

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood**  
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## **NATO Commander meets Russian Counterpart in Gulf of Aden**

**London:** Yesterday, Commodore Michiel Hijmans, commander of the NATO counter piracy mission Operation Ocean Shield, met with Commander Podkopailo of the Russian task group at sea in the Gulf of Aden. The Russian Federation warship Admiral Vinogradov was escorting a convoy of merchant ships and passed the area where the NATO flagship HNLMS De Ruyter was patrolling.

During a constructive meeting both sides shared information on their counter piracy operations, discussed issues and possible opportunities to conduct operations and exercises as partners. Both Commanders showed their willingness to improve communications and tackle the piracy problem together, illustrating the improving relationship between NATO and the Russian federation, following the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November 2010.

The Russian Federation has been sending ships to the Gulf of Aden to protect shipping from piracy for several years now. They focus on escorting convoys from the Red Sea far into the Indian Ocean.

After the meeting, Commodore Hijmans said, "The coordination between our forces is evolving into practical cooperation. We both have our tasks to fulfil, but we have agreed to look into joint action and exercises where possible. Today's meeting will surely help us to work together to tackle piracy in the region as well as strengthening the relationship between Russia and NATO."

----TEXT ENDS----

### **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 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

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

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 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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