

Special Representative Morgenthau's remarks at the "U.S. - Oman Commercial Relations Luncheon"

Thank you, David, for your kind introduction. My gratitude to you for your work in organizing this event, to the National U.S.- Arab Chamber of Commerce as a whole, and to the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Shaikh Saud Al-Nahari.

I'm Sarah Morgenthau, the State Department's Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs. Welcome to everyone here today – to our Omani guests, including Khalid Saeed Al Shuaibi, Director of the Oman National Program for Investment and Export Development, and to my colleagues from the U.S. government, including from the State Department: Deputy Assistant Secretary Daniel Benaim, U.S. Ambassador to Oman Ana Escrogima; and Commerce's Deputy Director General Jim Golsen. Last but not least, thank you to all of the business executives from leading U.S. companies who are here with us today.

What an honor and pleasure to dine with all of you following our productive sessions at the second annual U.S.-Oman Strategic Dialogue.

The United States government is committed to building upon the enduring ties between our countries: President Biden recently thanked Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for his personal leadership in the region, and reaffirmed U.S. interest in expanding opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

I'd like to take a moment to highlight the importance of U.S. companies represented in the room today in generating these opportunities. In my role as Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, I serve as the State Department's envoy to the U.S. business community. Through my work with senior leadership at State, our interagency collaboration, and my travels abroad, I hear us all saying the same thing about the value of American business as a force for good in the world.

The global success of U.S. businesses is both a reflection of American values and an important strategic asset, and strengthens the economies of the countries in which you operate. U.S. companies build on-the-ground workforce capacity in our partner countries, which, as our Omani partners know, means transferrable skills and expertise that, in turn, foster global innovation and growth.

This is why I – along with Secretary Blinken and senior officials across this administration – continue to stress your importance. You are the engine that drives our competitiveness around the world, and your input is vital to our continued success and that of our partners abroad. Which is why this morning, at our trade and investment working group, I delivered a number of key messages provided by all of you about your experience doing business in Oman, in the hopes that it may further grow our shared prosperity.

The State Department also recognizes the role U.S. businesses play in advancing our national interests around the globe. The Biden administration has made a historic commitment to commercial diplomacy as a key focus of our foreign policy. The results of this prioritization are significant, and the numbers speak for themselves:

In 2022, U.S. embassies helped deliver over \$355 billion worth of wins for U.S. businesses, delivering millions of jobs back home in the United States and in the foreign countries in which they operate.

Key to this success abroad are our embassy deal teams. The State Department has deployed a total of 1,500 economic officers to our embassies around the globe. Alongside our partners from Commerce, who we work seamlessly with on your behalf, they advance U.S. economic and commercial interests by identifying opportunities for U.S. companies in key markets.

To our Omani guests: although I have not yet traveled to your country, my team at the State Department has spoken highly of your nation, particularly of the rugged Hajar Mountains, pristine coastline, and towering dunes. My staff, who have spent significant time in Oman, tell me that your landscape is a reflection of a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Based on all I have experienced today during official and unofficial moments, I have to agree with their sentiments; Oman and Omanis are a special country and people. I hope to visit you someday.

In the meantime, it is an honor to be a part of advancing our bilateral relationship, built on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared strategic interests. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in the coming months and years, and I am confident we can find many ways to work collaboratively to meet the ambitious vision we have set forth in today's dialogue.

Thank you.