

Israel, Jordan and Saudi Fighter Jets Join US Bombers in Strong Message to Iran

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U.S. Air Force B1-B bombers flew over the Middle East last week, accompanied by fighter aircraft from five Middle East allies in a show of force intended for Iran.

The joint operation was aimed at projecting U.S. force in the region and reassuring key regional allies of Washington's commitment to regional security.

The Israeli Air Force tweeted a picture of its fighters escorting one of the B1-B bombers over Israeli airspace.

The American B1-B bombers also participated in live-fire exercises in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the capabilities of several precision-guided munitions, including JDAM-guided bombs and AGM-158 JASSM cruise missiles.

"These bomber missions represent the U.S.'s commitment to our partners and showcase our ability to deliver overwhelming power at a moment's notice," said . Alexis G. Grynke, commander of Air Forces Central (AFCENT), in a statement last week about the operation. "Today was a demonstration of that capability and the strength of our partnerships."

The bomber mission was also designed to show the U.S. military's ability to focus on multiple fronts.

The two bombers that participated in the operation are part of a four-bomber force from Dyess Air Force Base in Texas. The other two bombers flew to Europe, where they participated in an Arctic security exercise last week.

The United States is also conducting a joint military exercise in Saudi Arabia called Eagle Resolve to demonstrate that it has not abandoned its commitments to regional partners in the Middle East in light of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

While visiting Saudi Arabia last week, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "I think what we're seeing is an increasing convergence in our partnership to advance in issues of mutual interest to Saudi Arabia, to the United States, and, for that matter, to countries in the region and beyond."

The U.S. is also reportedly attempting to build up regional cooperation against the Iranian threat, where mistrust still remains. Some regional militaries are reluctant to participate openly alongside Israel, as popular support for the Jewish state remains low even three years after the signing of the historic Abraham Accords normalization agreements.

"These activities reinforced the U.S. commitment to contributing to the security and stability of the Middle East region and demonstrate the increasing complexity, deepening military interoperability and strength of our shared defense capabilities," said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force . Patrick S. Ryder in a press briefing.

Top military officials say they hope to include other Middle East military forces in future exercises.

Terminology

JDAM (short for Joint Direct Attack Munition) bombs are high-altitude bombs with GPS guidance that can be guided to a target up to 15 miles away using the aircraft's avionics to acquire targeting information. JDAMs are often used in coordination with "bunker-buster" munitions, designed for attacking hardened targets, such as Iranian nuclear facilities and its new below-ground air base.

JASSMs (short for Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile) are

air-launched precision-guided cruise missiles for striking moderately hardened targets behind enemy lines. As a standoff ordinance, the missiles can be launched from outside enemy airspace so the launching aircraft is not exposed to risk. JASSMs, designed with a stealthy airframe to reduce radar signature, are able to strike moderately hardened targets while en route. {eo}

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