

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



19 November 2010

NATO Warship Amsterdam disrupts pirates in the Indian Ocean

This morning whilst on sea patrol near the pirate camps on the east coast of Somalia, a helicopter from Dutch warship HNLMS Amsterdam, who is operating as part of NATO's counter-piracy mission - Operation Ocean Shield, identified an 'attack group' of suspected pirates. Equipment, such as ladders and weapons were clearly visible inside the pirate 'whaler' and two attack skiffs.

As the Dutch helicopter fired warning shots, HNLMS Amsterdam's Commanding Officer gave the order to launch the ship's boarding teams to intercept the suspected pirates. After throwing their pirate equipment over board, the gang surrendered and were taken to the warship for questioning and collection of evidence. The whaler was destroyed by the NATO warship to avoid it being used for piracy again.

"The pirates have been active this season, and whilst it is impossible for warships to be in every part of the Indian Ocean, this disruption demonstrates that NATO is being effective in the areas where we do operate. There is now one less pirate attack gang to worry about." Commodore Christian Rune Royal Danish Navy, Commanding of NATO counter-piracy operation Ocean Shield said.

HNLMS Amsterdam was, until yesterday, under the command of the EU counter piracy operation ATALANTA. She completed a seamless transition to NATO's counter piracy mission, Operation

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OCEAN SHIELD, and continues with her counter-piracy duties. This is another example of the excellent cooperation that exists between NATO and the EU.

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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.

In March 2010, NATO announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

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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