

News Release



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NATO warship escorts WFP ship

Earlier this week, USS Taylor, part of the NATO counter piracy mission Operation Ocean Shield escorted the World Food Programme (WFP) ship, MV Tupi Maiden. The WFP ship was making a westbound transit to Djibouti through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden.

MV Tupi Maiden began her transit escorted by the French warship, FS Guepratte from the EU's Operation Atalanta.

USS Taylor took over the escort from a pre-planned point in the IRTC and continued westward to Djibouti. During the transit, Taylor maintained a position close to the WFP vessel to deter piracy and respond rapidly if MV Tupi Maiden was attacked or if suspicious vessels were reported to be operating too close to the vessel.

"We (the crew) have been participating in counter-piracy operations since March, so the mission was not new for us. However, in this instance we knew that the escort was important as the supplies on board were intended to support people who may eventually turn to piracy if supplies like these fail to reach them" said Ensign Caitlyn Levinson, Combat Information Center Officer.

After a successful 24 hour escort, Taylor relinquished escort duties for MV Tupi Maiden near Djiboutian territorial waters and returned to normal counter-piracy patrols

CDR Dennis Volpe, Taylor's Executive Officer, stated "The escort mission provided an excellent opportunity to exercise the coalition nature of the counter-piracy mission in the Horn of Africa region."

Background Information

The World Food Programme (WFP) is an essential element of the United Nations endeavours to prevent world hunger and provide disaster relief. It aims to reach more than 90 million people in nearly 73 countries annually. The Horn of Africa is a focus area of the World Food Programme, and the pirated waters in that region necessitate an escort to ensure such a vital resource reaches its final destination because of the vast quantity of foodstuffs and medical supplies onboard. In an effort to support the United Nations and the World Food Programme, EU assets operating in the IRTC are tasked to provide escort, adding increased defence and response capabilities during WFP vessels' transit through high-risk areas. When the EU is unable to provide an escort, other task forces are asked to assist.

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

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

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