

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood**



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## **NATO COMMANDER MEETS MINISTERS FROM PUNTLAND**

Earlier today, Commodore Michiel Hijmans, Commander of NATO's counter piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield, hosted a meeting on board his flagship, HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën, for Ministers from Puntland. It was the first meeting between the Puntland Ministers and Commodore Hijmans (Royal Netherlands Navy), who took up his role 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2010.

The purpose of the talks was to build on the existing and growing relationship that has developed between NATO and the Puntland authorities. Through these meetings, NATO aims to improve local knowledge and to assist regional states, upon their request, in developing their own ability to combat piracy activities.

Present at the meeting were the Minister of Ports, Fisheries and Counter Piracy, Mr. Said Rage; the Vice Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Mohamed A. Salah; the Director General of Counter Piracy, Mr. Abdirizak Mohamed Ahmed and the Director General of the Ministry of Fisheries, Mr. Abdiwahid Mohamed Hersi. Covering a wide range of topics, the talks were aimed at bringing both sides up to date with the significant progress that has been made in countering piracy in the Gulf of Aden. They also covered ways in which further cooperation between NATO and the Puntland authorities could be developed.

During the talks Commodore Hijmans received a telephone call from the President of Puntland, His Excellency, President Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud "Farole". President Farole and Commodore Hijmans spoke about the progress the Farole administration is making to counter piracy off the Horn of Africa and to bring stabilization to Puntland.

Speaking after the talks, Commodore Michiel Hijmans said: "Meetings like this are important to help obtain long term success against piracy in this region."

**Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)**

NATO works alongside the European Union Task Force (EUNAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) as well as independent nations to tackle the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin.

**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.

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

The NATO Task Force consists of 3 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:

HNLMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEËN (Flagship) – NLD  
USS COLE – USA  
TCG GELIBOLU – TUR

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