

# U.S. Central Command Bids Farewell to Gen. Kurilla, Welcomes Adm. Cooper



U.S. Central Command's (USCENTCOM) Senior Enlisted Leader, Fleet Master Chief Derrick Walters passes the USCENTCOM flag to the outgoing commander of USCENTCOM, U.S. Army Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla, during a change of command ceremony, 8 August 2025. Multiple Department of Defense officials attended the event as well as distinguished defense leaders from partner nations around the world. (U.S. Central Command Public Affairs photo by Tom Gagnier)

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TAMPA, Fla. – U.S. Army Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla, the outgoing commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), relinquished command today to U.S. Navy Adm. Brad Cooper during a change of command ceremony held at the Tampa Convention Center. Prior to assuming command, Adm. Cooper

served as deputy commander of CENTCOM.

Multiple Department of Defense officials attended the event as well as distinguished defense leaders from partner nations around the world.

Gen. Kurilla assumed command of CENTCOM in April 2022. During his time as commander, he led U.S. military efforts in the Middle East maintaining regional stability and security as well as the enduring defeat of ISIS. He led the planning and execution of over 15 major combined combat operations, including Operations Rough Rider and Midnight Hammer.

“I know that under the leadership of Adm. Brad Cooper, with the support of the Defense Department and Joint Staff, the counsel and contributions of our allies and partners, and support of our headquarters and component teams, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastguardsmen, and Guardians of Central Command who serve this nation on the front lines of freedom will always succeed,” said Gen. Kurilla. “It has been the honor of my life to have been their commander.”

Adm. Cooper is a 1989 graduate of the U.S Naval Academy and holds a master’s degree in strategic intelligence from the National Intelligence University. As the commander of CENTCOM, Adm. Cooper will have oversight of all U.S. military missions throughout the 21-country area of responsibility which includes the Middle East and Central Asia.

“U.S. Central Command and the entire joint force have performed exceptionally well under the leadership of Gen. Kurilla, helping to bolster partnerships, increase lethality of U.S. forces, and defend Americans and civilians abroad,” said Adm. Cooper. “I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to lead America’s sons and daughters as we support the important mission of enhancing regional security and stability in the Central Command region.”