



Media Release

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Coalition Planning Conference in Support of Counter-ISIL Operations Concludes

TAMPA, Fla. – A counter-ISIL operational planning conference featuring military planners from 33 nations and hosted by U.S. Central Command from Nov. 12-21 at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. concluded here today.

The conference included nearly 200 coalition participants who worked together to synchronize and refine coalition campaign plans designed to degrade and defeat ISIL.

"This conference brought the very best plans officers from nations within the Central Region and coalition partners from around the world," said British Army Brig. Gen. Gary C. Deakin, Deputy Director of U.S. Central Command Strategy, Plans and Policy. "What I experienced, as the officer tasked to lead the planning effort, was the strength, level of determination, and scale of commitment of these 33 nations to defeat ISIL. This is perhaps the strongest coalition I have had the privilege of serving in. Our regional partners were particularly impressed by the depth of coalition support and collective will to prevail against ISIL in order to stabilize the region."

A major focus of the 10-day conference was the further development of Coalition plans to help train, advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces so that Iraq is better able to regenerate its combat power, counter ISIL and ultimately provide for its own security. Attendees were able to solidify plans and discuss how best to synchronize and reinforce mutual efforts to aid the Iraqis. Additionally, the conference provided a unique opportunity for attendees to share their regional insights and perspectives on how best to combat ISIL and ultimately defeat the terrorist group.

"The strength of our regional campaign is the broad Coalition that has come together with the common goal of defeating ISIL," said Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, U.S. Central Command commander. "Over the past week, the best military planners from 33 nations met and developed plans to train, advise and assist Iraq's security forces. Today, I received their outbrief and was very pleased to see the enormous progress made. I am confident that their hard work will pay significant dividends going forward. It is through these kinds of collaborations and our continued cooperation that we will achieve our shared objectives, further strengthen relationships between our nations, and improve stability and security in that strategically important region of the world."

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