

Distinguished Global Leadership Award: Honoring Vision at MEI's 80th Anniversary Gala

WASHINGTON DC, DC, UNITED STATES, March 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last March 25th in Washington, D.C., I had the distinct honor of attending the 80th Anniversary Gala of the Middle East Institute, an evening that transcended ceremony and became a powerful reflection on leadership, resilience, and the future of global partnerships, especially nowadays.

At the heart of the evening was the recognition of His Excellency Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, awarded the Distinguished Global Leadership Award for more than two decades of transformative impact across energy, technology, and climate. In a time marked by geopolitical complexity and regional tensions, his leadership stands as a model of pragmatism, vision, and unwavering commitment to progress.

What made this moment particularly compelling was not only the recognition itself, but the way Dr. Sultan framed it. He accepted the award not as an individual accolade, but on behalf of the leadership of the United Arab Emirates, the dedicated workforce of ADNOC, and the resilience of the Emirati people. A statement that reflects a deeper philosophy: leadership as a collective force, rooted in national vision and shared responsibility.

Throughout his remarks, Dr. Sultan articulated a principle that resonates far beyond the energy sector, one that speaks directly to the nature of true alliances in today's world:

"You learn who your real partners are when real pressure rises. Not in what they say, but in what they do, and how they show up. And nowhere is that more clear than in the relationship between the UAE and the United States. Our partnership is one of conviction. A partnership like this matters now more than ever."



These words capture the essence of the evening. Especially to me, living between UAE, USA and Italy. MEI Gala brought together an extraordinary group of leaders, current and former U.S. cabinet secretaries, distinguished ambassadors, global CEOs, and influential figures in philanthropy, united by a shared commitment to strengthening the strategic ties between the United States and the Middle East.

In this context, the leadership of Gen. John P. Abizaid, Chairman of the Middle East Institute, was instrumental in shaping a dialogue that reflects both urgency and long-term vision. The evening was not only a celebration of MEI's 80 years of impact, but a reaffirmation of its mission: to foster meaningful, enduring partnerships in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

I also had the opportunity to exchange perspectives with distinguished figures such as Douglas Burgum, USA Secretary of the interior, and Jarrod Agen, USA National Energy Dominance Council, engaging in conversations that reinforced the importance of aligning policy, investment, and innovation to address shared global challenges.

Yet, what remains most vivid from the evening is the clarity of Dr. Sultan's message. In a world often defined by uncertainty, true leadership is revealed under pressure—through action, consistency, and the ability to build trust across nations and sectors.

Being present at this milestone event was, for me, both a professional privilege and a personal inspiration. It reaffirmed a belief I hold deeply: that the future will be shaped not only by strategy and technology, but by the strength of the relationships we cultivate and the values we choose to uphold.

The MEI Gala was not simply a celebration of the past 80 years, it was a statement about the future. And in that future, leadership like that of Sultan Al



Douglas Burgum, Secretary of the interior USA



Gen. John P. Abizaid, Chairman of Middle East Institute

Jaber will continue to play a defining role and inspire me daily.

Press

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Jarrod Agen, Executive director of the National Energy Dominance Council USA



Middle East Institute Leadership Award

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