

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO WARSHIP USS KAUFFMAN ASSISTS SHIP AFTER PIRATE ATTACK

US warship, USS KAUFFMAN, participating in NATO's counter piracy operation Ocean Shield, together with a maritime patrol aircraft from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force, came to the assistance of merchant vessel '*Go Trader*' over the weekend after she was attacked by pirates in the Indian Ocean.

The armed pirates had fired on the merchant vessel, before scaling up the side of the ship. The master was able to issue a distress call, before joining his crew in a 'safe room'. The Japanese maritime patrol aircraft quickly established radio communication with the master in the safe room, and as NATO warship USS KAUFFMAN sailed towards the area, it was assessed that the pirates had abandoned their attack and left the ship. With USS KAUFFMAN's helicopter hovering above, the warship's boarding team conducted a security search, before the relieved crew left their safe room.

Before they left the ship, the frustrated pirates caused a significant amount of damage to the bridge and crew's living quarters. The crew, whilst shaken, were unharmed.

Speaking about the incident, Commodore Rune, Commander of the NATO Counter Piracy operation, said.

"This once again demonstrates that well executed best management practices (BMPs) by shipping companies can significantly improve a crew's chances of preventing a successful pirate hijack".

----TEXT ENDS----

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 recently announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Task Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

- HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
- USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America
- USS LABOON - United States of America
- HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
- ITS BERSAGLIERE – Italy
- HNLMS ZEELEEUW - Netherlands

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