

NATO To Open Centers In Kuwait, Other Gulf States

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Brussels: Kuwait and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) are discussing plans to open a centre in Kuwait City, a Nato official has said.

The centre, the first of its kind in the Gulf, will help bolster relations and cooperation between the Gulf country and the international organization under the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

The initiative was launched at the Alliance's Summit in the Turkish city in June 2004 to contribute to long-term global and regional security by offering Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries practical bilateral security cooperation with Nato.

Kuwait joined the ICI in December 2004, followed by Bahrain and Qatar in February 2005 and the UAE in June 2005.

The official who wished not be named told *Gulf News* that no date was set for the opening of the centre in Kuwait City, explaining that international agreements usually took time to materialise.

However, he said that the other ICI member states could also have their own centres.

"Should other GCC countries make the request to open a centre, it will be considered on its own merit," he said.

North Atlantic Council

In 2006, Kuwait was the first ICI country to host North Atlantic Council (NAC) for a conference on cooperation with Gulf Countries. The NAC later took part in conferences in Bahrain in 2008 and the UAE in 2009.

Non-GCC Arab countries that have developed partnerships with Nato are Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan under the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative launched in 1994.

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