dina Kavar**

“Ambassador Dina Kavar has done us all proud by achieving so much in such a short period, and during such challenging times, since she assumed her post in Washington, DC. Ambassador Kavar has added considerably to the strategic partnership between Jordan and the United States across all branches of government, U.S. businesses, civil society, and citizens.”

**- Amb. Karim Kavar, President of Kavar Group (In 2004, in his capacity as Jordan’s Ambassador to the United States, he was NUSACC’s first “Ambassador of the Year.”)**

“It is a great pleasure and honor to celebrate an outstanding Arab ambassador, who not only successfully represents her country but also works very closely with fellow Arab ambassadors to advance interests in the whole region. Our honoree has outstanding leadership qualities that make her the right person for the job in Washington DC, which makes the award much deserved and earned.”

**- Mr. Fawaz Bilbeisi, Advisor to the Executive Director, World Bank Group**

To learn more about the benefits of membership in NUSACC, please click [HERE](#).

*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.*