

# News Release



Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood  
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## NATO WARSHIP DISRUPTS PIRATES IN GULF OF ADEN

**LONDON:** Earlier today, the NATO warship USS Laboon, part of NATO's counter piracy operation, OCEAN SHIELD came across a suspect pirate skiff in the Gulf of Aden and having boarded it, ensured it was no longer able to be used to attack merchant ships.

In the early hours USS Laboon spotted the skiff and having covertly tracked it to ascertain its intentions she closed in to inspect it. When the skiff noticed the NATO warship coming towards her the suspected pirates started to throw weapons and ladders over board. USS Laboon sent a boarding team to search the vessel to complete the investigation.

While on board the team from USS Laboon found more items used specifically for acts of piracy - excessive amounts of fuel, grappling hooks, radios, sledgehammers and equipment to open closed doors and hatches. All these items were confiscated, making sure the vessel was not able to operate as a pirate skiff.

“Over the last weeks many attacks and suspected pirate vessels have been disabled by NATO warships. The presence of NATO and the other counter piracy forces has hampered the piracy activity significantly. USS Laboon has done an excellent job. “ Commodore Hijmans, Commander of the NATO Task Force commented.

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

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 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. Its command rotates amongst the contributing countries and is currently commanded by Commodore Michiel B. Hijmans, Royal Netherlands Navy

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

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS DE RUYTER (Flagship) - Netherlands  
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark  
USS LABOON - United States of America  
TCG GAZIANTEP – Turkey

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**Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)**