

Nato official stresses need for cooperation

By a staff reporter

ABU DHABI — Nato's relationship with countries in the region has more than decennial tradition through the Mediterranean Dialogue, said Nicola de Santis, Head of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Countries (ICI) Section, Nato Public Diplomacy Division.

In a lecture he delivered at the Information Affairs Office of Shaikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, he said in order to enhance Mediterranean Dialogue and to reach out to countries in the broader Middle East region, in December 2003 Nato nations decided to consult, before the June 2004 Istanbul Summit "our Mediterranean partners and interested countries in the broader region."

Nato has launched at its Istanbul Summit a more ambitious and expanded framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue, he said while reminding the audience that Nato's Mediterranean Dialogue was launched in December 1994, reaching out to non-Nato nations in the Mediterranean, willing and able to contribute to security and stability in the

REGIONAL SECURITY

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including public diplomacy; civil emergency planning; science and environment; crisis management; defence policy and strategy; small arms and light weapons; global humanitarian mine action; initiatives on WMD proliferation and a sound programme of military cooperation.

The ICI aims at enhancing security and regional stability through a new transatlantic engagement in the broader Middle East region, by promoting practical cooperation with interested countries, in areas where Nato can represent an added value, said De Santis.

He underlined that Nato has had talks for the moment with six individual members of the GCC: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, adding that four countries — Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE — have joined the ICI.

Concerning the role of Nato in solving the conflict in the Middle East, De Santis stated that the Alliance is not a party in this conflict and that no one has asked Nato to intervene. However, he said, Nato does support the Quartet and the United Nation's efforts in solving this issue.

region," De Santis explained.

He said that since 1997, measures to enhance practical cooperation between Nato and Mediterranean Dialogue were laid down in an annual Work Programme, which aimed at building mutual confidence through active cooperation in security-related areas.

The Work Programme comprises a wide range of activities