

# News Release



Maritime  
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## Coordination helps achieve counter piracy results

Counter piracy operations around the Horn of Africa are an international effort and are helped by good co-operation and co-ordination.

Last week Commodore Ben Bekkering, Commander of NATO's counter piracy task force, received Commander Combined Maritime Force task force 151, Rear Admiral Oguz Karaman of the Turkish Navy on board HNLMS Rotterdam. A day later he visited the commander of the Chinese Task Force, Rear Admiral Zhou Xu-Ming. In September, Cdre Bekkering and RAdm Zhou Xu-Ming met onboard the NATO Flagship HNLMS Rotterdam. This was the first meeting for Cdre Bekkering and RAdm Karaman as their tight patrol schedules in the vast Indian Ocean precluded earlier coordination visits.

Counter piracy patrols require coordination and well-established mechanisms are in place to achieve this. "However, nothing takes the place of face to face meetings. You meet your counterparts, you discuss topics and exchange information. All this is necessary to achieve results," explains Cdre Bekkering.

During both visits, in-depth discussions regarding the current level of piracy in the region, the presence of independent deployers and operations of the NATO ships in coastal waters were held. All three commanders shared the assessment that piracy numbers are down, but the trend is still reversible.

After the visit to Rotterdam RAdm Karaman stated "there is no doubt that by working together with task forces such as NATO's we will make far greater strides in eliminating acts of piracy. Our counter-piracy efforts are more effective together than working in isolation and this visit has reaffirmed the closeness of our working relationship."

The task force is continuing its patrols in the waters around Somalia. In doing so, NATO is contributing to maritime security for international, regional and local users.

## **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.

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 Rotterdam (flagship) – the Netherlands  
USS Halyburton (United States of America)  
HDMS Iver Huitfeldt (Denmark)

### **Media Inquiries only to:**

Public Affairs Officer  
+44 (0)1923 956763

Email: [pio@manw.nato.int](mailto:pio@manw.nato.int)

Facebook: operationoceanshield

Twitter: @oceanshield