

# Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR

## NATO Arms Embargo against Libya



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 and civilian-populated areas in Libya under threat of attack.

The overall operation is commanded by Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard from Joint Forces Command Naples. The Maritime Arms Embargo is under the command of Vice Admiral Rinaldo Veri from NATO Maritime Command Naples. Political oversight of the operation is provided by the North Atlantic Council.

As at 5 April 2011, 8 Allies (Belgium, Canada, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and United Kingdom) are providing 18 ships and submarines to monitor and enforce the arms embargo mandated by the UN. They are supported by surveillance planes and fighter jets as required. The Task Force's ships enforcing the arms embargo 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.

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