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# Region critical... diplomacy key: Amir

## Opinion

### O Minister of Interior ... Why such an angry face with every visa request?

**By Ahmed Al-Jarallah**  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

A COUPLE of days ago, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced that it will grant gold cards. According to the tweet of Vice-President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid: "Permanent residency will be granted to investors and exceptional workers in health, engineering, science and art. The first batch includes 6,800 investors with a total investment of AED100 billion."

Some days earlier, the Saudi Council of Consultants approved the 'distinguished residency' system which is not different from what has been approved by the UAE.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia opened its doors to investors from all over the world a few years ago without the need for a Saudi sponsor. In the UAE, there are free zones for this purpose. They also allow investors to hire the workers they need, away from complications such as age and questions like the names of their mothers and aunts and other outdated procedures that are still enforced in Kuwait.

A similar system was implemented in Bahrain some years ago. It turned the small kingdom into an international financial center, thanks to the off-shore system. All these support the economy of other Gulf countries which constitute the GCC along with Kuwait. GCC summits approved a number of comprehensive agreements; yet we, in Kuwait, are still working according to the systems of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, we see a decision being taken every day to close the doors to any investor by adding more conditions imposed by different ministries.

In this context, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior about the security obsession which controls decisions in your ministry more than in any other country. Despite the difficult security challenges that Saudi Arabia is facing; it approved flexible laws, issued decisions and enforced systems which opened the gates to diversification of the economy. The same steps have been taken by the UAE although it is facing security challenges which are more difficult than what Kuwait is facing.

Whoever decides to visit Kuwait will encounter all kinds of obstacles, starting from the issuance of visa that resembles a police operation. In many cases, it is subject to the personal mood of the person reviewing the application and it is up to him to simply dismiss the request.

In other countries, whoever possesses money to cover his stay in the host country receives the visa. On the other side, this process has become an evil trade which negatively affects the economy. It has become the most common reason behind the flight of investors.

We need to take a look at international reports classifying Kuwait as an investment repellent State. In 2009, Kuwait did not attract any investor at all. What was the reason then?

Minister of Interior, you have to study what is happening in neighboring countries, especially in terms of enhancing openness to the world. You have to watch the giant strides they have taken in the diversification of wealth sources. The ministries of interior in those countries, which are in charge of the issuance of visas and residence permits, always take the initiative in making dreams come true; but this is not the case in Kuwait. It seems we are going to Hajj at a time others are coming back. Why all this complication?

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## US goal to deter, not war with Iran

WASHINGTON, May 22, (RTRS): US officials who briefed Congress about Iran on Tuesday sought to convince lawmakers that President Donald Trump's administration wants to deter Tehran's aggression, not attack the Islamic republic, members of Congress said.

"I hope they're tamping down (the rhetoric). They tried to give that impression," Representative Eliot Engel, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, told reporters after the classified briefing for the full House of Representatives.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Joseph Dunford and Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan held the briefing after lawmakers, including Trump's fellow Republicans as well as Democrats, clamored for weeks for more information about escalating tensions with Iran.

The administration officials held a similar briefing, also behind closed doors, for the full Senate later on Tuesday.

### Imminent

At the closed-door sessions, they spelled out to lawmakers what they described as the imminent threat from Iran, or its proxies, to US personnel in the Middle East. Several Democrats said they were skeptical about the extent of the threat, but Trump's fellow Republicans generally agreed there was a heightened risk to Americans.

"There is no intention to go to war in the region. This is a deterrent operation to stop Iran's escalation and aggression," Representative Mike McCaul, the ranking Republican on the House foreign affairs panel, told reporters.

After speaking to lawmakers, Shanahan said the administration does not want the situation to escalate and that its actions to date had deterred attacks by Iran on US forces.

"This is about deterrence, not about war. We're not about going to war," Shanahan told reporters.

Pompeo, who has been an Iran hawk since he served in the House, made only a general comment that the administration officials had discussed their "strategic campaign" in the briefings.

Tehran and Washington have been escalating rhetoric against each other this month, following Trump's decision to try to cut Iran's oil exports to zero and beef up the US military presence in the Gulf in response to what he said were Iranian threats.

### Concessions

Trump said the tightened sanctions were intended to push Iran to make concessions beyond the terms of the 2015 international deal to curb Iran's nuclear program. Trump withdrew the United States from the pact a year ago.

Last week, Washington pulled some diplomatic staff from its embassy in Baghdad following attacks on four oil tankers in the Gulf.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday rejected talks with the United States, after Trump said Iran would call and ask for negotiations "if and when they are ever ready."

After the Senate meeting, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said they had told lawmakers the recent attacks on shipping and a pipeline in the Middle East were directed by the Iranian government and that US officials had detected worrisome communication between Tehran and a Shi'ite militia that prompted the military to quickly relocate an aircraft carrier.

"They explained to us how the Iranian threat streams were different than in the past, that the attack on the ships and the pipeline was coordinated and directed by the Iranian government, the ayatollah," Graham told reporters.

Some House Democrats accused the administration officials of twisting intelligence to make the case for what they see as an aggressive response to any Iranian actions.



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivering a speech during his visit to the foreign ministry late Tuesday. KUNA photo

### 'Build bridges'

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Tuesday the foreign ministry has a further responsibility to carry amidst "critical and very dangerous" circumstances in the region.

His Highness the Amir, accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a visit to the foreign ministry building, said escalation has been accelerating in the region and "we hope calm is restored and wisdom prevails."

His Highness the Amir said "these circumstances and challenges place upon you (diplomats) a doubling responsibility, and you should continue your diplomatic endeavors to achieve the higher interest of your country."

His Highness the Amir, received by Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, commended ministry's employees for building bridges of peace and cooperation with people around the world away from interfering in domestic affairs of others and good neighborliness.

"We, from a humanitarian approach, extended a helping hand to every needy in different parts of the world ... and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Kuwait charitable institutions are a clear example ...," he said.

His Highness the Amir said it has been almost one year and a half on Kuwait's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council, through which Kuwait diplomacy succeeded in "playing a realistic and balanced role towards a host of issues."

This role, he added, "was admired by many world countries despite sensitivity and importance of issues discussed at the Security Council."

"Kuwait diplomacy succeeded in representing the Arab and Islamic group, and defending causes of our Arab and Islamic causes," said His Highness the Amir.

His Highness the Amir was also accompanied by deputy head of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The meeting was attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, for his part, said Kuwait has been adopting a balanced diplomatic role that honors Kuwait's higher interests as well as meeting aspirations of the Arab and Islamic people.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, commending His Highness the Amir for setting foundations of Kuwait's diplomacy, said "we are living in an uncertain

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## Other Voices

### Shameful law!

**By Ali Ahmed Al-Baghli**  
Former Minister of Oil

Shameful is the law that prohibits naturalization of non-Muslims in Kuwait. This law was adopted by some of our parliamentarians, senior fanatics and "puritans". This disgraceful law, which is against Islamic principles and the country's Constitution, was praised by some moderate parliamentarians and the then government.

Islam as well as Muslim countries including the caliphates and others did not ban non-Muslims from obtaining citizenship like in our country through this unjust law.

Non-Muslim countries do not prohibit naturalization of people who embrace religions different from the religion of the majority. It makes us wonder how we enacted this shameful legislation and continue to respect it throughout these years while being an international humanitarian country and our Amir being the global humanitarian leader of the entire world.

In one word, this law is a violation of the least humanitarian principles. Here are some instances to prove the disgracefulness of this law.

The first instance is that of the King of

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US\$/KD 0.30400/10
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▲ <b>KSE +5.84 pts</b> at closing May 22 See Page 23
▼ <b>DOW -95.75 pts</b> at 20:10 May 22 See Page 24
▼ <b>Nasdaq -27.71 pts</b> at 20:10 May 22
▲ <b>FTSE +5.27 pts</b> at closing May 22
▲ <b>Nikkei +10.92 pts</b> at closing May 22
▲ <b>Gold \$1,276</b> per oz (London)
▼ <b>NYMEX crude \$61.23</b> per barrel
▼ <b>Brent crude \$70.55</b> per barrel
3-month \$ LIBOR rate 2.52350%

## Manila to hold second autopsy

**By Michelle Fe Santiago**  
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The body of Constancia Lago Dayag, the Filipina domestic worker who was rushed by an ambulance on May 14 to the Al Sabah Hospital where she was pronounced dead on arrival, will be flown to Manila on Thursday at 2:00 am on board Kuwait Airways Flight No. KU-417. The body is set to arrive on the same day at 4:40 in Manila, disclosed on Wednesday Philippine Charge d' Affaires Mohd Noordin Penedosina Lomondot.

"Through our strong representation with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the concerned Kuwaiti authorities gave us the clearance to bring home the remains of Constancia Dayag to Manila," stated Lomondot who is accompanying the remains to Manila as instructed by the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Dayag, 47, a native of Agadanan, Isabela arrived in Kuwait in 2016 to work as a household service worker under one employer. She was rushed at noon on May 14 by an ambulance to the Al Sabah Hospital where she was pronounced dead on arrival. Initial reports that came out on the Philippine media and several social media sites indicated that her body allegedly bore various bruises and contusions and was allegedly sexually abused.

However, the Kuwait Forensic Department released its initial findings that Dayag died of a natural cause and there was no foul play.

According to reliable sources, investigations by detectives showed the relationship between the maid and her sponsor and his

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## NewsWatch

**DUBAI:** Qatar will hold military exercises in a marine shooting range east of the city of Messaeed, from June 23 to July 4, the state news agency QNA said citing a Defence Ministry statement.

The exercise comes as tension is running high between the United States and Iran. Qatar hosts an important US air base, al-Udaid, near the capital Doha. (RTRS)

**ADEN:** The Yemeni Government on Tuesday lauded "courage and responsibility" of the World Food Programme (WFP) for revealing disruptive acts by the Houthi militias against humanitarian operations in Yemen.

The Yemeni Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the WFP disclosed that the greatest challenge to humanitarian action in Yemen is not fighting, but obstacles placed by the Houthi commanders in regions under the militia control. (KUNA)