



Foreword by
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Chairman and Founder
FIRST

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Official Report to mark the 120th Anniversary of the Anglo-Kuwaiti Friendship Treaty of 1899. Lord Astor, Lord Hurd and I are very grateful to His Excellency Khaled Al-Duwaisan, the Ambassador of Kuwait and his Embassy staff for all their help and guidance in the preparation of this publication. We are also especially grateful to Her Majesty the Queen and His Highness the Amir for contributing such important messages.

This Anniversary is particularly important and will help focus the attention of business leaders and policy makers on the many opportunities for further strengthening the links between our two countries. The Anglo-Kuwaiti Treaty was signed on 23rd January 1899 by Mubarak Al-Sabah and the British representative Major M.J. Meade. It was a secret treaty agreed between the British Empire and the Sheikhdom of Kuwait and under its terms Britain agreed to protect the territorial integrity of Kuwait and in return the access of other foreign powers to the Sheikhdom would be much restricted. This was an enormously important and influential treaty for both Britain and Kuwait.

The 1899 Treaty resulted in a period of significant expansion in trade and investment, as well as cultural and defence relations between both countries. These relationships have been further enhanced by the many official and State Visits since 1899. Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, visited in 1903, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a visit to London in October 1919, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah visited in January 1963, HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh paid a State Visit to Kuwait in 1979, and the then Amir HH Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah came on a State Visit to the United Kingdom in 1995. Her Majesty

The Queen welcomed the Amir, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on a very successful State Visit in November 2012.

Kuwait is the fifth richest country in the world based on GDP per capita and has a predominately oil-based economy, accounting for over six per cent of the world's proven reserves. Kuwaiti authorities plan to increase production to four million barrels per day by 2020. It is one of the UK's major trading partners with hundreds of British companies operating successfully in the country. The trade and investment relationship is especially strong in financial services highlighted by the establishment of the Kuwait Investment Office in London in 1952. The KIO's investments in the UK continue to grow exponentially. Kuwait represents a significant opportunity for trade and investment given its well-developed infrastructure and pro-investment government policies.

Britain's commitment came into sharp focus when Kuwait was invaded and occupied by Iraq in 1990. The then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher helped secure the UN mandate to form an international coalition whose purpose was the liberation of Kuwait. British armed forces played a pivotal role in restoring Kuwait's sovereignty and independence.

The 120th Anniversary of the Friendship Treaty gives us all an opportunity to study the important developments in both our countries and to weigh carefully the many opportunities to work together even more closely.

We at FIRST are delighted to have been asked to produce this official publication to mark the 120th Anniversary of the Friendship Agreement and hope that it contributes, in a small way, to the further development of the bilateral relationship especially in the areas of trade and investment. **F**