



11/09/09 - European Union and CHINA meet in Gulf of Aden

On Sunday 8 November the Force Commander of the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR), Commodore Pieter Bindt, met with his Chinese counterpart, Commander of Task Force 529 (CTF 529), Rear Admiral Wang Zhiguo on board the Chinese flagship Zhou Shan in the Gulf of Aden.

The meeting was held to discuss developments in counter piracy operations and further cooperation between EU NAVFOR and the Chinese counter piracy forces in deterring, disrupting and suppressing piracy off Somalia. The commanders also discussed the present situation of hijacked ships and patrols in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin.

CTF 529 provides anti-piracy escorts for convoys in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor, the busy shipping lane in the Gulf of Aden between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The convoys are basically for ships with a Chinese crew, Chinese flagged or owned ships and ships with humanitarian aid, but other vessels can attach when they register their transit with the Chinese authorities. Recently CTF529 offered support in the investigation of a suspect skiff in the Indian Ocean. EU NAVFOR and the Chinese counter piracy forces exchange information on the EU introduced common counter piracy communication system MERCURY.

Established in December 2008, EU NAVFOR is an European Union Task Force established to protect vessels of the 'World Food Program (WFP)' delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia, to protect vulnerable shipping through the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast and to prevent, deter and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, including arrest.