

News Release



**Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO WARSHIP DISRUPTS PIRATE ATTACK GROUP IN GULF OF ADEN

Earlier this week USS Carney, part of NATO's counter piracy task force Operation Ocean Shield, worked with other NATO forces and coalition partners to disrupt pirate activity in the Gulf of Aden.

A Japanese maritime patrol aircraft patrolling the area on counter-piracy operations spotted a suspicious skiff with seven suspected pirates aboard and contacted the NATO flagship ITS Andrea Doria who in turn tasked USS Carney to investigate.

In a co-ordinated operation, Carney approached the skiff, while the patrol aircraft circled overhead. As the warship appeared on the horizon the skiff attempted to flee however it stopped when hailed.

The patrol aircraft and Carney observed the suspected pirates throwing items overboard. The items were visually confirmed by the patrol aircraft as ladders and other pirate-related equipment.

A team from Carney boarded the skiff and after a thorough search seized the excess fuel and other items useful to piracy activity, before ensuring the skiff had enough fuel to return to the Somali coast.

In 2009, 45 ships were hijacked in the region; so far in 2011, 21 ships have been hijacked effectively halving the number of ships taken. Naval warships have been in the region constantly providing a visible presence and deterrence and this has undoubtedly contributed to the pirates' lack of success.

This is a very clear example of the work that NATO and its partners have been involved in for the past three years in the region. Pirates should not be under the illusion that the Christmas season is a good time to launch pirate attacks – NATO ships will be patrolling just as they have done throughout the year.

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Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

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 1 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.

Japan is a member of a multinational coalition providing airborne patrols and warships for convoy escort operations in the Gulf of Aden.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

ITS Andrea Doria (Flagship) - Italy
RFA Fort Victoria – United Kingdom
HDMS Absalon - Denmark
USS Carney - United States of America
USS De Wert – United States of America
P-3 Aircraft – Norway
Challenger 604 Aircraft - Denmark

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