

# *U.S. shifts Middle East command from Qatar to South Carolina*

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Washington, September 30 (RHC)-- The United States Air Force has 'temporarily' shifted its command center from Qatar to South Carolina amid U.S. President Donald Trump's escalation of tensions with Iran.

The unannounced operation marked the first time in 13 years that the U.S. command and control was moved out of the region, reported The Washington Post, which had been invited to observe the measure.

As a result, the Combined Air and Space Operations Center at al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar was left empty and Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina was put in charge of controlling U.S. operations from 7,000 miles away. "The functions that the CAOC provides for air power are so critical and so essential that we can't afford to have a single point of failure," said Major General B. Chance Saltzman, using an acronym for the center.

Colonel Frederick Coleman, the commander of the 609th Air and Space Operations Center, also claimed: "Iran has indicated multiple times through multiple sources their intent to attack US forces." He claimed: "Frankly, as the war against ISIS winds down and as we continue to work through a potential peace process in Afghanistan, the region is calming down and potentially more stable than it has been in decades, except for Iran."

This is while the Trump administration has been playing the key role in potentially bringing instability to the region by withdrawing Washington from the internationally backed Iran nuclear deal as well as re-imposition of illegal sanctions on Tehran.

Douglas Barrie, a senior fellow specializing in aerospace at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, stressed the importance of the command center, saying that, "It doesn't take a whole heap of imagination to look at it and think, if push came to shove and it was a full blown conflict, it would be one of the priority targets."

Iran has time and again asserted that it does not seek war, yet stands ready to defend its regional interests against US aggression.

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