



## Letter of Credence to the President



January 18th. Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson presented to the Honorable Barack Obama, the President of the United States of America, the Letters of Credence accrediting him as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Iceland to the United States of America at the Oval Office. Mr. Stefánsson is married to Mrs. Jóna Dóra Karlsdóttir.

## The Washington Post features recovery:

"Three years later, the unemployment rate has fallen. Tourism has increased. The economy is growing. The government successfully raised money from investors in the summer for the first time since the crisis."

[Click here to read the full story on their website washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

## Washington Post on EU negotiations:

"In a handful of countries applying to join the European Union, the European debt crisis has raised an urgent question: Why would we want to be part of that mess?"

[Click here to read the full story on their website washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

## 70 years of diplomatic relations



January 25th at the Ambassadors residence in Washington the 70 years of diplomatic relations between Iceland and USA were commemorated. Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson, MFA Permanent Secretary Mr. Einar Gunnarsson and Deputy Assistant Secretary Masha Yovanovitch addressed the reception. Among the guests were Ambassador Luis Arreaga from the US Embassy in Reykjavík and many officials and other guests

## Cabinet Reshuffle

A new Cabinet was unveiled in Iceland on December 31, 2011. During the reshuffle former Finance Minister Mr. Steingrímur J. Sigfússon was named Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture as well as Minister of Economic Affairs. Mrs Oddný G. Harðardóttir was promoted into Cabinet as Minister of Finance. Mr Jón Bjarnason, Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, and Mr Árni Páll Árnason, Minister of Economic Affairs, stepped down from the Cabinet. Other ministers retained their posts.

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## High Level Meetings in Washington

High level meetings, the Strategic Dialogue, between Iceland and the US took place here in Washington DC on January 24th and 25th. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Iceland, Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, led the Icelandic delegation at the senior level discussions that took place at the State Department and Pentagon. On behalf of the United States the delegations were led by DAS Masha Yovanovitch from the State Department and DASD Jim Townsend from the Pentagon.

The Strategic Dialogue has proved an important forum for open and candid discussions between the two countries. It is seen as essential to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

There were also expert level meetings on security issues and other global foreign policy issues such as coast guard co-operation in the Arctic, cyber security, and counter terrorism.

## ÞORRABLÓT: MIDWINTER FEAST



- [Icelandic American Association of Hampton Roads](#) – February 11, 2012
- [The Icelandic American Association of Minnesota](#) – February 11, 2012
- [The Icelandic Association of Washington, D.C.](#) – February 25, 2012
- [The Icelandic Association of Chicago](#) – February 25, 2012
- [The Icelandic Association of Northern California](#) – March 3, 2012
- [The Icelandic American Association of Southern California](#) – March 3, 2012
- [Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle](#) – March 3, 2012
- [The Icelandic Society of New York](#) – March 10, 2012
- [The Icelandic American Association of Central Florida](#) – March 10, 2012

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