NATO’S RESPONSE FORCE (NRF) TESTS ITS CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ATLANTIC

A large fleet of warships from NATO’s Response Force (NRF) sailed from ports across Europe on 13 October to take part in the maritime component of Exercise NOBLE JUSTIFICATION in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, which will encompass the anti-submarine and the electronic warfare components.

NOBLE JUSTIFICATION will prepare and test the highest levels of readiness for rapid response to any NATO contingency. It also develops force integration, multinational interoperability and enhance readiness by building joint capability and deployability through a high density, high threat scenario in which NATO will respond to a threat to its integrity and the sovereignty of its member states.

Warships will participate in demanding training evolutions that will enable them to respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world at short or no notice. The exercise, which runs through to 26 October, will involve more than 5000 military and naval personnel from 16 NATO nations: Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Afloat participants will include 23 warships: ten frigates, two amphibious ships, five auxiliary ships and six mine countermeasures vessels along with a number of submarines, small units and embarked marines. Exercise NOBLE JUSTIFICATION will also include a wide variety of aircraft, including US B-52 Stratofortress bombers. The participation of the bombers, which will assist in the exercise’s focus of validating the Spanish Maritime Forces as the 2015 NATO Maritime NRF, aims to strengthen interoperability with NATO allies and demonstrates the United States’ commitment to enhancing regional partnerships.

NATO Allied Maritime Command, in Northwood, UK, is responsible for directing the exercise, ensuring that the NATO Response Force (NRF) is faced with a realistic and demanding scenario, presenting a number of challenges for the participants.

The first part of the exercise will focus on interoperability training in asymmetric multi-threat and maritime warfare operations. This will help units to be ready to work together for the second phase of the exercise, during which the force will undertake demanding responses within a complicated, crisis response scenario.
Said NATO’s Maritime Commander, Vice-Admiral Peter Hudson, Royal Navy: “Exercise NOBLE JUSTIFICATION is a substantial opportunity for NATO to develop force integration, multinational interoperability and enhance readiness, by using of an improved technology. It exercises a high density, high threat scenario in which NATO responds to a threat to its integrity and the sovereignty of its member states.”