



NATO  
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OTAN

*Active  
Endeavour*



# briefing



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NATO naval  
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Proliferation  
Security  
Initiative

## Combating terrorism at sea

“Active Endeavour has proved to be an effective tool in countering terrorism at and from the sea in the Mediterranean”

Vice Admiral Roberto Cesaretti,  
Commander of Operation  
Active Endeavour

**N**ATO ships are patrolling throughout the Mediterranean, monitoring shipping and helping to detect, deter, defend, and protect against terrorist activity.

This operation, called Active Endeavour, evolved out of NATO's immediate response to the terrorist attacks against the United States of 11 September 2001. In the intervening years, the operation's mandate has been regularly reviewed and extended.

Today, the fight against terrorism is a core element in almost every aspect of

work undertaken by the Alliance. The essence of NATO's role in this fight is protecting people. Acts of terrorism are often simply acts of indiscriminate murder. NATO adds considerable value to efforts to ensure that individuals can go about their daily lives safely, free from the threat of terrorism.





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“Through the sharing of data gathered at sea by Allies and Mediterranean-rim countries Active Endeavour has increasingly become an information and intelligence-based operation”

All NATO's activities in the fight against terrorism, including its operations, are fully in line with international law, including human rights standards and humanitarian requirements. Operation Active Endeavour is an important part of these efforts and regular reports on the conduct of the operation are provided to the UN Security Council.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks against the United States on the 11 September, 2001, the Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's collective-defence provision, for the first time in the Alliance's history. Following this, NATO deployed its Standing Naval Forces initially to the Eastern Mediterranean on 6 October 2001 in a demonstration of Alliance resolve and solidarity.

The deployment was formally named Operation Active Endeavour on

26 October 2001. It is commanded by Allied Forces Maritime Component Command HQ Naples (CC-MAR Naples) through the Maritime Operations Centre. The operation represented a milestone for the Alliance. Together with the dispatch of Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft to the United States, it was the first time that NATO assets had been deployed in support of an Article 5 operation.

“Active Endeavour has proved to be an effective tool in countering terrorism at and from the sea in the Mediterranean,” says Vice Admiral Roberto Cesaretti, Commander of the Operation. Through Active Endeavour, NATO has gained valuable experience of maritime interdiction operations and more broadly contributed to maintaining peace, stability and security in a strategic region. In terms of energy alone, some 65 per cent of the oil and natural gas consumed in Western Europe passes through the Mediterranean each year. Major pipelines connect Libya to Italy and Morocco to Spain.



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## Expanding the mission

In March 2003, Active Endeavour was expanded to include providing escorts through the Straits of Gibraltar to non-military ships from Alliance member states on request.

The extension of the mission was designed to help prevent terrorist attacks, such as those off the Yemeni coast on the USS Cole in October 2000 and on the French oil tanker Limburg two years later.

The expansion was a precautionary measure, taken on the basis of intelligence that indicated ships passing through this extremely narrow passage were potential terrorist targets. Some 3,000 commercial shipments pass through the Straits every day. In May 2004, the escorts were suspended as a result of a declining number of requests. They may, however, be reactivated at any time.

In April 2003, NATO further expanded the mission and began systematically boarding suspect ships. These take place with the compliance of the ships' captains and flag states, in accordance with international law.

In practice, merchant ships are hailed by patrolling NATO naval units and asked to identify themselves and their activity. This information is then reported to both CC-MAR Naples and the NATO Shipping Centre in

Northwood, England. If irregularities are discovered, teams of soldiers under command of Operation Active Endeavour may board the vessel to inspect documentation and cargo. NATO personnel may otherwise convey this information to the appropriate law-enforcement agency at the vessel's next port of call. The suspect vessel is then shadowed until action is taken by a responsible agency, or until it enters a country's territorial waters.

In March 2004, as a result of the success of Active Endeavour in the Eastern Mediterranean, NATO extended its remit to the entire Mediterranean.

The Allies reaffirmed their commitment to the maritime operation and welcomed increasing support from partner countries at the Riga Summit in November 2006. With ongoing support, the operation continues to demonstrate NATO's resolve and capability to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorism.

## New operational pattern

In October 2004, NATO put in place a new operational pattern. Since then, the focus has been on gathering and processing information to target specific vessels of interest.

Through these efforts, NATO is now deploying surface forces as direct reaction units, to conduct specific tasks such as the tracking and boarding of



*“Active Endeavour has had a visible effect on security and stability in the Mediterranean”*

*Secretary General  
Jaap de Hoop Scheffer*

vessels. Augmentation forces, such as one of the Alliance's Standing Maritime Groups, may join the operation to provide an enhanced presence and a more intensive surveillance capability.

Task Force Endeavour consists of a balanced collection of surface units, submarines and Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Units from the Standing NATO Maritime Groups regularly contribute to Task Force Endeavour. These groups are NATO's maritime elite forces.

They are permanently ready to act and capable of conducting a wide range of maritime operations.

Through the sharing of data gathered at sea by Allies and Mediterranean-rim countries Active Endeavour has increasingly become an information and intelligence-based operation. The level of information-sharing achieved to date provides a sound foundation upon which to build in the future. According to Vice Admiral Cesaretti: "The aim is to develop a much more effective information collection and analysis system and to change the character of the operation from one that is intelligence-supported to one that is intelligence-driven."

NATO is developing an experimental networking system to enable all Mediterranean-rim countries to exchange information on Mediterranean merchant shipping more effectively. The resulting picture will assist law-enforcement agencies, as well as NATO forces in international waters, to efficiently act where necessary.

### **Benefits**

The mandate of Active Endeavour is limited to deterring and detecting terrorist-related activities, yet the operation has had a visible effect on security and stability in the Mediterranean. This has directly benefited trade and economic activity.

As of late October 2007, some 88 590 ships had been "hailed" and 125 boarded. In addition, 488 non-combatant escorts had been conducted through the Straits of Gibraltar.

NATO ships and helicopters have intervened on several occasions to rescue civilians on stricken oil rigs and sinking ships. This included helping 84 workers to evacuate an oil rig in high winds and heavy seas in December 2001 and winching women and children off a sinking ship carrying some 250 refugees in January 2002. NATO forces also aided in repairing the damaged hull.

In September 2007, ships from NATO's standing maritime force 1 embarked on a mission to circumnavigate Africa. Following the eruption of a volcano on the Yemeni Island of Jazirat at Ta'ir, NATO personnel rescued two Yemeni servicemen.

The experience that NATO has accrued through Active Endeavour and other maritime interdiction operations (see box on page 5) has given the Alliance unparalleled expertise in this field. This expertise is relevant to wider international efforts to combat terrorism and, in particular, the proliferation and smuggling of weapons of mass destruction.

In terms of the equipment used and activities involved, many characteristics of Active Endeavour are essentially the same as those of earlier NATO maritime missions. Yet the nature of the threat was new and has required the adoption of innovative approaches.

### **Cooperation with partner countries**

In addition to the benefits to security, Operation Active Endeavour has become a useful tool to increase practical cooperation and interoperability among NATO Allies and partner countries.



At NATO's Istanbul Summit in June 2004, the Alliance decided to enhance Active Endeavour, including through the support of NATO Partner nations and Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The Mediterranean Dialogue Programme, which was set up in 1995, seeks to contribute to regional security and stability and to achieve better mutual understanding between NATO and its Mediterranean partners.

All offers of support, including those by other interested countries, are considered on a case-by-case basis. Following offers of support by Russia and Ukraine, agreements were finalized in 2004.

Expert NATO teams worked with staff from both countries to prepare for their operational contributions, and since September 2006, two Russian frigates and one Ukrainian corvette have participated in the operation. Other partner countries have also offered their active support to the operation. An exchange of letters has taken place between NATO and Albania and Israel and negotiations on the modalities of co-operation are under way. ■

For more information on Active Endeavour, see [www.afsouth.nato.int/JFCN\\_Operations/ActiveEndeavour/Endeavour.htm](http://www.afsouth.nato.int/JFCN_Operations/ActiveEndeavour/Endeavour.htm)



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## NATO naval operations

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has acquired much experience and practical expertise in naval operations, whether carried out in support of individual Allies, coalitions of Allies or under the NATO banner.

The longest-duration NATO maritime missions took place during the wars of Yugoslav dissolution. Between 1992 and 1996, the Alliance helped enforce both an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia and economic sanctions against Serbia

and Montenegro, both of which were imposed by the UN Security Council. This operation, which also involved forces from the Western European Union, was originally called Maritime Monitor. It was later re-named Sharp Guard, as the mission was expanded from surveillance to include the boarding and searching of vessels. The experience gained during these years has proved extremely useful to the current operation, as it shares many similarities with Active Endeavour. ■



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The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a response to the growing challenge posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems and the related global technology trade. Launched by US President George W. Bush in May 2003, it is a collaborative, global set of activities that seek to halt the flow of dangerous technologies to and from states and non-state actors engaged in, or supporting WMD proliferation programmes. States participating in the PSI are located all over the globe, including many NATO Allies.

Participating countries agreed on a Statement of Interdiction Principles in September 2003. These commit them to undertaking effective measures, either alone or in concert with other states, in a

## Proliferation Security Initiative

number of specific areas: interdicting the transfer or transport of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern, adopting streamlined procedures for the rapid exchange of relevant information concerning suspected proliferation activity; protecting the confidential character of classified information provided by other states as part of this initiative; dedicating appropriate resources and efforts to interdiction operations and capabilities and maximising coordination among participants in interdiction efforts; reviewing and working to strengthen relevant national legal authorities where necessary to accomplish these objectives and working to strengthen relevant international laws and frameworks in appropriate ways to support these commitments; and taking specific actions in support of interdiction efforts regarding cargoes of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials, to the extent national

legal authorities permit and consistent with their obligations under international law.

At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, the Alliance underscored its strong support for the aims of the Proliferation Security Initiative and its Statement of Interdiction Principles, and called on partners and other countries to join in supporting and implementing the objectives of the Initiative. At the NATO Riga Summit in 2006, the Allies adopted a Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG). This provides a framework and political direction for NATO's continuing transformation. The CPG lists a number of practical measures that complement the aims of the PSI.

NATO's experience of patrolling the Mediterranean to detect and deter terrorism through Operation Active Endeavour is highly relevant in this context. ■

## Early measures to combat terrorism

Having invoked Article 5 in response to the terrorist attacks against the United States of 11 September 2001, the Allies agreed, on 4 October 2001 - at the request of the United States - to take eight initial measures to implement it.

Specifically, they agreed to enhance intelligence sharing and cooperation, both bilaterally and in the appropriate NATO bodies, related to the threats posed by terrorism and the actions to be taken against it; to provide individually or collec-



tively, as appropriate and according to their capabilities, assistance to Allies and other states which are or may be subject to increased terrorist threats as a result of their support for the campaign against terrorism; and to take necessary measures to provide increased security for the facilities of the United States and other Allies on their territory.

The Allies also agreed to "backfill" selected Allied assets required to support operations against terrorism; to provide

blanket over-flight clearances for US and other Allied aircraft for military flights related to operations against terrorism; and to provide access for the United States and other Allies to ports and airfields on the territory of NATO nations for operations against terrorism. In addition, the Allies agreed to deploy part of NATO's Standing Naval Forces to the Eastern Mediterranean and AWACS planes to the United States. ■