

OE Threat Assessment: Qatar



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Complex Operational Environment and
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Introduction

Qatar, who gained independence from Britain in 1971, has worked on building a strong relationship with the U.S. since 1992, but also strives for amicable ties regionally in the Arab world. Exploitation of Qatar's oil and gas fields over the last 70 years spurred economic growth that made it one of the richest, albeit smallest, countries in the Gulf State region. This money proves beneficial to the small, affluent country when it is used to quell potential negative intentions by al-Qaeda through bribes paid to the terrorist group. While overtly an ally of the U.S., Qatar is unlikely to act aggressively toward any terrorist that may act within its border. Overall, Qatar's intentions seem to be to remain as neutral as possible and to maintain as much independence as possible while also positioning itself as a country of influence on an international scale. Internally, Qatar has no active Islamist opposition because Islamism is still very much a part of its culture and government despite some democratic additions over recent years. Qatar is scheduled to host the 2022 FIFA [International Federation of Football (Soccer) Associations] World Cup and has even attempted two bids at hosting the Olympics for 2016 and 2020; both bids were rejected.

Political

Qatar is an emirate ruled by Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani who assumed the position the position of chief of state in June 1995. The Emir is also the Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Although the position of emir is hereditary, Hamad usurped power from his father in 1995 and even accused him of taking money from the state (the dispute was settled out of court). Since coming to power, Hamad has encouraged policies that espouse more openness. The Emir's decisions must respect *Sharia* (Islamic) law and customs, although he constitutionally answers to no one.

The legislative branch consists of the unicameral Advisory Council, or Majlis al-Shura, made up of 30 elected members and 15 appointed members for a total of 45. This process became effective in 2005 in accordance with the constitution revised that year, and its purpose was to increase democracy in Qatari politics. Both male and female Qataris have the right to vote beginning at age eighteen, but women only earned the right to vote and serve in a political office by decision of the emir in 1997. National legislative elections are scheduled for 2013.

The judicial branch, according to Qatar's constitution, operates independently of any other branch of government. Although *Sharia* is a part of Qatar's culture and history, the prominence Qatar has achieved internationally because of its wealth and desire for influence has effected some changes including the implementation of civil law into its society.



Military

With the presence of American military personnel in the country, Qatar can field a small force that consists of only 12,100 active duty personnel. Qatar also has long-standing military and defense relationships with France and India. Service in all three branches of the Qatar military is voluntary and approximately 50% of the personnel come from other countries, primarily other Arab states and Pakistan. Most native Qatari military personnel come from the larger desert tribes. Most Qatar military equipment comes from Western countries, primarily France and the U.S. Qatar is a strong supporter of the Western presence in the Middle East and has supported the U.S. in its actions in Afghanistan and Iraq; and the rebel forces in Libya. The Qatari emir serves as his country's Commander-In-Chief and Minister of Defense (MOD). The operational commanders for the army, air force, and navy serve in the General Headquarters and serve the MOD.

Army

There are approximately 8,500 active duty personnel in the Qatari Emiri Land Force (QELF). The QELF is primarily armor and mechanized infantry units that effectively operate in the country's desert terrain. The Qatari special forces units have received amphibious warfare training from French commandos, while U.S. Marines provided demolition and anti-terrorism training. The Qatari chain of command extends from MOD to three subordinate land force generals: The Armed Forces Chief of Staff, the Qatar Emiri Land Forces Commander, and the Emiri Guard Commander. The Emiri Guard brigade is an independent military formation whose duty is to protect the head of state, the royal family, and high-ranking government officials. Most units are stationed in the Doha area.

Units include:

- 1 Armor Brigade
 - 1 Armor Battalion
 - 1 Mechanized Infantry Battalion
 - 1 Anti-Tank Battalion
 - 1 Mortar Squad
- 3 Mechanized Infantry Battalions
- 1 Field Artillery Regiment
- 1 Mortar Battalion
- 1 Royal Guard Brigade (Emiri)
 - 3 Infantry Regiments

Air Force

Over the last couple of years, the Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) has grown from about 1,500 active duty members to approximately 2,100 pilots and support personnel. The small air force only possesses a limited number of combat aircraft, but they are capable of transportation, close air support (CAS), anti-tank, and anti-ship operations. In March 2011, six QEAF fighters deployed to Crete to help enforce the Libyan no-fly zone. Most aircraft are based out of Doha, but some are located at Al Udeid, the regional home of the U.S. Central Command. The QEAF



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reports through the Air Force Commander and is structured similar to the French and British air forces with a fighter wing of two squadrons and a rotary wing of three squadrons. While considered professionally trained, the QEAF does not possess the capability to defend its country from an aerial attack without outside assistance.

Aviation units include:

- 2 Fighter/Ground Attack Squadrons
- 1 Transport Squadron
- 1 Attack Helicopter Squadron
- 1 Transport Helicopter Squadron

Navy

The Qatari Emiri Navy (QEN) is more akin to a coast guard than a navy. There are 1,800 sailors in the QEN that operate 10 surface ships and five auxiliary ships, none over 395 tons in size. There are also 18 smaller patrol craft operated by the Marine Police fleet already counted in the navy personnel numbers. The navy focuses on amphibious operations and protection of off-shore hydrocarbon infrastructure as well as anti-smuggling, anti-piracy, and anti-terrorism missions. The navy possesses limited mine-laying and mine-sweeping capabilities. The navy operates, however, two batteries of MM 40 Exocet Coastal Defense Missiles mounted on cross-country trucks for protection against an amphibious invasion. Command and control is through the Naval Commander, usually a commodore in rank. The Qatari navy possesses limited ability to conduct maritime patrols and would rely on outside assistance in most instances. The navy operates out of two bases: one at Doha and one at Halul Island. The Qatari navy often conducts joint operations with U.S., French, and British ships in the Persian Gulf.

ARMY (As of November 2011, French origin unless otherwise noted)					
Armored Equipment in Service		Artillery Systems in Service		AT/Missile Weapons in Service	
AMX-30B2 Main Battle Tank (MBT)	30	Howitzer, 155-mm F3 SP	22	Anti-Tank (AT), Milan (Germany)	100
V-150 Chaimite Armored Car (U.S.)	8	Howitzer, 155-mm G5 Towed (South Africa)	12	AT, HOT	24
AMX-10P Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)	30	Mortar, 120-mm Brandt	15	AT, UTM800 HOT (mounted on VAB)	24
AMX-VCI Light Tank	30	Mortar, 81-mm L16 (U.K.)	30	AT, 84-mm Carl Gustav (Sweden)	40
Panhard VBL Light Armored Car	16		12	Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL), Surface-to-Surface (STS) Missile, 10-mm ASTROS II (Brazil)	4
AMX-10RC/105 Armored Recon Vehicle	12		6		
FV701 Ferret Recon Vehicle (U.K.)	12		60		
EE-9 Cascavel Recon Vehicle (Brazil)	20		25		
Piranha II Combat Support Vehicle	36				



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AIR FORCE (As of November 2011, French origin unless otherwise noted)						
Fixed Wing Aircraft in Service		Rotary Wing Aircraft in Service		Missiles in Service		
Fighter/Attack (F/A) Mirage 2000-5 (9 Single, 3 Dual Seated)	12	Transport, AW-139 (Italy)	5	Anti-Ship, AM 39 Exocet		UNK
Attack/Training, Alpha Jet (France/Germany)	6	Transport, Commando Mk 2A (U.K.)	3	Anti-Ship, Apache		UNK
Transport, Airbus VIP A340-211 (International)	1	Transport, Commando Mk 2C (U.K.)	1	AT, HOT		UNK
Transport, Airbus VIP A320 (International)	1	Anti-Shipping, Commando Mk 3 (U.K.)	8	Air-to-Air (ATA), R-550 Magic 1		UNK
Transport, Boeing 707-336C (U.S.)	2	Anti-Tank, SA-342L Gazelle	11	ATA, R-550 Magic 2		UNK
Transport, Boeing 72-7-2P1 (U.S.)	1	Utility, SA-341 Gazelle 2	2	ATA, MICA		UNK
Transport, Falcon 900 VIP	2			Surface-to-Air (STA), Mistral		24
Transport, C-130J Super Hercules (U.S.)	4			STA, Blowpipe (U.K.)		12
Transport, C-17 Globemaster (U.S.)	2			STA, Roland 2 (mounted on AMX-30)		9
				STA, FIM-92A Stinger (U.S.)		12
				STA, SA-7 Grail		20
NAVY (As of November 2011, French origin unless otherwise noted)						
Vessels		Missiles		Marine Police Fleet		
Guided-Missile Craft, Vosper Thornycroft Design (U.K.)	4	Anti-Ship, MM 40 Exocet	12	Fast Intercept Craft, DV15		4
Guided Missile Craft, French Combattante III Design	3			Coastal Patrol Craft, Halmatic M 160 (Unknown)		3
Patrol Craft, 14.5-m Damen Gorinchem Design (Netherlands)	3			Coastal Patrol Craft, Crestitalia MV-45 (Unknown)		4
Spear-Class Mk I/Mk II 9.1-m Launches	12			Coastal Patrol Craft, Watercraft P1200 (Unknown)		3
Fast Patrol Boat, CMN 15-60	6					
Patrol Boat, Vosper 103-foot Design (U.K.)	4					
Patrol Boat, Polycat 1450-Class	3					

American Forces in Qatar

The U.S. military bases a number of its aircraft at the Al-Udeid Air Base that was built in 1996 at the cost of more than \$1 billion. It can accommodate up to 100 aircraft and can land any airplane in the world on its 15,000 foot runway. The air base also possesses the necessary mission command equipment for the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to use as its forward command center.

The U.S. military also pre-positions a large amount of equipment in Qatar at the As Sayliya complex near Doha. In one of the largest pre-positioned stockages of military equipment



outside of the continental United States, there is enough equipment to meet an American mechanized brigade's logistical requirements.

Government Paramilitary Forces

The Qatari national police force, with approximately 2,500 personnel, is tasked by the government with limited border security and coast guard functions. In addition, there are three other types of units of company (+) strength of 300 to 400 personnel, namely the Oil Wells Guard Unit, the Static Guards Regiment, and the Border Guards Regiment. The names reveal their missions: The first type guard Qatar's oil wells, mainly in the Dukhan and Umm Bab regions, and the pipeline infrastructure; static guards are stationed throughout the country to protect other important infrastructure; and the Border Guards help ensure the security of the country's boundaries.

Qatari Military Functions

Mission Command

The Qatari military operates through a normal command system with the emir serving as his own MOD at the top of the chain of command. Due to the small size of the country and the congregation of most of the military in the Doha area, the lack of the most modern communication equipment would probably not hamper military activities. Previous exercises with the U.S. probably would make the Qatari military able to communicate and work with its Western allies without too many issues.

Maneuver

The armor and mechanized units in the QELF would give it the means to maneuver in the country's desert environment. The emphasis on amphibious warfare training by the navy is probably more for its training value with foreign militaries than actual combat, as Qatar would be more likely to operate in both a strategic and tactical defense posture instead of a tactical offensive involving an amphibious assault on a foreign country.

Information Warfare

While the Qatari military does not operate any units whose sole mission is Information Warfare, the government controls both television and radio broadcasts in the country. The Qatari government provided the original funding for the Al-Jazeera News Network that now claims editorial independence. Once viewed as slanted towards the Middle Eastern/Arab perspective, Al-Jazeera continues towards the path of independent journalism. Qatari residents can also access several international broadcasters for views other than those espoused on the state-run media outlets.



RISTA

The QELF does not field any specific reconnaissance units outside those organic to its brigade structure. The QEAF does not have the capacity to conduct much RISTA activity beyond aerial reconnaissance. Qatar's allies would provide most of the RISTA assets during combined military operations.

Fire Support

The Qatari military possesses limited fire support capability with only 34 howitzers, 45 mortars, 12 combat fixed wing aircraft, and 18 combat helicopters. While this may be enough to initially support the small Qatari military, sustainment of effective fire support would be unlikely.

Protection

Due to the mechanized nature of most of the QELF, military personnel will likely meet the minimum requirements to protect the force. With a desert terrain, the dispersal of vehicles would likely reduce the likelihood of major losses caused by a large congregation of equipment in a confined space.

Logistics

While the Qatari military does not field any major logistical units, the country's small size and port facilities would make it easily supported with outside assistance. The equipment that the Qatari army does possess is usually maintained at a high level of readiness.

Threat Actors in the OE

Non-State Paramilitary Forces

Insurgent Forces

Al-Qaeda (AQ): The worldwide terrorist organization, AQ, is known to operate in over 65 countries to include Qatar. AQ is a radical Sunni Muslim organization that wants to establish an Islamic government in Muslim countries based on Sharia law. AQ has conducted many attacks over the year ranging from the hijacking of the airplanes that crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City to individual suicide attacks by the faithful carrying explosive-laden vests in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are many AQ affiliated terrorist organizations throughout the world.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): AQAP operates heavily in adjacent Saudi Arabia and in Yemen as it attempts to establish an Islamic caliphate. There is only one incident in recent years inside Qatar's borders that was connected to AQAP: the March 2005 car bomb suicide attack that destroyed the Doha Players theater just outside the capital and killed one person, Jonathan Adams from the United Kingdom (U.K.). Although not proven, the relative



sophistication of the attack led analysts to believe that AQAP orchestrated it, as opposed to lone wolf operators who have committed other attacks in Qatar. The attacker was soon identified as Omar Ahmad Abdullah Ali, an Egyptian who lived and worked as an engineer in Qatar for the previous 15 years. It is believed that the attack was purposefully timed to coincide with the anniversary of the beginning of U.S. operations in Iraq. Qatar's rich petroleum reserves and its positive relationship with the U.S. – and its support for U.S. operations in Iraq – make it a probable target for AQAP, but because the government is so rich, it has allegedly been able to pay off al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Open source reports indicate that the Qatari government provides millions of dollars each year to al-Qaeda through spiritual leaders that fund its operations.

Guerrilla Forces

There are currently no known major guerrilla forces operating in Qatar.

Criminal Organizations

There is little organized criminal activity in Qatar. The country received the best rating available for its lack of organized crime from the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), an organization headquartered in Sydney, Australia. Qatar was the highest-ranked Middle Eastern country and ranked 12th globally in the IEP's Global Peace Index.

Private Security Organizations

There are small numbers of private security organizations (PSO) in Qatar. These companies guard U.S. military properties and often provide VIP security for civilians. Most of these PSOs will be pro-Western at best and neutral at worst.

Non-Military Armed Combatants

There are 520,000 guns owned by civilians in Qatar or about 19.2 firearms per 100 people. Like the PSOs, their view to the Western world will be positive to neutral.

Force Protection Issues

While terrorism is a possibility, very few attacks against foreigners have taken place in Qatar. The most recent major attack occurred in 2005 against a British national. In 2008, only 13 homicides occurred in Qatar and none with a firearm. The only major terrorist incident in the last year in Qatar occurred on 5 September 2011 when unidentified gunmen attacked the Qatari emir's motorcade near his palace. The emir suffered injuries and was taken to the hospital while eight of his bodyguards were killed in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

While the overall crime rate is fairly low in Qatar and most visitors have nothing to fear, crime did rise six-fold between 2001 and 2010. The major reason cited for the increase in crime is that



the openness of the country has caused increased visitation by people from other countries who are responsible for committing crimes.

Visitors to the area should be careful before boating around the Abu Musa and Tunbs Islands off the coast of Qatar, as other countries have detained and arrested those who accidentally violated the maritime boundaries of other countries.

Threat Actors' Military Functions

Mission Command

If AQ or AQAP decided to conduct a mission in Qatar, a local cell would both plan and conduct the mission internally to avoid exposure to capture before the completion of the mission.

Maneuver

Threat actors in Qatar would most likely travel on foot or use civilian vehicles for longer distances.

Information Warfare

Sometimes a terrorist organization will take credit for an attack, but other times they do not. Terrorist groups exploit modern media outlets while government leaders still struggle with the best use of modern technology to get their information out to the people.

RISTA

The most important RISTA capability for threat actors in Qatar is Human Intelligence (HUMINT). With their eyes and ears spread out among the population, non-state paramilitary forces can often obtain the information they desire.

Fire Support

Non-state paramilitary forces in Qatar lack the firepower to conduct even the most basic fire support for an attack. If an attack occurred and the assailants used fire support, it would most likely come from a single or small number of mortars.

Protection

With only small arms and civilian vehicles, the threat actors in Qatar cannot adequately protect its members. The best protection the threat actors possess is their ability to blend in with the population as they conduct surveillance and then their actual mission.

Logistics

The threat actors in Qatar require little in the way of logistics. Some small arms and explosives is all that is necessary for most insurgent groups to conduct an attack.



Economic

Qatar has transformed from a poor pearl-fishing country to one of the richest countries in the world in only about 70 years, largely because it possesses 15% of the world's proven oil reserves. This puts the country in a position to become a global energy giant. In 2009, crude oil exports were at 704,300 bbl/day and imports were zero. Overall production was 1.631 million bbl/day (2011 figure).

Oil and gas revenues comprise more than 50% of Qatar's GDP, and citizens enjoy the second-highest per capita income in the world. 2011 unemployment figures put Qatar at 0.4%, the lowest in the world. There is no poverty. Qatar's wealth allows it to provide many programs for its citizens at little or no cost to them. Ninety-six percent of Qataris lived in urban areas as of 2010, with an annual increase rate of 1.6%. Qatar spends 10% of its GDP on defense, which is the second-highest percentage in the world.

Social

Qatar has 1,951,591 million residents, and only approximately 300,000 of them are Qatari citizens. Nearly 85% reside in the capital, Doha. Arabic is the official language, but many also speak English. The citizens benefit from the fact that most services are free or government subsidized.

Sunni Muslims comprise the majority of the Qatari population, and the government espouses an Islamist ideology, so there is little friction among the homogenous citizens or between them and the government. Specifically, Wahhabism dominates the culture. While Wahhabism is a strict interpretation of Islam and the people of Qatar are fairly conservative, enforcement of the tenets of the religion in most areas is lax. In fact, Qatar ranks second among Arab countries in safeguarding the civil liberties of its citizens (Lebanon is first). There is general harmony throughout society because of the religious homogeneity, and even though much of the population is comprised of foreigners, the majority of them are from other Muslim countries.

Both men and women occupy the work force, although there are more men than women. Despite the fact that females enjoy the same rights as males do, there are still some traditional gender roles that are followed throughout society, such as separate schooling, separate staircases in Qatari homes for men and women, and presence of women in public spaces is limited.

Information

Al Jazeera is headquartered in the Qatari capital, Doha. The network is the most watched channel on YouTube. Al Jazeera English (AJE) is broadcast throughout 100 countries and in over 220 million homes. Although it was originally funded by the government, and still receives



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government loans and grants, Al Jazeera now claims to operate independently of the Qatari government.

Other broadcast media experiences more government control. Most newspapers are connected in some way to the Al Thani family and are influenced by them either directly or indirectly. The government also censors Internet material that is un-Islamic, anti-government, or pornographic. There are 687,000 Internet users in Qatar according to 2011 statistics. As of September 2012, there were 727,980 Facebook subscribers in Qatar.

Intelligence Services in the OE

Qatari State Security (QSS) maintains a close surveillance of its citizens, residents, and visitors with a large and well-equipped force. The QSS comes under the control of the Qatari Minister of Interior (MOI). In June 2003, the *mukhabarat* (General Intelligence Service) and the *mubahith* (State Security Service) merged to form the QSS. QSS missions include internal security investigations, intelligence gathering, corruption cases, and monitoring sedition and espionage activities.

Infrastructure

At least 96% of Qataris live in urban areas, and the only major city is the capital, Doha, whose population was 427,000 in 2009. Homes and buildings in Doha reflect the wealth of the country and are quite modern. The Doha Tower was named “Best Tall Building Worldwide” by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat in a ceremony in Chicago in October 2012.

Because Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup in 2022, infrastructure has become a prominent issue in the country. Yousef Hussein Kamal, Qatar’s Minister of Economy and Finance, announced in the fall of 2011 that Qatar would spend around \$150 billion by 2022 on projects like roads, railways, an airport (which would be the second international airport in the country), a deepwater seaport, hotels, stadiums, and a transport corridor in Doha.

Physical Environment

Qatar is a peninsula in the Persian Gulf and shares a 37-mile border with Saudi Arabia to its south. Its coastline is 349 miles. Terrain is primarily desert with less than two percent arable land. The country is about the size of the state of Connecticut at 7,158 square miles. The country’s primary natural resources are petroleum, natural gas, and fish.

Time

Most Qataris view time in a fashion typical of people who reside in Middle Eastern countries. In general, punctuality is not as important as it is to those in Western cultures. Qatar is presenting itself as a major international player, though, so the government and many residents



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understand how Westerners view time and can adapt to it to a certain extent when necessary for business and political relationships.

The work week in Qatar is Sunday through Thursday. Work hours vary between government and private offices. Government employees work from 7am to 2pm while others work 8am to noon, then 4pm to 8pm. Friday and Saturday constitute the weekend. Qataris celebrate these nationally recognized holidays: National Day on the 18th of December in each year, Eid Al-Fitr Holiday from the 28th of Ramadan until the 4th of Shawwal, and Eid Al- Adha from the 9th of Zilhijjah until the 13th of Zilhijjah.

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