US-IRAQ-KUWAIT TRILATERAL EXERCISES

The US Navy, Army and Coast Guard together with Iraqi and Kuwaiti navies and Kuwait Coast Guard, solidified the creation of the first in a series of US-Iraq-Kuwait trilateral exercises following an initial planning conference held at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. This was announced from Manama, Bahrain, on 13 July.

This US-Iraq-Kuwait trilateral will be a quarterly exercise that serves to develop the proficiency of all participating forces to work together in support of regional safety and security.

Here the trilateral will replace two separate monthly US-Iraq and US-Kuwait bilateral exercises and serves to support long-term regional cooperation of forces in the Arabian Gulf.

In the words of Captain Abdulate’ef K Obaid, Iraqi navy senior naval representative: ‘We are happy to work cooperatively with our brotherly Kuwaiti navy to protect our waters from external threats.’

‘It will be a good opportunity to reengage with our Iraqi friends in order to secure the area from any threats,’ said Cmdr Walid Sabti, Kuwaiti navy head of training. He added: ‘We have the same needs for security, and the success of this exercise depends on each other.’

Commander, Task Force (CTF) 55 facilitated the conference, which consisted of representatives from US, Kuwaiti and Iraqi forces in order to solidify schedule of training events and address any potential challenges that might take place during the trilateral.

‘We value greatly the role this exercise will play in building security interoperability, as well as for the enhancement of our collective capability to operate forward in the Arabian Gulf and promote regional political and economic stability,’ said Captain Andrew Arnold, commodore, CTF 55.

The trilateral concept was driven by the desire of the three partner nations to cooperatively address threats that exist in the Arabian Gulf. The Republic of Iraq became a member of the Combined Maritime Forces in February. With a desire to increase its involvement in maintaining security and stability in the region, planning for the exercise series began.
'The trilateral exercise this August with our partners, Kuwait and Iraq, is a significant milestone because it is the first joint exercise since 2006 that simultaneously involves both countries,’ said Arnold.

Training will include a search and rescue exercise; night-time joint patrol; visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations; fast attack craft and fast inshore attack craft defence; first-aid response and maritime infrastructure protection.

‘We would like to have medical exchanges between ships with as many people as possible,’ said Sabti. ‘It is valuable information, and it would be good to share that.’

CTF 55 controls surface forces including U.S. Navy coastal patrol craft and U.S. Coast Guard patrols boats in the US 5th Fleet area of operations. US 5th Fleet continues to expand its relationship with Iraqi and Kuwaiti forces through key leader engagements, professional exchanges and by conducting exercises in the Arabian Gulf.

Picture caption
Gunner’s Mate 1st Class Christopher Lamotte assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) dismounts a .50-cal to demonstrate how to properly perform maintenance to Iraqi Navy sailors assigned to Iraqi Swift Boat (P-308) during a monthly Iraqi bilateral exercise.

The Iraqi bilateral is a monthly exercise with US Navy, US Coast Guard and the Iraqi Navy.

The US participates in bilateral exercises with partner nations in order to build and strengthen solid partnerships throughout the region. Commander, Task Force 55 controls surface forces including US Navy coastal patrol crafts and US Coast Guard patrol boats throughout the US 5th Fleet area of operations. (US Navy Combat Camera photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Torrey W Lee/Released).