

# News Release



## Headquarters Allied Maritime Command Northwood



Ref: SNMG2 2010 / 32

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010

### Russian Commander visits NATO Flagship

Earlier today, Commodore Michiel Hijmans (Royal Netherlands Navy), Commander of NATO's counter piracy Task Force hosted a visit on board his flagship by the Russian Task Force Commander Senior Captain Vladimir Kondratov. HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën and RFS Admiral Levchenko met as they were patrolling in the Gulf of Aden near the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC).

Recently in June the ships had an unexpected rendezvous in the Atlantic Ocean on their way to the Gulf of Aden when the Commanders spoke of possible future cooperation. Now approximately six weeks later they are meeting again to share information and to discuss future ways of collaboration between NATO and the Russian Federation in the area.

The Chief of Staff of the NATO Task Force, Commander Ricardo Hernandez (Spanish Navy), said: "Every meeting with Commanders and representatives of other counter piracy Task Forces is extremely useful and it will greatly benefit the operation. The operation area is a vast space, comparable to the size of the continent of Europe, and therefore any opportunity to discuss the coordination of counter piracy units will help safeguard the shipping lanes off the Horn of Africa."

The NATO Task Force will continue to contribute to the counter piracy effort off Somalia in cooperation with the Task Force of the European Union, the Task Force of the Combined Maritime Forces and besides the Russian Federation with independent navies such as India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Australia and China.

#### 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

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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

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