

Expanded Nato role 'will boost security'

CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING NOW ARE GLOBAL IN NATURE: FOURNET

By a staff reporter

DUBAI — An expanded Nato role in the Gulf is likely to contribute to greater security and stability in the region, Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of Gulf Research Centre (GRC), said yesterday.

He made the statement during his address at a conference organised jointly by the GRC and Nato's Division of Public Diplomacy in Dubai yesterday.

"Since first announcing its Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and stating its willingness to broaden its outreach to the Middle East region and specifically the Gulf, Nato has proceeded at a relatively rapid rate and has been able to conclude agreements with four of the six AGCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE under the ICI umbrella," he said adding that discussions are underway with Oman and Saudi Arabia and are likely to be brought to a positive conclusion shortly.

Highlighting the significance of Nato's role in the region, Sager said, "Given the volatile security situation that currently exists in the Gulf, Nato can play a role in assisting the region to develop more comprehensive and lasting



KEY MEET: Jean Fournet delivering the keynote address at a conference organised by the Dubai-based Gulf Research Centre and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on Monday. — KT Photo by Mukesh Kamal

structures that can deal with the dangers with which the region might be confronted."

He added that Nato's "knowledge and practice in constructing a multilateral alliance network, in burden-sharing as well as in promoting individual country specialisation ultimately leading to a more effective coalition, is unprecedented and of direct utility for the AGCC states."

Sager pointed out that over the past year, there have been a number of initiatives by GRC to build upon its

relationship with Nato. He noted that a year ago, the GRC hosted Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, Deputy Secretary-General Ambassador, for a roundtable discussion that coincided with the visiting dignitary's initial talks with regional governments about the ICI and Nato's offer of a broadened relationship.

The one-day conference, Sager noted, was organised considering the confusion and uncertainty about Nato's objectives and interests in general, and lack of understanding among the

general public about the ICI in particular.

"We agreed to hold this joint conference so that people in the Gulf region will become more aware about this important initiative and so that Nato itself can enlighten us all about its intended and envisioned role in the near future," he said adding that the existing perceptions have to be overcome if Nato is to succeed in making the initiative an important component of a more inclusive regional security dialogue.

In that context, it is important that one begins to better understand the composition of Nato as an organisation, to comprehend the relationship between Nato and the US as well as the rest of the member states and to get a better sense of the different components that make up the ICI.

In his keynote address Jean Fournet, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Diplomacy (Nato), said that with transformation as the key concept for its evolving process, and while keeping co-operation as its founding stone, Nato is re-inventing itself. He noted that since "the challenges we are facing now are global in nature, we need to try and bring about global solutions through a global alliance".

WMO to honour award winners

By a staff reporter

DUBAI — The World Memon Organisation (WMO) will kick off its Sixth Board of Management meeting for the year 2004/05 today at the Sheraton Creek Hotel and Towers, Deira.

The meeting would be attended by members of the Board of Management, founder patrons and trustees of the WMO.

According to the agenda, the welcome address would be presented by WMO President Haji Abdul Razzak Yaqoob, while Secretary-General Abba Ali Yousuf would present a report. Progress made by the WMO regional chapters would also be listed while a report would be presented on the funds raised for various projects.

After the first day of the meeting, members of the board would visit the new

premises of the WMO Headquarters at Dubai Humanitarian City. Later award winners from the UK, Pakistan and Portugal would be felicitated and presented a WMO memento in recognition of their achievements.

Those in line for awards included Sir Iqbal A.K.M. Sacranie OBE on receiving knighthood conferred by Queen Elizabeth, Dr Abdool Magid Vakil on receiving Ordem Do Infante Dom Henrique conferred by president of Portugal, and late Haji Abdul Razzak Tabba on receiving Sitara-e-Imtiaz, late Haji Abdul Latif Jamal on receiving Nishan-e-Imtiaz, Bashir Ali Muhammed on receiving Sitara-e-Imtiaz, Moin M. Fudda on receiving Sitara-e-Imtiaz, Dadabhoy on receiving Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Zubair Habib on receiving Tamgha-e-Imtiaz conferred by president of Pakistan.