

**Ambassador Baali's speech at the dinner hosted by USABC in honor of  
Minister Chakib Khelil**

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Honorable Minister Chakib Khelil,  
Chairman Paul Mikolashek,  
Distinguished guests,

I am thankful to all of you for joining us tonight at this special event, co-hosted by the Algerian Embassy and the US-ABC and featuring Dr. Chakib Khelil, whom I would like to thank very sincerely for accepting to be our keynote speaker.

Minister Khelil is not unknown to you and I know that we are all eager to listen to what he has to say. Therefore, I will limit my statement to a few observations about the evolution of the Algerian-US relations over the last six months.

At the political level, I am glad to report to you that our relations have never been as close and strong as they are today. Since last October, several visits of high-level officials from both countries have taken place in Algiers and Washington. In this regard, I would like to mention in particular the visits made by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mourad Medelci, and by Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel. Both ministers had very extensive and fruitful conversations with US officials on a wide array of issues of common interest.

Other visits are going to take place in the very near future. Next April 7, Attorney General Eric Holder will be in Algeria to sign an agreement on legal mutual assistance and discuss ways and means to strengthen the cooperation in the legal and judicial fields. The following week a high-level delegation from Algeria will visit Washington.

We are also working very effectively and resolutely in confronting global threats such as transnational terrorism. In this regard, we are committed to intensifying our cooperation in order to ensure optimal security for all air travelers, while preserving their welfare and dignity.

In the economic field, I am equally pleased with the growing desire shown by Algerian and American entrepreneurs to develop closer ties and do business with the full support of our two governments.

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More and more US companies are interested in the Algerian market as demonstrated by last October Start Up Conference and last November Infrastructure Event co-hosted by the Algerian Embassy and the US-ABC as well as by the successful Department of Commerce Trade Mission that visited Algeria last February.

As you are aware, a major trade and investment mission to Algeria co-organized by the Algerian Embassy and the US-ABC is scheduled for the last week of May and will be followed in June by another trade mission led by the US-Arab Chamber of Commerce of Houston.

The good news is that you have a growing number of Algerian entrepreneurs who are visiting the United States. Twenty of them from the agro-business sector just spent a whole week in California. Eight more are expected to attend the Summit on Entrepreneurship initiated by President Obama to build partnerships between the US and the Muslim world.

Moreover, my understanding is that the draft version of the very ambitious multi-billion Algerian development Plan will be finalized soon. Once adopted, this Plan will provide tremendous opportunities for US companies willing to invest and conduct profitable business in Algeria in sectors other than oil and gas.

Today, Algeria is more than ever a great destination for US investors and business community and will remain so for decades to come. As Government, we have the duty to offer a lucrative and stable environment for investors and we are committed to continue to work to improve this environment and to work closely with the US Government to put together the bilateral legal framework that is required to create a stronger and closer relationship between our two countries. The Customs Agreement is ready for signature and the Open Skies Agreement is still a top priority for us.

In addition to the efforts pursued by the two Governments, private Algerian and US citizens have engaged in very ambitious initiatives, such as the Algerian-American Foundation for Culture, Education, Science and Technology created in July 2009 and formally launched in January 15, 2010, aiming at taking advantage of the numerous opportunities existing in both countries and at strengthening our bilateral cooperation.

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In the same vein, many Algerian and US academic researchers and other experts and economic leaders are involved in various development programs, offering their experience and competence as contributions to the development of our country. These people must be praised for their initiatives and efforts and they deserve our full support and gratitude.

Before closing my remarks, I would like to express once more my sincere thanks to Dr. Smail Chikhoune and Ms. Elizabeth Stewart for their continuous efforts and cooperation with the Embassy and to renew to Mr. Paul Mikolashek my best wishes for success as Chairman of the US-ABC.

Thank you.