

NATO Pushes Deeper Into Persian Gulf

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NATO Official Urges Increased Cooperation with GCC

-A new strategic concept for cooperation could be adopted at the next summit of Nato....Nato is actively reviewing its strategic approach for the 21st century in light of the new US administration and evolving global threats....

ABU DHABI — The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) should increase cooperation with North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) to overcome challenges in the region, urged Nathalie Goulet, member of the Parliamentary Assembly of Nato during a lecture on 'Future Relations Between Nato and the GCC' at the Emirates Centre Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

She is also senator from Orne, Normandy in France and vice-president of the France-Arabian Gulf Friendship.

Goulet said that among the individual members of the GCC states, only Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE have joined the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) so far. The ICI was launched in Turkey in June 2004 for global and regional security and offering countries in the Middle East region practical bilateral security cooperation with the Nato.

ICI is open to all interested countries in the region who subscribe to the aim and content of this initiative.. .."The ICI will be the focus of our discussion and we will examine the current aspirations of the GCC in meeting their security objectives through Nato," Goulet said.

"In the process we will look at the current challenges facing Nato in meeting its long-term objectives and examine the questions: Is Nato a solution for peace and security in the GCC? How well does the GCC fit into current Nato policies," she said.

A new strategic concept for cooperation could be adopted at the next summit of Nato, which is to be held in Portugal in 2010, Goulet said.

Though Nato did not initiate any internal process due to lack of explicit mandate from the heads of states and governments, a series of informal seminars were held by four American think-tanks in Washington between September and December 2008, Goulet stated.

Nato is actively reviewing its strategic approach for the 21st century in light of the new US administration and evolving global threats, she said.

She emphasised the rapid spread of globalisation suggests changes and modifications to existing Nato policies.

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