

News Release



**Headquarters Allied Maritime
Command Northwood**



Ref: SNMG2 2010 / 31

2nd August 2010

MINISTER OF PUNTLAND STATE OF SOMALIA VISITS NATO FLAGSHIP

Over the weekend, the Minister of Ports, Fisheries and Counter Piracy, Mr. Said Rage, and a delegation of the Puntland Coastal Monitoring Force visited the flagship of the NATO counter piracy Task Force that is patrolling the waters off Somalia.

At the moment of the visit HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën was near the Northern Somali town of Bosaso, conducting counter piracy operations near the Northern coastline. The Minister took this opportunity to come on board and meet for the second time with the NATO Task Force Commander, Commodore Michiel Hijmans (Royal Netherlands Navy), to discuss the general situation of Puntland, including its counter piracy efforts.

As a part of the counter piracy mission, codenamed Operation Ocean Shield, NATO has established liaisons with countries in the region such as Djibouti and Somalia. Through this contact NATO is promoting the need for regional actors to be involved in counter piracy operations. The Puntland Authorities have been particularly proactive in fighting piracy and wish a return to peaceful trading and fishing activities along the Northern Somali coastline.

The Commanding Officer of HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën, Captain Hugo Ammerlaan, said: "It is great for HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën to be able to host a meeting with the authorities from Northern Somalia. They are eager to work with multi-national forces to create a solution to piracy and to strengthen the legitimate maritime businesses such as fishing and trading and the establishment of other viable sources of work and income on the shore."

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

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 2 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:

HNLMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEËN (Flagship) – The Netherlands
USS COLE – US

Media Inquiries only to:

Public Affairs Officer

+44 (0)1923 956763

+44 (0) 7747 008508

<mailto:pio@manw.nato.int>

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)