



**Joint Press Statement from
The Embassy of the United States
and
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
Manama, Bahrain**

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Defense Department Authorizes Adult Family Members to Return to Bahrain
From Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain – Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) in cooperation with the American Embassy in Bahrain announced today that adult family members for all Department of Defense personnel permanently assigned in Bahrain will be allowed to return effective immediately.

This decision marks a change to the Defense Department policy that has been in place since July 2004 when families were required to relocate following security concerns.

“We are extremely pleased with the policy change,” said Vice Adm. Bill Gortney, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. “The return of our adult family members reinforces the security and stability of the region, demonstrates our enduring commitment to Bahrain, and will make the quality of life for our service members and Department of Defense civilians even better.”

Admiral Gortney speaks from experience. Four years ago, then-Capt. Gortney was the Chief of Staff for NAVCENT, and he oversaw the departure of all of the family members. “I have been committed to having family members return to Bahrain ever since,” he said.

U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Mr. Christopher Henzel and Rear Adm. Kendall Card met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs November 2 to inform the Government of Bahrain.

“The return of the adult dependents of Defense Department personnel will restore an important personal dimension to the strong relationship between Bahrainis and Americans,” said Henzel. “It was a pleasure to be the bearer of such good news. We look forward to welcoming Department of Defense adult family members back to Manama.”

School-age dependents and below school-age dependents will be considered at a later date, after the Department of Defense Education Activity completes its supplemental support review.

Defense Department personnel currently serve 12-month unaccompanied tours in Bahrain, with some assignments designated as 18-month tours. This authorization will return accompanied tours to 24 months.

Operations in the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command area of operations are focused on reassuring regional partners of the United States’ commitment to security, which promotes stability and global prosperity.