

Air Force Deploys Stealth Fighters to the Middle East for the First Time

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

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Amid the threats of war with Iran, the U.S. Air Force has forward deployed Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter jets to the Middle East, [reported Air Force Times](#).

Air Force Central Command (AFCENT) announced last week that F-35s from the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, have arrived at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates to continue air superiority missions across the region.

It's the first time Air Force F-35s have been sent to the Middle East.

“We are adding a cutting-edge weapons system to our arsenal that significantly enhances the capability of the coalition,” **Lt. Gen. Joseph T. Guastella**, commander of AFCENT, said in the release. “The sensor fusion and survivability this aircraft provides to the joint force will enhance security and stability across the theater and deter aggressors.”

WHENEVER, WHATEVER OR WHEREVER THE MISSION.
THE F-35 CAN CARRY THE LOAD.



STEALTH MODE

AIR-TO-AIR ONLY MISSION



AIM-120 AMRAAM

AIR-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSION



GBU-31 JDAM 2,000 lb (Mk-84 Warhead)

5,700 LBS
internal ordnance

BEAST MODE

AIR-TO-AIR ONLY MISSION



AIM-120 AMRAAM

AIM-9X Sidewinder

AIR-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSION



AIM-120 AMRAAM

GBU-31 JDAM 2,000 lb (Mk-84 Warhead)

AIM-9X Sidewinder

22,000 LBS
internal and external ordnance



>2,800 km RANGE



1,390 km
COMBAT RADIUS

“The F-35A provides our nation air dominance in any threat,” added Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein. “When it comes to having a ‘quarterback’ for the coalition joint force, the interoperable F-35A is clearly the aircraft for the leadership role.”

The F-35’s deployment comes one month after Rockwell B-1 Lancer bombers completed their deployment at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, which left an operational gap of planes in the Middle East. The F-35s will support regional allies in airstrikes against the Taliban and Islamic State in Afghanistan.



The F-35 is expected to replace aging airframes such as the F-15, F-16, and A-10. The

stealth jet's advanced sensor package is designed to integrate and share data with other assets on the modern battlefield.

"The F-35A provides our nation air dominance in any threat," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Dave Goldfein said in the release. "When it comes to having a quarterback for the coalition joint force, the inter-operable F-35A is clearly the aircraft for the leadership role."

AFCENT spokeswoman **Maj. Holly Brauer** told the Air Force Times that upcoming missions would be on behalf of Operation Inherent Resolve.

"During their deployment, the Airmen will fly operational and other missions as assigned," she said. "Consistent with operations security, we will not discuss employment details in advance. The F-35A and their crews will bring the advanced capabilities to the CENTCOM commander's wide range of options."

The deployment comes as the Trump administration formally designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization. Thus setting the stage for potential escalation with Iran.

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