

Saudi defense minister visits US Navy ship in CENTCOM region

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Taylor L. Jackson, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs



Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, second deputy premier, deputy crown prince, minister of defense for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, speaks with Rear Adm. Andrew Lewis, Carrier Strike Group 12 commander, aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). Theodore Roosevelt is deployed in the U.S. Central Command region, supporting Operation Inherent Resolve strike operations in Iraq and Syria, maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Anna Van Nuys)

ARABIAN GULF, July 9, 2015 -- The Saudi defense minister flew aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Tuesday to observe carrier operations at sea.

The arrival of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, second deputy premier, deputy crown prince, minister of defense of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was marked by eight bells and salutes from sideboys as Rear Adm. Andrew Lewis, Carrier Strike Group 12 commander, greeted Al Saud upon his arrival.

After being welcomed onboard, Al Saud observed flight operations as aircraft launched from and landed aboard Theodore Roosevelt's flight deck. Lewis and Al Saud then discussed the Theodore

Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group's goals and strategies while operating in the Arabian Gulf.

"We have a long-standing relationship with Saudi Arabia that is absolutely necessary for us to be successful in support of the objectives of our greater coalition," said Lewis.

The tour took guests to the ship's flag bridge, tactical flag command center and combat direction center.

Following the tour Al Saud expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to visit Theodore Roosevelt.

"I am happy to have been here with you today," he said. "I admire American professionalism and American capabilities. America has a heavy responsibility, and throughout the Saudi-American history we have not let down our allies. It will remain this way, and this visit encourages me to strengthen the relationship to a new level."

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Commander Vice Adm. John Miller also reflected on the importance of maintaining strong relations with Saudi Arabia and other nations in U.S. Central Command region.

"Anytime we have a chance to meet with the Saudis is time extremely well spent," Miller said. "It's an opportunity for the Saudi government to see the professionalism of our sailors and Marines and their capability of accomplishing our mission."

Theodore Roosevelt is the flagship of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, which is composed of Carrier Strike Group 12, Carrier Air Wing 1, Destroyer Squadron 2 staff, the guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) and the guided-missile destroyers USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), USS Farragut (DDG 90) and USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98).

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