

News Release



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NATO Commander and Russian Counterpart Exchange Counter-Piracy Views in Gulf of Aden

The Commander of the Russian counter-piracy mission, Captain First Rank Vladimir A. Kondratov, visited NATO's counter-piracy flagship HNLMS Evertsen today. The aim of the visit was to share experiences of counter-piracy efforts and seek opportunities to improve the level of cooperation and coordination.

After being welcomed by the Task Force Commander, Commodore Ben Bekkering, the Russian delegation was briefed about NATO's counter-piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield. Captain Kondratov, in turn, provided an overview of the Russian counter-piracy efforts and current convoy procedures. Considerable time was spent sharing views and information about the current situation around the Horn of Africa, including the most recent hijacking attempts and the use of private security teams. Both commanders agreed that there was scope to expand the exchange of information and that they would seek ways to achieve that. In addition, they agreed to investigate possibilities for counter-piracy related exercises.

The visit was concluded with a tour through the flagship of CTF 508, HNLMS Evertsen. During this tour the Russian delegation talked with the Enhanced Boarding Team and the advanced resuscitation medical team.

"Counter-piracy is truly a combined effort of the international community", stated Cdre Bekkering after the visit.

"Like NATO's navies, the Russian navy has been present in the waters off Somalia ever since piracy became a scourge to the merchant shipping there. And ever since that moment, NATO's task force commanders have been meeting with their Russian counterparts. This has resulted in increased coordination and cooperation. Having met Captain Kondratov and having been able to share thoughts, I am convinced we now know when and where to find each other when needed, to the benefit of the overall counter-piracy effort".

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 Allies agreed on 19 March 2012 to extend Operation Ocean Shield for a further two years until the end of 2014.

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