

Carrier Strike Group Conducts Second Multi-Large Deck Event with Italian ITS Cavour CSG



U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (Oct. 18, 2024) Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and the Italian Carrier Strike Group leadership pose for a group photo aboard the Italian aircraft carrier ITS Cavour (CVH 550). (Official U.S. Navy photo)

By Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group & Cavour Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs | October 24, 2024

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY – The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group (CSG) conducted a Multi-Large Deck Event (MLDE) with the Italian Navy's ITS Cavour CSG, Oct. 18.

MLDE provide the ships and aircrafts of the two naval forces, comprised of more than 7,500 U.S. and Italian Sailors and Marines, an opportunity to advance interoperability by carrying out integrated planning and coordination, communications, cross-deck leadership exchanges, a fast-roping exercise, and an air defense exercise to strengthen combined maritime operations and combat readiness.

“The opportunity to exercise our interoperability with our Cavour CSG counterparts for a second time in our deployment, highlights our strategic advantage inherent to our network of strong alliances,” said Rear Adm. Adan Cruz, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 3. “We have seized every opportunity to fly and sail with our Italian counterparts to deepen our combined operational capacity anywhere in international waters.”

During the event, Rear Adm. Giancarlo Ciappina, commander,

Cavour Carrier Strike Group, hosted Cruz, aboard the ITS Cavour for a visit focused on building relationships.

"We are proud to work once again alongside Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, after almost two months from our first interaction in the Pacific Ocean," said Ciappina. "[It] has represented another precious opportunity to train together and to exchange experiences and knowledge, highlighting the versatility and flexibility of Navies operating on a global scale, wherever a presence is required to keep maritime lines of communication open and safe to strengthen our bonds and to enhance levels of cooperation with commitment to security."

This marks the second time the Abraham Lincoln CSG participated in an MLDE with the Italian Navy during the 2024 deployment. The previous event in August marked the first-ever MLDE between U.S. and Italian Navies in the Indo-Pacific.

Participating ships in the MLDE included Nimitz-Class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), Integrated Air and Missile Defense Commander (IAMDC) USS Frank E. Petersen, Jr. (DDG 121), Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS O'Kane (DDG 77) & USS Michael Murphy (DDG 111), assigned to Destroyer Squadron 21, Italian aircraft carrier ITS Cavour (CVH 550), Italian Frigate ITS Alpino (F 594), and Italian Multipurpose Combat Ship Raimondo Montecuccoli (P 432).

Participating aircraft included MH-60S and MH-60R Sea Hawks, F/A-18E & F Super Hornets, E/A-18G Growlers, F-35C Lightning II, and E-2D Hawkeye, all assigned to Carrier Air Wing 9; and Italian F-35B Lightning II and AV-8B Harrier II assigned to Cavour CSG.

Cruz and Ciappina conducted a conditions check via virtual teleconference prior to the commencement to ensure all participants were ready, Oct. 17. The exercise started with personnel exchanges where key Abraham Lincoln CSG leadership toured Cavour and Italian officers toured the USS Abraham

Lincoln. USS O'Kane and ITS Raimondo Montecuccoli conducted a joint live-fire exercise, while the embarked U.S. explosive ordnance disposal team conducted a subject matter expert exchange and fast rope exercise with Italian counterparts. The event concluded with a complex air defense exercise involving both CSG's tactical aircraft.

"It is an honor to once again have the opportunity to work jointly with our NATO Allies," said Cruz. "I am grateful to Rear Adm. Ciappina and his entire crew of the ITS Cavour for their gracious hospitality aboard their ship. I am also grateful to continue training and operating together to drive interoperability forward."

Ciappina responded with his reflection on the MLDE.

"I am very grateful to Adm. Cruz and to the whole crew of ABE CSG for their great effort and professionalism continuously shown during these challenging times for peace and international stability and that clearly confirm their strong commitment towards own common values, which are shared within the allied and partner Navies on a global scale," concluded Ciappina.

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group stands ready to successfully conduct any mission essential to U.S. National security, spanning combat operations to integrated maritime operations with our allies and partners to maritime security and stability in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. It also operates postured to deliver unfaltering maritime force to deter, defend, and if necessary, defeat coercive behavior from those who seek to challenge the rules-based international order.

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group consists of USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), embarked staffs of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) Three and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 21, squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) Nine, IAMDC USS Frank E.

Petersen Jr. (DDG 121), and USS O'Kane (DDG 77), USS Spruance (DDG 111), and USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112).

CVW-9 consists of an F-35C squadron, the "Black Knights" of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314; three F/A-18E/F Super Hornet squadrons, the "Tophatters" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14; "Black Aces" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 41, the "Vigilantes" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 151; "Wizards" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133, operating the EA-18G Growler; "Wallbangers" of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 117, operating the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye; "Chargers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 14 operating the MH-60S Sea Hawk; and "Raptors" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71, operating the MH-60R Sea Hawk.