



Foreword by
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Chairman and Founder
FIRST

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Official Report to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Independence of the State of Kuwait and the Thirtieth Anniversary of Liberation Day. 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 special publication. We are also especially grateful to Her Majesty the Queen and His Highness The Amir for contributing such important and personal messages.

These Anniversaries are historic milestones in Kuwait's distinguished history and provide an occasion to focus the attention of policy makers and business leaders on the many opportunities to strengthen ties with Kuwait. Since independence Kuwait has pursued a foreign policy based on the peaceful resolution of conflict through cooperation and dialogue with the aim of advancing global peace and prosperity. This approach, combined with Kuwait's extraordinary humanitarian efforts that have been recognised by the United Nations, has been a major force for good in the region.

Kuwait maintains strong and enduring relations with friends and allies around the world – especially with its neighbours in the region. Kuwait's economic and political stability since independence has been a key point of competitive advantage under successive Heads of State. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jabir Al-Sabah has emphasised the importance of national unity, upholding the rule of law and adherence to the constitution and democratic process.

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 over four million barrels per day by 2022. Kuwait 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 and her successor John Major 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. It is with special pride that the United Kingdom celebrates the Thirtieth Anniversary of Kuwait's liberation with friends in Kuwait.

The Sixtieth Anniversary of Kuwait's Independence and the Thirtieth Anniversary of Liberation give us all an opportunity to study the important developments in Kuwait 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 these historic anniversaries and hope that it contributes, in a small way, to the further development of Kuwait's vital global and regional role. **F**