

News Release



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NATO Commander meets Chinese Counterpart in Gulf of Aden

On 19th January, Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN, Commander of the NATO Counter Piracy Mission Operation Ocean Shield, met with his Chinese counterpart Rear Admiral LI Shihong. They paid reciprocal visits to each others' flagships on the same day while the Chinese Task Group ships were escorting a convoy and the NATO flagship, TCG Giresun was patrolling through the Gulf of Aden.

During these warm and constructive meetings both Commanders had an opportunity to share information and experiences about their counter piracy operations, learn more of each other's capabilities and also discuss matters of mutual concern in how to tackle piracy.

Speaking about the visits, Rear Admiral Sinan Azmi TOSUN stated "the Chinese Navy has supported the counter piracy efforts by providing escorts to merchant vessels passing through the region in cooperation with other navies. These escort missions support provided by other actors in theatre allow NATO maritime forces to fight against piracy in different ways such as intercepting any upcoming threat to the maritime community which increase the effectiveness of our mutual efforts. We both expressed our determination to improve the cooperation between NATO and Chinese units."

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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 actors to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to respond quickly to crisis situations anywhere in the world. It is 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. These include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response and embargo operations. Its command rotates amongst the contributing nations and SNMG 2 is currently commanded by Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN, Turkish Navy.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

TCG GIRESUN – Turkey
HDMS ABSALON – Denmark
ITS GRECALE – Italy
RFA FORT VICTORIA – United Kingdom
USS DEWERT - United States of America
Challenger 640 Aircraft - Denmark

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