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**Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed  
Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a lunch banquet  
held in honor of the Lord Mayor of the City of London,  
Alderman Roger Gifford**

Sunday, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2013

**HE The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of the City of London,  
Alderman Roger Gifford,  
HE Jassim Mohammed Abdul Mohsen Al-Kharafi, former  
President of the National Assembly (1999 - 2012),  
HE Mubarak Baniya Al-Khurainej, acting President of the  
National Assembly,  
Their Excellencies the Sheikhs,  
HE Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime  
Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Their Excellencies Ministers and ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First, please allow me to express my extreme pleasure in welcoming our Honourable Guest, the Right Honourable Alderman Roger Gifford, Lord Mayor of the City of London, on the occasion of his important visit to Kuwait. His presence with us during this month of national celebrations is indeed an excellent opportunity for him and the accompanying delegation to see and enjoy our country, clad in its festive robes and ornaments, as we prepare to mark our National Day and Liberation Day celebrations.

**The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor,**

Britain and Kuwait have enjoyed a unique and long-standing relationship over the last centuries. Their record on bilateral cooperation of mutual benefit covers all sectors: on the political, economic, commercial, cultural and educational fronts.



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In all of these areas, we have built a solid future-looking partnership whereby the common interests of both our countries and our peoples have been carefully engraved and considered.

On the political level, we have enjoyed the most cordial and deeply-rooted relations, which have witnessed continuous flourishing over the years, culminating in the historic State visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the United Kingdom in November 2012.

In 1999, I was honoured by his Highness the late Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, to represent him in the celebrations held to mark the centenary of the friendship treaty between Kuwait and the United Kingdom, in the Presence of His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Lady Margaret Thatcher.

More recently, I was also honoured, in May 2012, by His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, to represent him personally in the celebrations held in the United Kingdom to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

For Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people, the United Kingdom has always been a close political friend, a worthy ally, and a trusted partner. Nowhere can this vision of the steadfast position of Britain and the British people in the eyes of Kuwaitis be more transparent than in the immediate and courageous response of the United Kingdom to stand by Kuwait in its hour of need.

On the economic and commercial levels, we have enjoyed a vigorous longstanding partnership. This vibrant partnership, as you indicated in your speech at Guild Hall in November 2012 at the banquet held in honour of His Highness the Amir **“can trace its root back to the eighteenth century when we traded saffron and silks, satin and spices through Kuwait as a key trading post.”**

As a testimony of confidence in the solidity of our economic ties, Kuwait decided to anchor the Kuwait Investment Office, its overseas investment arm, in the City of London, exactly sixty years ago (in 1953).



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As a result, the past half century has witnessed the burgeoning of Kuwaiti investment not only in London and the United Kingdom, but indeed with the City of London acting as the essential launching pad for Kuwaiti investment all over the world.

As His Highness the Amir mentioned in his speech at the banquet that you held in his honour at Guild Hall in November 2012:

**“We, in Kuwait, look forward to cementing the friendly relations which we enjoy with your country. We also seek to strengthen our investment ties through the work of the Kuwait Investment Authority, which was established in 1953 in London, and later expanded into continental Europe.”**

On the cultural and educational levels, there are numerous indications of the vigorous and flourishing relations that our two countries enjoy. Kuwaitis are currently considered one of the top visitors to the United Kingdom among the peoples of our area, and many of my countrymen have their second homes there.

Britain was the first among western nations to receive Kuwaitis studying on state-sponsored scholarships, and in the early fifties of the last century, Kuwait decided to set up the Kuwait Education Office, located at that time at 113, Park Lane. Since then, there has been a dynamic increase in the number of Kuwaiti students, both state-sponsored and privately-financed, who are pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate studies in all fields of academic specializations in the United Kingdom. Indeed, since the liberation of Kuwait, the number of Kuwaiti students in the United Kingdom has more than tripled.

As a result, thousands of Kuwaitis pride themselves in being products of prime British education, and over the years, many of them have, and continue to occupy, senior executive and leadership positions in the government and private sectors.

On a personal level, I am proud to have had the opportunity to study in British schools in 1955, and to be the recipient of GCE certificates at Ordinary and Advanced levels before proceeding to pursue my university education at the University of Geneva in Switzerland.



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More recently, and as a token of my great affection and deep gratitude to the British education system, I had the pleasure of endowing a chair in International Relations, Security and Regional Politics at Durham University, which is also the *alma mater* of the elder of my two sons.

**The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of the City of London,**

It is a great pleasure and we are delighted to welcome you, and attach great importance to your visit to our country. It is our deepest wish that your visit, **Lord Mayor**, will be considered a milestone in furthering and consolidating the historic ties of friendship, unwavering alliance, and warmest cordiality with which Anglo-Kuwaiti relations have traditionally been stamped.