

# NATO Arms Embargo against Libya

## Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR



As of 23 March 2011 NATO warships and aircraft are patrolling the approaches to Libyan territorial waters as part of Operation Unified Protector. Their mission is to reduce the flow of arms, related material and mercenaries to Libya, as called for in UN Security Council Resolution 1973.

This is part of NATO's contribution to the broad international effort to protect civilians in Libya from the violence committed by the Ghaddafi regime.

The operation is commanded by Vice Admiral Rinaldo Veri from NATO Maritime Command Naples. Political oversight of the operation is provided by the North Atlantic Council.

NATO nations are now building up the operation, which the UN mandated on 17 March. As of 24 March, ten Allies (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States) had pledged more than 25 ships and submarines, as well as over 50 fighter jets and surveillance planes to monitor and enforce the arms embargo mandated by the UN.

The Task Force's ships and aircraft will remain in international waters and will not enter Libyan territorial waters. While NATO cannot block all routes into the country, it has cut off the quickest, easiest and straightest route to Libya.

NATO ships will use surveillance to verify the activity of shipping in the region, separating out legitimate commercial and private traffic from suspicious vessels that warrant closer inspection. Suspicious traffic will be hailed by radio, and if they cannot give satisfactory information about their cargoes, the NATO ships are authorized to intercept them. As a last resort, the Task Force is empowered to use force.

If weapons or mercenaries are found, the vessel and its crew will be escorted to a secure port where international and national authorities will take charge. Suspected aircraft can be intercepted and escorted to an airport designated by NATO.

At the same time, NATO is working closely with the International Maritime Organization to ensure that the flow of legitimate commercial and private shipping to Libya continues unimpeded.

**Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) - Press & Media Section Media Operations Section (MOC)**

**Tel.: +32(0)2 707 1010/1002**

**E-mail: [mailbox.moc@hq.nato.int](mailto:mailbox.moc@hq.nato.int)**