



Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah at the lunch banquet held in honor of His Excellency Mr. Etienne Thévoz, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation on the occasion of the end of his mission in Kuwait

13 October 2015

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
And prayer and peace be upon Prophet Mohammed bin Abdullah,
his family and all his companions

His Excellency Ambassador of the Swiss Federation Mr. Etienne Thévoz and his spouse,

Their Excellencies the Ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you,

As much as I am happy to meet you today, I am sad to bid farewell to His Excellency Mr. Etienne Thévoz, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation, who spent in Kuwait around four years, during which he represented in the best way, his country, his people and his government. Switzerland occupies a distinguished place in my personal experience. I lived there and did my university studies, which has contributed to the formation of my knowledge, my culture



and my outlook on life. Switzerland for me is not only the country of beauty, of beautiful nature and of prosperity. It is rather the rooted confederation, the country of democracy, the country of freedom, the country of justice, the country of law, and on top of that, it is the neutral country of the world. For, although Switzerland is located in the heart of the European continent, and despite its religious and linguistic diversity, it maintained its neutrality since the thirteenth century and avoided being involved in wars, which made it the cradle of the Red Cross, the headquarters of many international organizations, the second largest office of the United Nations Organization, and one of the fortresses of justice in the world. Here, I remember my late colleague and friend, Jassim Mohammed Abdulmohsen Al-Kharafi, Speaker of the National Assembly from 1999 until 2012, who told me every time I went to Switzerland, "Do not just enjoy the beauty of nature in Switzerland, but take the opportunity to enjoy the democratic regime and the refined and authentic people." I wish he was among us today, however, I have invited his sons, Mr. Louay Jassem Al-Kharafi and Mr. Talal Jassem Al-Kharafi, to honor the memory of their dear father.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Swiss-Kuwaiti relations are seen as a successful model of diplomatic relations, which have recently reached their closest level. The cooperation in economic, commercial, cultural, military and financial fields has reached good levels. The volume of Kuwaiti



investments in Switzerland has exceeded eight and a half billion dollars. An academic relationship between the University of Geneva and the University of Kuwait was recently established through a cooperation agreement for purposes of educational and academic exchange. In all cases, we Kuwaitis can never forget the historical position of Switzerland during the invasion of Saddam Hussein, till the liberation of our country. Switzerland welcomed the Kuwaitis who were in Switzerland at that time, and opened for them all the doors, including schools, until the liberation of the country. Switzerland also supported the legitimate position of Kuwait to the United Nations Organization and the international organizations. For this reason, it was agreed to celebrate, in 2016, the fiftieth anniversary of launching the bilateral relations between Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion, I recall my official visit to Bern, the federal capital of the Swiss Confederation, in September 2011, when, during the official talks with Her Excellency the Swiss President at that time, Micheline Calmy-Rey, she introduced me to Mr. Etienne Thévoz, as the new ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Kuwait. I remember my meetings with the representatives of Switzerland, our successful talks, and my visit to the exceptional Swiss Parliament, which is distinguished by its democracy and its unique historical building; it's a visit I cherish during the period of my official work.



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I regret to say goodbye to a colleague who is dear to us, His Excellency Ambassador Etienne Thévoz, who played a key role in the development of relations between our two countries. We wish him all the success in representing his country in the other countries of the world, with the same courage, the same energy and the same sincerity that we have witnessed during his stay among us for the last years. Perhaps his diplomatic work experience in Kuwait will enrich his experience when he assumes his duties in the State of Qatar, because of the great similarity between our societies and regimes in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). And the proximity of these countries will allow him to come, whenever he wants, to Kuwait, where he will always be welcomed.

On this occasion, I remember a verse of Arabic poetry that says: "We stayed in this place, and then we left, because life is an arrival and a departure."

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Those who work in the diplomatic corps know that traveling and moving out is the fate of the diplomats and their families. Departure, arrival, meeting, farewell and nostalgia, form an essential vocabulary in their life. As soon as the diplomat lands and starts - with his homesickness – his journey in a new place, he finds himself, the day he leaves with a large network of relationships,



friendships, memories, feelings and positions. And it is this network of relationships that makes it difficult for him to leave and tempt him to stay. However, the fate of a diplomat is to follow this circular movement, which brings him back, every time, to the starting point, and the result of this repetitive circular movement of the diplomat is a wealth of accumulated knowledge from various cultures, languages, information, history, and geography, making him a distinguished person in the society, and I say this based on the expertise that I gained through my experience in diplomatic work for thirty years, inside and outside my country Kuwait.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Kuwaiti diplomacy, which pillars were established by my mentor, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who was the dean of diplomacy in the world, is based on communicating with everybody, within the framework of the international and Arab conventions. It seeks to bring together and reconcile instead of arguing and cutting ties, within a framework of mutual respect. This diplomacy also believes in the importance of the humanitarian role towards people afflicted or needy. Here, I want to emphasize in my speech, an essential rule of Kuwaiti diplomacy, which is that Kuwait does never forget its friends, and does never forget those who supported it in difficult times. Their names will remain in the memory of our future generations. A friend in need is a friend indeed as the English proverb says, and the



position of Switzerland towards the tyrannical invasion of Saddam Hussein to Kuwait will remain engraved in the memory of our generations and in the history of Kuwait.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all, and I would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Etienne Thévoz for all his efforts in strengthening the various relationships between our two countries. I wish him success and good luck in his work and in the service of his country.