

News Release



**Allied Maritime Command
Northwood**



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NATO praises crew's actions in preventing pirate attack

LONDON: A British flagged, Norwegian owned car carrier, MV Tortugas, successfully repelled a pirate attack yesterday afternoon by two pirate skiffs in the Somali Basin approximately 630 nautical miles south-west of the Seychelles. MV Tortugas was able to prevent the pirates hijacking the vessel because it adopted the recommended best management practices. The vessel used fire hoses and a speed of 20 knots to out run and out manoeuvre the pirates.

The Self Protection "Best Management Practices" for maritime shipping have been in place for over a year. Ships are advised not to travel at low speeds or give pirates easy access by leaving ropes or boarding ladders hanging over the side. They are also advised to have water cannons rigged and razor wire around the ship's structure to prevent pirates climbing on board.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin has become an increasing concern to the international community in recent years; up to 95% of the world's sea trade passes through the area on an annual basis. Since NATO warships, ships from the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and Combined Maritime Force, together with other maritime nations have been patrolling the area, piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden have dropped by 50%.

The NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) is NATO's primary point of contact with the Maritime Community and is used by NATO as the tool for communicating and coordinating initiatives and efforts with the other military actors and thereby supporting the maritime community to

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reduce incidents of piracy. Making the merchant community aware of Industry Best Management Practices, is one of their main tasks, and is now proving to have positive effects.

All international shipping transiting the area are encouraged to check in with the UK's Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO) based in Dubai and the EU's Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) in London so that their transits can be monitored and any incidents quickly reported to the master of the vessel.

For more information on Best Management Practices and piracy alerts, visit the NATO Shipping Centre's website www.shipping.nato.int

Notes to editors

1. At the request of the UN in late 2008, NATO started to provide escorts to UN World Food Programme vessels transiting through the Somali Basin. This operation has now been succeeded by Operation Ocean Shield, which as well as deterring and disrupting pirate activity additionally offers training to regional countries in developing their own capacity to combat piracy activities.
2. NATO is conducting counter-piracy activities in compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions (1816, 1838, 1846, 1851 and 1897) and in coordination with other international actors, including the European Union.
3. The NATO task force TF 508 conducting Operation Ocean Shield is one out of three coalition task forces operating in the fight against piracy. TF 508 consists presently of five ships:

HMS CHATHAM (Flagship - Royal Navy)

USS COLE (US Navy)

TCG GELIBOLU (Turkish Navy)

HS LIMNOS (Greek Navy)

ITS SCIROCCO (Italian Navy)

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