

# News Release



Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood  
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## NATO Commander Addresses Global Counter Piracy Conference

**London:** After receiving a personal invitation by the Ministry of Foreign affairs (UAE), the commander of NATO's counter piracy operation, Ocean Shield, Commodore Michiel Hijmans (Royal Netherlands Navy) addressed the high level counter-piracy conference held in Dubai between 18-19 April 11. As NATO's tactical counter-piracy commander, Commodore Hijmans presented '*a view of the situation from the front line*' to the international audience of counter piracy stakeholders.

Speaking about all the maritime forces that are operating in the region, Commodore Hijmans highlighted the counter-piracy efforts that are being made, not just in the Gulf of Aden and the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), but also wider afield, in the Somali Basin. As the Somali Basin coordinator - responsible for all areas outside the IRTC, Commodore Hijmans stipulated that a number of warships and aircraft regularly patrol the Somali coast and other areas known for pirate attacks, with firm action being taken against piracy.

The NATO Commander also reiterated the benefits of the merchant community working closely with the military forces, and highlighted the significant progress that has been made by shipping companies in protecting their vessels and coordinating and communicating with the naval forces in the region.

"This conference - the first of its kind in the region, was an excellent opportunity to inform the key players about counter piracy efforts. We need the maritime industry, politicians, security experts and counter piracy think-tanks to work closely together and we also need the media in order to

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report on the real issues surrounding piracy”. Commodore Hijmans stated on the way back to his flagship on the frontline.

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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 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 TROMP (Flagship) - Netherlands  
USS BAINBRIDGE - United States of America  
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark  
TCG GIRESUN – Turkey  
USS STEPHEN W GROVES – United States of America

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