Kuwait signs security agreement with NATO

Kuwait on Tuesday signed a security agreement with Nato at the opening of an international conference to discuss boosting security links with Gulf Arab states.

The Information Security Agreement, signed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al Sabah and Nato Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, will regulate the exchange of security information between the 26-member Nato and oil-rich Kuwait as part of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

The deputy head of Kuwait's National Security Agency, Sheikh Thamer Ali Al Sabah, told reporters the agreement would allow the exchange of "classified" security and defence information between Nato and Kuwait.

"The agreement will enhance the existing security cooperation between Nato and Kuwait … It also involves exchange of information on countering terrorism," he said.

Kuwait is the only country of the ICI that has signed such an agreement, he said.

Around 120 Nato delegates are attending the "International Conference of Nato and Gulf Countries: Facing Common Challenges through ICI."

A number of senior officials, including Bahrain's crown prince, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and military commanders are representing the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at the conference.

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