Developing Practical Cooperation through Science

Kuwait has been engaged with NATO since the creation of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), launched at the Istanbul Summit in 2004.

The NATO SPS Programme enables close collaboration on issues of common interest to enhance the security of NATO and partner nations by facilitating international efforts to meet emerging security challenges, supporting NATO-led operations and missions, and advancing early warning and forecasting for the prevention of disasters and crises.

The current SPS Key Priorities include:

- *Counter-Terrorism;*
- *Energy Security;*
- *Cyber Defence;*
- *Defence against CBRN Agents;*
- *Environmental Security;*
- *Security-related Advanced Technology;*
- *Border and Port Security;*
- *Human and Social Aspects of Security*.

Additionally, the SPS Programme helps to promote *regional security* through scientific cooperation among partners. The Programme also helps to *prepare* interested eligible nations for NATO membership. SPS activities often have a high *public diplomacy* value.

KUWAIT

Kuwait engages with NATO through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) partnership framework, and is therefore eligible to participate in activities supported by the SPS Programme. Following the inauguration of the NATO-ICI Regional Centre (NIRC) in Kuwait in 2017, the SPS Programme also launched several tailor-made Advanced Training Courses (ATC) hosted at the Centre.

Below are some examples of recent activities involving Kuwait implemented under the framework of the NATO SPS Programme.

Cooperative Activities

Following initial discussions between NATO Staff and Kuwaiti authorities in January 2017, and an SPS Information Day held at the Centre, a consolidated package of tailor-made SPS ATCs was developed. The purpose of the courses was to deepen collaboration, forge networks among experts, and enhance security and defence capacities of ICI countries through tailored support. The package, approved by Allies in November 2017, included ATCs in the fields of **Cyber Defence**, **Critical Infrastructure Protection**, and **Defence against CBRN Agents**. It was open to participants from all ICI countries.

- Two tailor-made ATCs, held in February 2018 and March 2019 and attended by 54 official representatives and experts of the private energy sector, focused on critical energy infrastructure protection and resilience. They addressed different kinds of threats, including cyber or terrorist attacks and natural disasters, and discussed how to maintain the energy supply chain and operational resilience. [ref. G5519 and G5522].

- In the field of cyber defence, SPS supported the delivery of two courses: an Introduction to Network Security Course in March-April 2019, and an Introduction to Network Vulnerability Assessment Course in October 2019. They provided students with a thorough conversational knowledge of the dominant terminology and principles involved in the bits-in-transit aspect network security, and an understanding of the methods and operations used to exploit cyber networks. [ref. G5521]

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- Two tailor-made ATCs, held in December 2017 and spring 2019, focused on CBRN incidents. The events trained a total of 45 participants, enriching their way of tackling different CBRN incident scenarios and improving their preparedness and emergency-response organization abilities. They also developed the security standards required for successful cooperation during and in the aftermath of CRBN incidents, aligning them to international requirements. [ref. G5518 and G5521].

Based on the success of the first courses, another package of activities was approved in March 2020. It included three ATCs:

- In the field of cyber defence, new iterations of the ATCs "Introduction to Network Security" and "Introduction to Network Vulnerability Assessment and Risk Mitigation" took place in September and December 2020 respectively. [ref. G5742]

- A Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Course was held in November 2020, and addressed challenges associated with protecting critical energy infrastructure from threats, including cyber, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters, and how to maintain the supply chain and operational resilience in the energy domain. [ref. G5737]

Two additional courses took place in the course of 2021:

- A new edition of the ATC "Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection and Resilience" was delivered in October 2021 to 19 trainees from state institutions in four Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. [ref. G5966]

- A 10-week Advanced Cyber Defence Course on Network Security was taught between October-December. This activity represented an advancement on the previous introductory-level cyber defence courses taught at the NIRC with support from SPS. With this course, trainees participated for the first time in the complete "Network Security" course, which is part of the cyber defence Professional Development Curriculum taught at the NATO School Oberammergau. 27 cyber defence professionals from institutions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia received information that will help them to enhance the protection of IT networks in their own countries, identify potential vulnerabilities, and familiarize with tools to mitigate them. [ref. G5967]