



57th National Day

THE STATE OF KUWAIT



FOREIGN POLICY OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT

THE cardinal principle on which the foreign policy of Kuwait is based had been enunciated by the late Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait when he declared that, "Kuwait lives under the protection of Islam as its religion, Arabism as its homeland, cooperation as its strategic path, tolerance as its motto, fraternity as its guidance, constitution as its *modus operandi*, justice as its rule, progress as its responsibility and peace as its goal". The objective of Kuwait's pursuit of diplomacy is based on a pragmatic and balanced approach and is conducted in accordance with the government's philosophy and the interest of the State. Kuwait adheres to a policy, which is characterised by clarity, straightforward and quiet diplomacy. It strives to strengthen cooperation with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. It advocates the use of peaceful means in resolving all problems between States in accordance with the principles of right and justice, away from conflicts, sphere of influence and International blocs. His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, while outlining the salient features of Kuwait's foreign policy, said that 'one of the main objectives of Kuwait's diplomacy is to cooperate with all countries to maintain world security and stability as well as reach sustainable development of societies.

Kuwait endeavors to promote peace among nations and enter into partnerships with brotherly and friendly countries for the development of societies. At the same time, Kuwait's policy is concerned with the safeguard of her independence and sovereignty and her freedom of political decision. His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah asserted that the pursuit of Kuwait's diplomacy is the first line of defence of the State's security and interests. This policy stems from her belief in a common Arab destiny towards the development of relations with its fraternal Arab States. Hence, Kuwait plays a significant role in the progress of the Arab League and its bodies and gives her wholehearted support to the Palestinian cause, which is at the core of Arab cause.

Kuwait is an ardent advocate of Pan Arabism and its policy and interest in the Arab world is motivated by its strong adherence to the principles of Arab nationalism. Indeed, for Kuwait, Arab solidarity is not an outfit to be put on and off to suit its interest. It is blood in the veins, a candle in the heart, heritage passed by forefathers, ambitions and security, language and religion, history and geography, air and water, an undiluted and a never ending inter-twined interest. Kuwait always has a throbbing heart for the concerns of the Arab nation. Its hands are always extended towards them. It is an active and vocal member of the Arab League and plays a leading role in promoting economic prosperity in the region through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Through Kuwait Fund, Kuwait launched economic cooperation with all the countries as well as attract foreign investments in Kuwait. In its pursuit of eco-



His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait



His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait



His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait

nomics diplomacy, His Highness the Amir said that the loans and grants provided by Kuwait Fund as well as the Kuwaiti donations for other International funds are a testimony of Kuwait's effective role in building bridges of friendship and cooperation by financing development projects in the four corners of the globe. Kuwait is vocal in its demand for withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all Arab lands illegally and forcibly occupied by Israel.

Kuwait has been a firm supporter of the Middle East peace process since the Oslo accords. At the 1994 donors' conference, Kuwait was one of only three Arab states to contribute to the Palestinian Authority, committing itself to \$25 million dollars in development aid to the Palestinian people, in addition to the millions of dollars sent by Kuwait-led multilateral funds for projects in the West Bank and Gaza. Kuwait again contributed to Palestinian development at the second donors' conference, held in Washington in 1998. Kuwait has declared its support for the Oslo process, has participated in all multilateral meetings related to the peace process, and has lifted the tertiary and secondary boycotts on trade with Israel. In response to the United Nations appeal for humanitarian assistance for Syrian war victims, Kuwait twice hosted a donor countries summit meeting, the first in January 2013 and the second in January 2014. Recently, Kuwait hosted a meeting of over 70 countries in Kuwait this February, to raise fund for the reconstruction of Iraq.

Kuwait emerged as the leader of humanitarian aid providers with a generous contribution of US \$ 800 million so far towards the planned US \$ 5 billion fund.

Being a Gulf State, Kuwait played a pivotal role in bringing about the unification of the Gulf Emirates. The formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a brainchild of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, was perhaps one of the most

important landmark of Kuwait's foreign policy. The idea of floating such a regional forum emanates from a common perception and outlook on regional and other matters by the Gulf States. His Highness the Amir of Kuwait conceived such a forum to promote cooperation and co-ordination amongst the member States in all spheres not only for their mutual benefit but also for the whole Arab nation. His Highness the Amir stated that Kuwait attaches importance to the unity among the Gulf Cooperation Council members to meet the challenges of rapid developments in the region. Kuwait was the host of the 34th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council in December 2013 which focused on the unified political stance of the member States on matters of regional and international concerns. The conference also laid emphasis on striving to attain economic integration.

On the Islamic level, Kuwait ardently believes that the progress of the Islamic Ummah is linked with the cooperation and co-existence of the Muslims in a spirit of tolerance and fraternity. Since the dawn of Kuwait's independence, this country exerted strenuous efforts, particularly under the sagacious guidance of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Al-Sabah, the architect of Kuwait's foreign policy and the Amir of the State of Kuwait, and the prudent leadership of His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister, to fulfil Kuwait's strong commitment to the welfare and progress of the Islamic Ummah. This was aptly reflected when it hosted the 5th OIC Summit meeting in January 1987.

On the International plane, Kuwait's foreign relations have always been balanced and based on openness. It is worth mentioning here that Kuwait was the first Gulf country to have recognised and established diplomatic relations with the erstwhile Soviet Union, in the cold war era. The recent

hosting of the Asian Cooperation Dialog Summit by Kuwait testifies Kuwait's eagerness to buttress cooperation among the Asian countries.

Kuwait is known as an ardent supporter of peace and stability and therefore it has always mediated for peace whenever the opportunity arose. In 1974, Kuwait mediated to include Bangladesh in the first OIC Summit Meeting in Pakistan. More recently, Kuwait played a mediating role in the standoff between neighbouring Gulf countries.

As part of Kuwait's role in pursuing a dynamic and pro-active foreign policy, Kuwait hosted the third Arab-African Summit in November 2013. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced a loan of US \$ 1 billion to African countries over a five year period in addition to another US \$ 1 billion worth of investments in the infrastructural development projects.

As an active member of the Arab League, Kuwait will play host to the 25th Arab League Summit in March this year which will focus on Arab integration, cooperation and coordination as well as the latest Arab developments.

This candid approach in the conduct of its relations with other countries, based on cooperation, understanding and continuity, is not a mere coincidence or a passing phase that might be altered with a change of faces in the government. Rather, it is a philosophy felt deeply by the government and is based on self-confidence and mutual trust between the citizens and the government of Kuwait.

Kuwait aspires to a new approach in International Relations moulded by a New World Order, which is based on international legitimacy and a rejection of the principles of using force, terrorism and aggression to alter the status quo.

It is an ardent believer in promoting international peace, security and stability. On this note,

Kuwait hosted a number of international and regional summits including the GCC summit, the OIC summit, Arab Economic and Social summit and Asian Cooperation Dialog summit.

Further, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, the architect of Kuwait's foreign policy makes regular visits to different countries to promote international peace and security.

Kuwait is currently in the midst of a transformation, as it considers its place in the era of globalization. The Kuwaiti people recognize the nexus between domestic and foreign policy, and have undertaken tremendous political and economic decisions that prepare the country for sweeping reforms. In recent years, Kuwait has deepened its commitment to democratic progress. It has expanded the voting franchise; embarked upon an ambitious plan to privatize the state-centered economy; and opened up the country to direct foreign investment. Kuwait is negotiating with foreign companies to invest in the upstream oil sector; and has closed the loopholes in laws protecting intellectual property rights. All these steps are aimed at maintaining Kuwait's political and economic viability throughout the new millennium.

Kuwait strongly advocates the continued role of the United Nations in ensuring international peace and security. Kuwait calls for international cooperation to protect humanity, individuals and groups from the dangers of ethnic, racial and State terrorism and all forms of concomitant threats and blackmails.

At the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other multilateral agencies, Kuwait is a major donor. Historically it has contributed 5 per cent of its GDP to economic development of other countries; this places Kuwait near the head of the list of donor countries as a percentage of GDP.

Kuwait's strong adherence to what it regards as the basic principles of her external policy has been put to severe tests on a number of occasions.

Kuwait does not compromise its principles and honour. His Highness the Amir had once said in October 1985 that 'our decision will remain free and we will not yield to blackmail, terrorism and emotionalism'.

Kuwait has strong conviction that World peace in general and regional peace, stability and prosperity can only come through a rational approach to divisive issues which could be and should be resolve amicably through discussions.

In this aspect, it has tremendous faith on the United Nations and its principles and charters, as a means of sustaining international legitimacy, peace and security of all the countries.

Therefore, it is no mere co-incidence that Kuwait shares the belief of all peace loving countries that adherence to the UN charter and respect for the principles and objectives of the United Nations Security Council will usher in a new era of peaceful cooperation and co-existence, stability and security and progress and emancipation in the Arab Gulf Region.

Ambassador's Message

Message of His Excellency Mr. Adel Mohammed A H Hayat, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait in Bangladesh

ASSALAMU ALAIKUM WA RAHMATULLAH WA BARAkatUHU.

Dear Friends,
As we step into the 57th Year of our glorious independence it is both a privilege and a pleasure for me to convey my fraternal greetings to the friendly people of Bangladesh. It is an auspicious moment in the annals of Kuwait's history to join the comity of nations through the annulment of the protectorate status in 1962.

I would like to pay special tribute to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait as he steers and guides our beloved country and its people with pragmatism, sagacity and wisdom as we strive to attain socio-economic prosperity.

Indeed, Kuwait's march to progress despite the challenges it encounters both globally and regionally, is a testimony of the astute leadership in Kuwait as well as the resilience of the Kuwaiti populace. Indeed, modern Kuwait is the fruit of the enduring traits of its people, shaped by the confluence of the Arabian Gulf, the romanticism of the desert and the Almighty Allah's endowment of oil resources. This Kuwaiti characteristic is further molded by the strong religious faith and thus we take great pride in the traits of benevolence, empathy, goodwill and humanitarian feelings in the Kuwaitis. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait has been in the forefront as a humanitarian practitioner. As a true leader of his people, he led from the front in endeavoring to mitigate the sufferings of the poverty stricken people irrespective of place, creed, ethnicity and race. His magnanimity and generous patronage has touched the world and the United Nations have rightly honored him with the award of humanitarian leader.

The transition to modern Kuwaiti has its roots as much as in the deep foresight of the leadership as in the perseverance and industry of the endeavoring people. Our forefathers struggled against all adversities, travelled to distant continents and shores for trading. The frequent and intense interaction led to cultural enrichment, garnering of new ideas and accumulation of eclectic knowledge that have put Kuwait in a good stead as it confronted the challenges of balancing socio-economic development with political aspirations of the people.

The transition became all the more facile with the contributions of the young Western educated graduates in different sectors of Kuwait. My Friends, today we honour and salute those sons of the Kuwaiti soil who have sacri-



Mr. Adel Mohammed A H Hayat

ficed themselves for a better, peaceful and prosperous Kuwait. Kuwait is rich not because of its oil resources but because of its enduring and enterprising people.

Dear Friends, as we reflect on our excellent relations with all countries irrespective of their status in terms of wealth, size and religious belief, I would like to recall the humanitarian role of the Kuwaiti NGOs and Charitable Organizations in the socio-economic welfare of the marginalized community in the world. Kuwait is an ardent exponent of people to people relationship and it is an integral practice of the Kuwaiti culture to share their wealth with the economically challenged people all around the world. Their conspicuous presence in Bangladesh can be seen in their noble and charitable activities of Kuwaiti NGOs in Bangladesh, especially in the infrastructural development and poverty alleviation of the rural Bangladesh. These NGOs have invested over US \$ 600 million and are continuing their effort. I feel proud to see Kuwait as a partner in the development strides of Bangladesh. Kuwait Fund has provided over half a billion dollar as soft loans to Bangladesh to cover some key projects in key sectors of energy, communication, electrification, agriculture and poverty alleviation.

Under the changed circumstances in a world fraught with conflicts, instability and environmental hazards, Kuwait believes that the pursuit of a vigorous socio-economic interaction and connectivity are strong confidence building measures scaffolding bridges of friendship and cooperation.

My Friends, our two countries have a big scope for availing the investment opportunities existing in Kuwait. My Government has liberalized the investment rules and regulations in Kuwait and opened new sectors for investment,

making it the most investment friendly country. I see with great admiration the emergence of a strong and aggressive business community in Bangladesh. I call upon these enterprising business leaders to explore the growing market in Kuwait and in the Gulf region using Kuwait as the hub. In the context of expanding and strengthening this bridge of friendly cooperation and economic interaction between our two countries, I would be happy to facilitate the efforts of Bangladeshi entrepreneurs investing in Kuwait.

Friends, given the shared principles of friendship toward all and Malice toward none, Kuwait and Bangladesh have steadily moved forward toward realizing their common goal of promoting peace, tolerance and amity in the world as envisioned by His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, our sagacious Amir and the visionary leader of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As a reflection of our common perception, both of our friendly countries stress passionately the upholding of the principles of respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries. This common pursuit has inspired our two countries to take a principled stand against terrorism and violent extremism. Just as Bangladesh pursues a proactive policy in strengthening regional cooperation, Kuwait too pursues a proactive foreign policy as a facilitator and promoter of peace, stability and friendship based on rationality and practicality, particularly in the Arabian Gulf region.

This close bond of friendly cooperation between our two countries have been shaped by the people to people contact and the frequent exchange of visits of leaders and officials of the two countries. I would like to recall here the valuable contribution of the Bangladeshi diaspora, numbering over 200,000 in Kuwait in the development of Kuwait. We have strong defence cooperation between our two countries that is growing steadily.

My Friends, Kuwait, and indeed the world, observes with great admiration the humanitarian stand of Bangladesh in coping with the mass exodus of persecuted Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar into Bangladesh. Despite its own constraints, Bangladesh opened its door of humanitarian sanctuary to the oppressed Rohingya community. Kuwait stands besides Bangladesh in this principled stand and hour of crisis and fully supports Bangladesh in all its endeavors to resolve the issue amicably.

Friends, while expressing my profound gratitude and appreciation to the friendly people of Bangladesh for the warm hospitality extended to me and my colleagues here, I look forward to the further consolidation of our deep rooted historical friendship.

Long live Kuwait-Bangladesh friendship.

Parliamentary life

DEMOCRATIC practice in Kuwait is imbued in the Kuwaiti entity itself. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, has reaffirmed Kuwait's adherence to democracy when he said that "Democracy is deeply rooted in ourselves and is not imposed on us". The Kuwaiti people have experienced democracy since a long time and it is viewed as a positive development in Kuwait's march to peace and progress.

The institutionalization of democracy is deep rooted in the social structure of Kuwait. Indeed, Kuwait's Parliamentary experience weaved its way through to the present form through gradual and steady development which characterized the growth of the Kuwaiti society and state system since its inception.

The Al-Sabah family, led by its patriarch, Sheikh Sabah 1, always adhered to consultation practice based on tribal traditions in his efforts to shape the destiny of Kuwait, as far back as 1752.

The Kuwaiti tradition encourages consultation and expression of ideas and opinions in Kuwaiti Diwaniyahs among the different segments of the society, irrespective of their social status. What emerged as a consensus had an impact on the formulation of State Policy which reflected popular will. Thus, the Diwaniyahs, numerous in number, served as a default consultative body in the earlier days.

Historically, elections in Kuwait go back to 1756 when the people of Kuwait unanimously elected Sheikh Sabah the First as the Head of State.

As Kuwait entered the 20th century, the need of the time brought about further development of the democratic institutions. Kuwait has known consultation system as the basis of government since 1920 when the first State Consultative Council, comprising of 21 prominent citizens, was formed during the reign of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber. It was indeed a historical indicator of a serious attempt to create a democratic atmosphere.

This was followed by the Municipal Council comprising of 14 members of which 10 were elected by the people and

the rest 4 were appointed. This Council made all types of decisions and recommendations.

In 1938, the first elected Legislative Assembly with 14 members was formed through general elections. This undoubtedly had a tremendous impact on the political life of the Kuwaitis. This was followed by the formation of the State Consultative Council.

After Kuwait gained absolute political independence on 19th. June 1961 through the termination of the January 1899 Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between Kuwait and Great Britain, new parliamentary life was initiated through the election of a Constituent Assembly that was entrusted with the task of framing the State's constitution.

Democratic experience in Kuwait became more mature, conscious and open with the election of the first Kuwaiti National Assembly in 1963.

The Parliamentary experience passed through a process of trial and error with each new experience strengthening the democratic spirit and institution.

An Amiri decree in December 1980 set up 25 constituencies, increasing the number from 10.

A constituent Council set up through an Amiri Decree in 1989 to recommend specific changes in the constitution to suit the need of the time, was in session when the country experienced a brutal aggression on August 1, 1990. Kuwaiti stint with parliamentary practice was a major target of this aggression. Parliamentary life was restored through General Elections held in October 1992 for the Seventh Legislative terms. Kuwait witnessed a democratic festival when Parliamentary elections were held in July 2003 to elect the National Assembly for the 10th Legislative term. Over 130,000 voters went to ballot centres in 25 constituencies across Kuwait to elect their representatives in Parliament.

Institutionalization of democracy in Kuwait was further consolidated when in May 2005, in a land mark development, parliamentary elections based on adult suffrage included women electorates and candidates for the first time. In the last Parliamentary elections in December 2012, three women were

elected Members of Parliament. One of them was inducted in the Cabinet as a Minister.

New Elections were held in November 2016 in which the government alliance group retained its majority with 26 seats while the opposition alliance registered an increase in their seats to 24.

A Parliamentary Deputy must be at least 30 years of age on Election Day. Government servants have to relinquish their respective positions prior to their contesting the polls. The technocrat Ministers not elected in the National Assembly are considered members in it by dint of their position in the cabinet. However, they do not participate in committees' work and cannot vote when an interpolation leads to a no-confidence motion against one of the Cabinet Members.

Kuwait is divided into 25 electoral constituencies with each constituency electing 2 representatives in the Assembly. Earlier, a voter could elect four members of his choice. However, in 2013, an Amiri Decree introduced the one man one vote system to institutionalize democracy.

The 50 seat unicameral Legislature is elected for a four year term. Currently, there are five geographically distributed electoral districts. Regular Annual Session is no less than eight months subject to budgetary sanction.

The Assembly sessions are only valid when more than half of its members are present. Decisions are taken by absolute majority of the members present.

Parliamentary representation is on a non-party basis since there are no active political parties in Kuwait. However, there are various groups representing varied interest groups. Elections in Kuwait meet a relatively high standard of fairness. The Government does not interfere or influence the voting mechanism.

His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait has the Power to dissolve the Assembly and in such an event, new elections are held within two months.