

Security of shipping in the Mediterranean and Middle East

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A member has forwarded the following from the NATO website:

Anti-terrorism measures – issued by the NATO Shipping Centre on 5 March 2003

“At present there is no intelligence of an immediate terrorist threat. In a press release (AP 03 Mar) it is announced that NATO intends to extend the anti-terrorist maritime patrols, surveillance and monitoring in the Mediterranean Seas (‘Operation Active Endeavour’) to cover the whole of the Med including the Straits of Gibraltar. As boarding of suspect merchant ships has now been authorised for all patrolling forces the operation can become more effective.

NATO escorts shipping in Gibraltar

“This week NATO warships have taken on a new mission to escort Allied civilian ships through the Straits of Gibraltar. The Alliance decided to expand its naval operations in response to recent assessments of terrorist threats to particular shipping lanes. This new mission is part of NATO’s continuing support for the campaign against terrorism, and is a significant extension of the existing Operation Active Endeavour, which was launched following the September 11 attacks on the United States.

“Under Operation Active Endeavour, NATO air and naval forces have been carrying out patrolling and surveillance activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Apart from demonstrating NATO’s resolve in the face of terrorist threats, Operation Active Endeavour has already played a significant role in enhancing security in the Eastern Mediterranean. This new mission will help further safeguard the ships of NATO’s nations against the threat of terrorism.

“News and information will routinely be posted on the NATO website: nato.int”

Members whose operations involve shipping in the Mediterranean should also be aware of the NATO Shipping Centre website, which contains details for ships intending to transit the Suez Canal – including details on reporting shipping details, encouraging co-operation with NATO anti-terrorism measures in this area.

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