

Carrier JFK Sailors May Train on Gerald R. Ford



An F/A-18F Super Hornet lands on the flight deck of the USS Gerald R. Ford during tests of its launch systems and arresting gear. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jesus O. Aguiar

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy may accelerate the training of the crew of the future USS John F. Kennedy on its predecessor, USS Gerald R. Ford, the Navy's top official said.

Acting Navy Secretary Thomas J. Modly, speaking Jan. 29 at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington think tank, said the Navy "might want to bring some crew from the Kennedy over to the Ford to help [the Ford] get up to speed more quickly."

Modly said he knew from personal experience during his Navy service that shipyard periods can be miserable for a ship's crew and that some seagoing skills atrophy during long yard periods.

By having some of the Kennedy's crew train on the Ford, they could gain valuable training and experience while helping the Ford progress in its certifications and be more ready to take the Kennedy to sea when it is commissioned. In the past, some carriers in yard periods would send a few of their crew to another carrier operating in the area to gain experience.

The John F. Kennedy was launched last month and is now being outfitted. The carrier is scheduled for delivery to the fleet in 2024.

Modly took the opportunity to say that the Gerald R. Ford was "doing extremely well" of late.

He said that probably seven of the ship's Advanced Weapon

Elevators – critical to the ship's sortie generation rate – would be operational by the end of the year. Four already have been certified.

The secretary said that one advantage of the far aft position of the island superstructure on the Ford is the decrease in airflow turbulence over the flight deck compared with the Nimitz-class carriers, as reported by the pilots who have been busy certifying the ship's flight deck.