

News Release



Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood
www.manw.nato.int



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NATO WARSHIP AMSTERDAM DISRUPTS ANOTHER PIRATE SKIFF

LONDON: Yesterday, the Dutch warship AMSTERDAM part of NATO's counter-piracy operation OCEAN SHIELD, detected a pirate skiff while patrolling along the east coast of Somalia. AMSTERDAM's helicopter detected the skiff as it was speeding down the coastline. Upon closer inspection, it was established that the attack-skiff was rigged with two powerful engines and had 7 suspected pirates on board with pirate paraphernalia clearly visible.

When the suspected pirates realised that they had been spotted, they fled to the shore. Convinced that these suspected pirates would eventually attempt to go to sea to hijack a ship, AMSTERDAM remained in the area. Throughout the day the warship kept an eye out for the skiff and as it attempted to get to sea last night, AMSTERDAM was waiting and ready. The warship's boarding teams launched in their fast boats and intercepted the skiff before it could reach the shore.

As the skiff refused to stop, the boarding team disabled the engines, stopping the skiff for the teams to board. The suspected pirates had been observed throwing a pirate ladder overboard prior to the skiff being boarded. Other pirate related paraphernalia was confiscated.

Capt. Fred Smith, (US Navy) based at NATO's Maritime HQ in Northwood said, "This disruption of a pirate group by a NATO warship continues to put pressure on the pirates. This is our third NATO disruption in five days and should send a message to the pirates that we are not prepared to sit back and watch them leave the shore on another pirating mission." *Ends*

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

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 and 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 working with other international bodies to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to quickly respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world. A capable, stand-alone task group and one of four standing maritime elements that form a flexible core around which NATO can build a larger force to meet a wide range of missions that will include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response, embargo operations, etc.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America
USS LABOON - United States of America
HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
RFA FORT VICTORIA (With a Royal Marines boarding team embarked) – United Kingdom
ITS BERSAGLIERE – Italy
HNLMS AMSTERDAM - Netherlands

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