

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO Counter Piracy Warships Remain Ever Vigilant in the Gulf of Aden

LONDON: Late last week Danish warship, HDMS Esbern Snare, who is part of NATO's counter piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield, stopped and boarded a suspect pirate vessel in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden.

The crew of Motor Vessel (MV) Elly Maersk, who was sailing in the Gulf of Aden, had seen the vessel acting suspiciously, and put out a radio message, which was picked up by the Danish warship. The crew of HDMS Esbern Snare responded immediately, by launching her helicopter and sailing towards the position.

When the Danish navy helicopter over flew the suspicious vessel, they tried to make contact with the several men on board. After several attempts, and with no response, the helicopter crew disabled the outboard engines of the vessel with accurate sniper fire. The helicopter crew then witnessed the suspected pirates throwing weapons, a ladder and other gear overboard.

When the NATO warship arrived on the scene, their security boarding team was sent to investigate the suspected pirate vessel. The suspected pirates were taken to the warship and Danish authorities are now investigating the legal position with regards to possible prosecution.

"I am glad that once again suspected pirates have been disrupted by a NATO warship in the Gulf of Aden" commander Haumann CO of HDMS ESBERN SNARE said afterwards

----TEXT ENDS----

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.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 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 has announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS DE RUYTER (Flagship) - Netherlands
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark
USS LABOON - United States of America
TCG GAZIANTEP – Turkey

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