Currently in Kuwait, a small state surrounded by emerald-green waters of the Persian Gulf, there are ongoing active preparations for celebrating the 90th birthday of its Emir, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The current energetic ruler of Kuwait, or the pearl of the Persian Gulf as the nation is sometimes called, will really turn 90 on 16 June 2019.

Undoubtedly, the Emir is one of the most intelligent, experienced, and, crucially, the wisest of leaders among the heads of state in the world. Anyone who has ever communicated with the Emir of Kuwait even for a short time invariably points out his wonderful personal qualities, such as nobility, honesty, devotion to duty, a sense of justice, his concern for Kuwaiti residents and noblesse oblige. We should also add a number of professional characteristics to this list (which the author has noted while working and meeting with the Emir), such as his outstanding analytical skills; the capacity to quickly and accurately find his footing in a complex environment; his ability to find counter arguments to someone else’s opinion; his political wisdom; expertise, and professionalism when making the right decisions.

Incidentally, the current Emir and all of his predecessors come from the Sabah family, a part of the Arab Bani Utbah tribe, which migrated north from Najd (Saudi Arabia) at the beginning of the 18th century. At first, the Sabah family settled in the Iraqi city of Um Qasr, but it was expelled from there by the Ottoman forces. From Um Qasr they moved to a small town / village of Kuwait, where they allied themselves with other Bani Utbah family clans, i.e. Al Khalifa, Al Thani and Al Jalalma. In 1716, these families signed an agreement to allocate responsibilities and spheres of activity
among the clans. According to this pact, the Sabah family was now responsible for the security in the town/village of Kuwait and collection of taxes in this region. Thus, the administrative powers over the town and the clan were now in their hands. In the middle of the 18th century, the Bani Utbah council of elders chose Abu Abdullah Sabah I bin Jaber Al Sabah to be the first Sheikh of Kuwait. Members of this family have since been ruling this state.

The current ruler of Kuwait was born on 16 June 1929 in the city of Kuwait. He is one of the oldest statesmen in the world, and is the 4th son of the 10th Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (who ruled from 1921 to 1950). Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was educated in Kuwait. He graduated from the Al-Mubarakiya school and then continued his studies with private tutors. He then gained valuable experience in various high-level administrative posts, including the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs (from January 1963 to July 2003), and helped successfully guide the small state through the “turbulent seas” of politics. In September 2001, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was vested with most of the powers of an Emir, because the former ruler of Kuwait, Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (his half-brother), suffered a brain hemorrhage. On 24 January 2006, the then Prime Minister, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, became the ruler of Kuwait. On 29 January 2006, he was sworn in before Parliament and became the 5th Emir of Kuwait and the 15th Sheikh to come from the al-Sabah dynasty. On coming to power, he pushed through some democratic reforms. As a result, women gained the right to vote and to hold positions within the government administration, and some provisions in legislation with regards to public gatherings and media outlets were loosened.

It is worth mentioning that in the current harsh climate of world-wide economic instability, when many countries are slashing their budgets and resorting to borrowing funds from abroad in order to survive, Kuwait, under the leadership of Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is providing economic assistance to other nations instead. Owing to Emir’s fairly rational policies, not only does the state’s annual budget review show a surplus, but the country also gives financial aid to many other nations of the world. Naturally, the money comes from the huge revenues Kuwait receives from its only key sources of wealth, i.e. oil. All in all, Kuwait follows conservative investment policies, which, owing to the rational course set by the current Emir, brings economic benefits as well as political gains to the nation.

Hence, for example, the former United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, presented Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with a Humanitarian Award in order to recognize his enormous achievements in providing aid to the needy on this planet. In his speech during the award ceremony, the U.N. Secretary-General said: “Kuwait has shown exemplary humanitarian leadership in supporting these operations under the compassionate and passionate leadership of His Highness, the Emir. Kuwait may be a small country in size but she has a big and broad and compassionate heart,” and provides humanitarian aid to nations engulfed in crises.

In turn, during his address to the nation, the Emir said that being recognized as a humanitarian leader was a true honor for his beloved nation and for all of its citizens. He said that Kuwait had always played an active and noble role in rescue and humanitarian operations, and that they had always helped people in need, who were suffering as a result of cataclysms, conflicts and wars all around the world. The ruler of Kuwait highlighted that engaging in charity work and helping other people were the core attributes of its citizens, which, with time, began to manifest themselves more and more.

The official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia made a statement regarding the honor bestowed on the Emir of Kuwait, which said that the Sheikh was recognized for his role as a humanitarian leader who supported aid work carried out by, among others, U.N. agencies all over the world. Kuwait has organized international conferences with the aim of collecting donations to meet the humanitarian needs of Syria’s population, who are experiencing one of the longest and most wide-spread crises of modern times.

It is especially important to note that the Emir of Kuwait has expressed feelings of friendship towards Russia. In his roles as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Kuwaiti leader, he has always supported and still supports a closer relationship with our nation in every sphere in order to ensure people in both our nations prosper.

Outcomes of the visit by the Emir of Kuwait to Russia served as a vivid example of the strengthening of relations between our two countries. During the meeting with the Kuwaiti leader, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, welcomed the high-level guest with the following words:

“Your Majesty, we have been acquainted for a long time, since you represented your nation on the global stage as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but this is the first time you are visiting our nation in the role of your country’s leader, and we are very happy to welcome you. The situation in the region is far
from simple, if not to say quite complex. We are delighted to have this opportunity to meet you, to discuss our bilateral ties and the situation in the region with you personally as well as your colleagues. Your Majesty, welcome to Russia!”

Bilateral relations in economic, trade and science and technology spheres received a substantial boost once the two sides established a Joint Business Council and agreed to set up a joint commission, with Moscow and Kuwait City taking turns hosting its sessions. “Friendship, established on the foundations of mutual respect, compliance with the rule of international law and a policy of non-interference in each other’s affairs, has continued to evolve and strengthen over the recent decades,” said the influential Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Qabas.

On this memorable day, Russians wish Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah health, happiness, prosperity, longevity and many more years of leadership that benefits our friends, the people of Kuwait.

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