

Combined Multinational Effort Averts Attempted Seizure in the Gulf of Aden



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MANAMA, Bahrain – A combined naval effort between multiple nations thwarted an attempted seizure of an oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden, Nov. 26.

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87) assigned to Task Force (TF) 55, a P8 patrol and reconnaissance aircraft from TF-57, a Japan Maritime Self-

Defense Force destroyer JS Akebono (DD 108), a JMSDF P-3C maritime surveillance aircraft, and the Republic of Korea Navy destroyer ROKS Yang Man-chun (DDH 973), all working with Combined Maritime Forces' Philippine-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, responded to reports of a seizure of the M/V Central Park, an oil tanker, as the ship was transiting in international waters.

Working in coordination with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, the aircraft kept a watchful eye on events until surface units could converge on Central Park's location. After several hours the perpetrators, unable to gain control of the ship, abandoned the vessel and attempted to escape on their skiff.

Tracking their movements, the international force cornered the skiff and the individuals surrendered to Sailors from Mason and were taken into custody in accordance with international law.

"This was an international effort and the textbook definition of teamwork," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, NAVCENT commander. "We remain deeply committed to ensuring maritime security to support the free flow of commerce and safe navigation."

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet's area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. This expanse, comprising 21 nations, includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.