

NATO Military Training Facilities in Persian Gulf

By [Stop NATO](#)

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At its Chicago summit in May, Nato in its final communiqué said that it looked forward to a better understanding of common security threats in the region.

A Nato official last year told Gulf News that the alliance was keen to reinforce its cooperation and relations with GCC individual members through the ICI.

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Manama: The allocation of a piece of land to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) in Kuwait is part of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) launched in 2004, a senior Kuwaiti official has said.

“The move consolidates Kuwait’s interest in international missions, especially that Kuwait was the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to join the ICI,” Shaikh Sabah Al Khalid, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said.

The land will be used by Nato as a training site under the ICI, he added.

“We are interested in the region’s security and stability and in being partners with anyone who seeks to achieve them. We are also interested in facilitating everything that is related to our contacts and consultations with Nato,” the minister said on Wednesday, quoted by Kuwait News Agency (Kuna).

Shaikh Sabah was speaking at a press conference in Kuwait City alongside his Belgian counterpart Didier Reynders.

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“We will strengthen political dialogue and practical cooperation in the ICI,” the communiqué said. “We warmly welcome the generous offer by the State of Kuwait to host an ICI Regional Centre, which will help us to better understand common security challenges, and discuss how to address them together. We encourage our ICI partner countries to be proactive in exploiting the opportunities offered by their partnership with Nato. We remain open to

receiving new members in the ICI," the 28-member alliance said.

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"We do want to deepen our engagement with our Gulf partners, through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," James Appathurai, the then NATO's deputy assistant secretary general for political affairs and security policy, said. "I do stress that our engagement with Gulf partner countries is a two-way street. The moment has come for us to work more closely with our partners in the Gulf and we are confident there will be opportunities to deepen our political and practical cooperation," he said.

Plans included more regular dialogue and political consultations to promote a better mutual understanding with the region and engaging in shared strategic analyses, he said.

"We can see how we can enhance military-to- military cooperation, inter-operability and public diplomacy so that we can better explain Nato and what it does and, at the same time, we at Nato can better understand the region," said Appathurai, Nato spokesperson from 2004 to 2010. He now serves as the Nato secretary general's special representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia.

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