



# News Release

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## **Counter-ISIL military coalition concludes operational planning conference**

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – More than 300 military representatives from 39 nations concluded a weeklong operational planning conference here today that further developed and refined coalition campaign plans designed to degrade and defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

"Planning the coalition campaign is a challenging but essential step in our aim at defeating Daesh," said French Army Maj. Gen. Bernard Commins, chairman of the coalition planning and strategy group at U.S. Central Command, using another term that refers to the terrorist group ISIL. "Success relies on the cohesion of this coalition. Sixty-two nations for one mission. That's where we are."

This week's conference was the third hosted by Headquarters CENTCOM in less than a year. It represented another important milestone in coalition military efforts to work together with Iraq and other partners in eliminating ISIL and the threat the terrorist group poses to Iraq, Syria, the region and the wider international community.

"I have never experienced commitment and determination like this," said British Army Brig. Gen. Gary C. Deakin, deputy director of CENTCOM's strategy, plans and policy directorate. "The conference was an impressive gathering of talent from what I believe to be, after 30 years of experience, the strongest military coalition ever assembled. The degree of personal commitment and determination from the representatives of these 39 nations was overwhelming. This plan will deliver the defeat of Daesh."

The planning at this week's conference complements the coalition's military actions against ISIL, which include airstrikes in support of Iraqi forces as well as helping to train and equip Iraqi forces.

A dozen nations have undertaken more than 3,600 airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. As part of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve, those who have conducted strikes in Iraq include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Jordan, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States; and those who have conducted strikes in Syria include Bahrain, Canada, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and United States.

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A dozen countries are also involved in the building partner capacity effort in Iraq. Those who have announced their participation in the program that trains Iraqi forces include Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom and United States. As a result of the BPC program, nearly 6,500 Iraqi forces have completed the training, with approximately 4,500 currently in training.

Iraqi forces have received about 5.5 million pounds of materiel from nearly 20 donor countries, with much of the materiel flown to Iraq on board nearly 80 flights of coalition aircraft.

On the ground, Iraqi forces have stopped Daesh expansion and are rolling them back, Commins said.

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