

News Release



Maritime
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Counter Piracy Commanders Meet in Gulf of Aden

On Wednesday 18th July, the commander of the NATO Task Force, Commodore Ben Bekkering, hosted his counterparts, EUNAVFOR Rear Admiral Jean-Baptiste Dupuis and Combined Maritime Force (CMF) Rear Admiral Anho Chung on board of his flagship HNLMS Evertsen.

While the meeting was used to conduct replenishment of supplies at sea, it demonstrated a very practical example of the level of cooperation that exists between the task forces.

“The coordination between our task forces is already a well developed daily routine. But when our patrol cycles offered the chance to meet for a few hours, we all jumped at the opportunity”, explained Bekkering.

The real purpose, though, was for the three Commanders to exchange ideas and share thoughts on counter piracy. With the monsoon now at full strength, the pirates are more limited in their options. However, once the monsoon subsides it is more than likely that the pirates will again attempt to launch attacks on merchant ships. To discuss face-to-face where they may do that, in what way and how best to employ own ships and aircraft proved to be very beneficial.

Cdre Bekkering stated after the meeting:

“Counter piracy is truly a combined effort of the international community. Ships from NATO, the EU and CMF are joined by the independent deployers from China, Russia, Japan and India and also from the regional states such as Djibouti and Oman to stop piracy and ensure safe passage for merchant shipping. As the International Maritime Bureau stated in a report published last week, naval operations are effective. Yet, the three of us agreed today that we must continue to be vigilant and work in concerted effort. This meeting enabled us to work on the same sheet of music.”

After the meeting all CTF's returned to their flagships to resume their respective patrols.

Background Information:

NATO is working alongside EUNAVFOR, Combined Maritime Forces and individual nations to fight piracy. By joining forces, counter piracy efforts are more effective and can achieve more than any one ship, navy, organisation or country working alone.

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.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:
HNLMS Evertsen (flagship) The Netherlands
USS Taylor (United States of America)

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