



NEWS RELEASE
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NATO COMMANDER HOSTS PUNTLAND AUTHORITIES OFF
BOOSAASO

Commodore Steve Chick, the Commander of the NATO Task Force patrolling the waters off Somalia as part of NATO's counter-piracy operation, code-named Ocean Shield, had the opportunity to speak with Puntland authorities yesterday on board NATO flag ship HMS CHATHAM.

During the visit, the visitors were briefed on NATO's and the other counter piracy forces, including the EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) operations in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean to fight piracy. The naval forces co-operate to help deter piracy and protect merchant ships, trading dhows and Somali fisherman from pirate attacks.

The visit also provided the opportunity for the visitors to outline what actions had been taken within their respective regions to counter piracy.

Commodore Chick stated:

'NATO is fully committed to tackling piracy and co-ordinates its efforts with the international community and other organisations around the Horn of Africa. It is only through the activities of the authorities ashore that a long term solution to this problem can be found. That is why today's meeting is so important. Both parties need to know what the other side is doing so that, where possible, we can co-ordinate our efforts.

TEXT ENDS

Background Information:

NATO has contributed to the international counter piracy effort off the Horn of Africa since December 2008. The mission has expanded from escorting UN and World Food Programme Shipping under Operation Allied Provider to protecting merchant traffic in the Gulf of Aden under Operation Allied Protector. In addition to these activities and as part of the latest mission, Operation Ocean Shield, NATO is offering to countries in the region, upon their request, to help develop their own capacity to

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combat piracy. This complements the existing international efforts as coordinated with the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia (CGPCS).

NATO recently announced its commitment to counter piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

The NATO Task Force consists of 5 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:

HMS CHATHAM (Flagship) – UK
USS COLE – US
TCG GELIBOLU – Turkey
HS LIMNOS - Greece
ITS SCIROCCO – Italy

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