

Dear Colleague,

The past few years have seen Qatar grow into a major hub for terrorist operatives and terrorism finance.

The Qatari government actively finances, hosts, and advocates for the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. The Qatari government also turns a blind eye to terrorist fundraising for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State by U.S.-designated persons within its borders. Qatar is now known as the world's safe haven for terrorist groups and militia leaders.

Qatar professes a commitment and a role in the coalition against ISIS and other Islamist insurgents in the Middle East. However, its direct role is minimal. Evidence suggests that Qatar has directly armed or financed multiple Islamist groups in the region, undermining U.S. objectives in pivotal countries such as Libya, Egypt, and Syria by pushing those places toward violent extremism.

At the same time, Qatar's efforts to curb terror finance are woefully inadequate. Money from Qatar was funneled to a number of terrorist groups including both ISIS and al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate Al Nusra.

These activities indicate that it is time to reassess and reevaluate the U.S. military alliance with Qatar.

Please join me in sending a letter to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter asking him develop a new strategy that will hold Qatar accountable for their support of terrorism, including a serious exploration of positioning some of our military assets with other allies in the region. If you have any questions or would like to sign the letter, please contact Meir Buchnick in my office.

Sincerely,

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

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Dear Secretary Carter,

We write to express deep concerns that America's military footprint in Qatar may be enabling the Al Thani regime to offer up its territory as a fundraising center for terrorists around the region. The past few years have seen Qatar grow into a major hub for terrorist operatives and terrorism finance.<sup>[i]</sup>

The Qatari government turns a blind eye to terrorist fundraising for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State by U.S.-designated persons within its borders.<sup>[ii]</sup> The Qatari government has also actively financed, advocated for, and – at least until recently – hosted the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, a relationship that Doha is only being compelled to reconsider after increased pressure from other Gulf States, not the United States.<sup>[iii]</sup>

Qatar is now known as the world's safe haven for terrorist groups and militia leaders. These activities lead us to believe that it is time to reassess and reevaluate the U.S. military alliance with Qatar.

Qatar professes a commitment and a role in the coalition against ISIS and other Islamist insurgents in the Middle East. However, its direct role in joint air operations against ISIS was minimal in terms of military impact.<sup>[iv]</sup> Further, evidence suggests that Qatar has directly armed or financed multiple Islamist groups in the region, undermining U.S. objectives in pivotal countries such as Libya, Egypt, and Syria by pushing those places toward violent extremism.<sup>[v]</sup>

At the same time, Qatar's efforts to curb terror finance are woefully inadequate. Money from Qatar has been funneled to a number of terrorist groups including both ISIS and al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate Al Nusra. For instance, the Treasury Department indicated in September that a Qatar-based donor provided \$2 million to ISIS's "Amir of suicide bombers."<sup>[vi]</sup> There is no indication that this individual has been punished by Qatar.

Another individual based in country, Qatari national 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nu'aymi, has been sanctioned for providing millions of dollars to al Qaeda affiliates in at least four different countries, but evidently he has yet to be prosecuted or arrested by Doha for his actions.<sup>[vii]</sup> Nu'aymi once provided the forerunner of ISIS, al Qaeda in Iraq, with \$2 million a month; Doha's refusal to convict and lock up a seed funder of ISIS casts doubt upon the Al Thani regime's true beliefs about fighting Islamist terror.<sup>[viii]</sup>

Indeed, David Cohen, the U.S. Treasury Department's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence recently noted that "there are U.S. and U.N.-designated terrorist financiers in Qatar that have not been acted against under Qatari law." These include others beyond Nu'aymi or financial facilitators for Hamas. Leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian Islamic Group, and the Taliban have also found a safe haven in Qatar, from which they can safely coordinate radical activities and in some cases even terrorism in the region without interruption.<sup>[ix]</sup>

While some of these activities are done clandestinely, Qatar has not even attempted to hide its support of Hamas, an organization blacklisted by the United States. As Cohen noted in March, the Qatari regime "has for many years openly financed Hamas."<sup>[x]</sup>

Qatar has opened its doors to Hamas leadership that fled from Jordan and Syria and provides an unfettered media platform for terrorist leaders on Al Jazeera. Israel's security forces have disrupted several plots by Hamas operatives in the West Bank that were run out of Qatar. Qatar's support for Hamas continued even as Hamas launched a war this summer against Israel, lobbing rockets at Israel, and attempted to massacre Israeli civilians by means of underground tunnels while using their own civilians and U.N. schools as shields. While there are indications that Qatar may be reconfiguring its relationship with Hamas, much more needs to be done.

U.S. reliance on Qatar's support such as the Al Udeid base in Qatar has emboldened the Qataris to believe they can undermine and damage American interests and efforts in the region without consequence. America's strategic interests should not be undercut or held captive. Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and the UAE all have advanced bases which can support the same U.S. aircraft and facilities, possibly making the need for such an extensive installation in Qatar redundant.

We ask that you develop a strategy to hold Qatar accountable for their support of terrorism, including a serious exploration of positioning some of our military assets with other allies in the region.

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[ii] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/qatar/11110931/How-Qatar-is-funding-the-rise-of-Islamist-extremists.html>

[http://defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Qatar\\_Part\\_I.pdf](http://defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Qatar_Part_I.pdf)

[iii] CRS report Qatar: Background and U.S. Relations, Christopher M. Blanchard, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, November 4, 2014. <http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=RL31718&Source=search>; David S. Cohen, "Attacking ISIL's Financial Foundation," Remarks at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 23, 2014. (Transcript provided by CQ Transcripts, LLC, accessed via Nexis)

Also, [http://defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Qatar\\_Part\\_I.pdf](http://defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Qatar_Part_I.pdf)

[iii] <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-qatar-turkey-cant-solve-the-crisis-gaza-10930>

[iv] <http://time.com/3422702/isil-isis-syria-obama/>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/17/us-mideast-crisis-syria-strikes-exclusiv-idUSKBN0JV2JB20141217?irpc=932>

[v] <http://www.janes.com/article/39583/qatari-c-17-alleged-to-have-visited-libya> ;

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/09/14/uk-libya-security-qatar-idUKKBN0H90WE20140914>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/15/world/middleeast/jihadists-receiving-most-arms-sent-to-syrian-rebels.html?pagewanted=all>

<http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/schanzer-jonathan-allies-adversaries-enemies-americas-increasingly-complex-alliances/>

[vi] <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2651.aspx>

[vii] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/11156327/Al-Qaeda-terror-financier-worked-for-Qatari-government.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11233407/Terror-financiers-are-living-freely-in-Qatar-US-discloses.html>

[viii] <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/pages/jl2249.aspx>

[ix] On leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and EIG still being in Qatar, see the following:

<http://goo.gl/rD2Gy1>

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/87985/Egypt/Politics-/Egypys-prosecution-calls-on-Interpol-to-arrest-Isl.aspx>

On leaders of the Taliban still being in Qatar, see the following: <http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-may-resume-peace-talks-with-taliban-in-qatar-9137>

[http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/10/taliban\\_claims\\_captu.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/10/taliban_claims_captu.php)

On leaders of Hamas still being in Qatar, see the following:

[http://www.defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Schanzer\\_Testimony\\_HamasFinance\\_Sept914.pdf](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/publications/Schanzer_Testimony_HamasFinance_Sept914.pdf)

[x] <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx>