

Statement by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on the Liberation of Manbij

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"I want to congratulate the people of Manbij, the Manbij Military Council, the Syrian Arab Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces for their success in liberating Manbij city from ISIL's hateful rule. Their success, enabled by critical Coalition support, is another significant milestone in the campaign to deal ISIL a lasting defeat. Manbij city was a key transit point for ISIL fighters going into both Syria and Iraq, and for its external operators plotting attacks against our allies, our partners, and our homeland. The success in Manbij city will also help reinforce the growing isolation of Raqqa and enable us to achieve the next objective of our campaign in Syria - collapsing ISIL's control over that city. I also want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Turkish government for their support to this critical operation. For the people of Manbij city, now begins the difficult job of rebuilding their homes

and communities, and I call on all of our coalition partners to help them with that task. For its part, the military coalition will continue to work with capable and motivated local forces to defeat ISIL and ensure it remains defeated."