

The Turkey-Qatar Military Cooperation Agreement: Turkish Military Presence in the Persian Gulf?

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Global Research, February 15, 2016

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 15 February 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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A short while ago Turkey and Qatar announced that they have an agreement in place to further deepen their military cooperation within the framework of the “[struggle against common enemies](#)”, which implies the construction of two new military bases: a Turkish one in Qatar and a Qatari base in Turkey.

As it was made clear by the Turkish Ambassador to Qatar, Ahmet Demirok, Ankara is planning to construct a multi-purpose military installation that will become home to some 3,000 soldiers. By taking this step Turkey expects to become a state that is directly influencing security in the Persian Gulf. In the future, this base will also provide Turkish armed forces with an outpost for operations in the Red Sea, North Africa, along with the access to the waters of the Pacific, which Turkey lost back in 1950.

Just as with the creation of the British military base in Bahrain, and the French military base in the UAE, this deal is but a step in the implementation of Washington’s plan of enhancing the role of its allies in ensuring regional security in the Persian Gulf, that its satellites are to take at their own expense. It is expected that in late February, the US Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Charles Johnson is going to visit Turkey to offer local authorities American technologies that should allow Ankara to enhance its own national security, including reconnaissance balloons, explosives spotting devices, and so on. It is believed that Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson is going to discuss the strengthening of the fight against ISIL along with “the mutual interests” the US and Turkey can protect with the Turkish base in Qatar.

Of course, experts that have been watching closely Turkey’s and Qatar’s policies in recent years, won’t be surprised by this chain of events. In an effort to regain the influence that the Ottoman Empire enjoyed in the Middle East, President RecepTayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party have been using every pretext to justify the future deployment of its troops in the Persian Gulf through the “sincere” desire to intensify “the fight [against common threats](#)”, while making Turkey’s military presence in the region official.

However, a military agreement between Qatar and Turkey is of vital strategic importance for both states, since by coincidence or not, they share [regional interests](#). Turkey and Qatar have been supporting similar extremist and even terrorist groups used extensively in the fight against the Syrian government. Both states have also been deeply involved in the political struggle for influence in Egypt, by sponsoring the Muslim Brotherhood organization and former President Mohamed Morsi, along with promoting Wahhabi ideas not only in North

Africa and the Middle East, but also in Central Asia.

It should be noted that Qatar and Turkey are the original creators of ISIL, and they have been investing heavily in the strengthening of this terrorist organization ever since. While Qatar provided a certain share of its financial wealth with ISIL, Turkey has spent significant time on the recruitment and training of ISIL militants for them to then wreak havoc in Iraq and Syria. Turkey did its best to provide its terrorist creation with sophisticated smuggling networks that allowed ISIL to ship stolen oil and drugs across the globe. The Islamic State repaid their masters with a constant stream of Muslim refugees heading to Europe in a bid to save their lives. After all, Turkey is the first to benefit from the flow of migrants that are supposed to conquer a foothold in new lands, planting the seeds for future victories of a new Ottoman Empire.

Bilateral military cooperation between Turkey and Qatar received a significant boost back in December 2014 when the parties signed a military agreement that received a whole new meaning a year later. This secret agreement was expanded during the visits of Turkish intelligence chief Hakan Fidan to Doha last December, when Ankara managed to secure Doha's promise to compensate a portion of its losses from the cessation of Russian tourism to Turkey, believed to have caused a whopping 3 billion dollars in economic damage, along with the promise that Qatar will be providing Ankara with gas supplies, should Russia decide to terminate its supplies. In addition, Qatar has agreed to pay all the costs that will be attributed to the construction of Turkey's military base on its territory, believed to be as high as 1 billion dollars.

The real question is what is Qatar getting in return? – Although both countries have sought to hide the answer from the general public, it is still fairly obvious.

First of all, Qatar will greatly enhance its military and political independence from its neighbor – Saudi Arabia, which has been repeatedly trying to distance itself from Qatari policies and even condemned Doha for the financial support it has been providing to radical extremists. Moreover, there's little doubt that it will untie Doha's hands in the business of sponsoring radical movements in the Islamic world, which have been labeled by numerous experts as extremist or even terrorist groups. Qatar will be able to train future members of such groups on its military base in Turkey, as well as using Turkish extremists on its territory for the same purposes, raising new radical hordes for military engagements in Syria or other countries. Such grim predictions are not only made by international experts, but by the members of the Turkish opposition, the [Republican People's Party](#) as well.

According to the French agency *Intelligence*, Saudi Arabia has opposed the construction of the Turkish military base in Qatar since its first announcement, as has the UAE.. The Arab world seems to be frankly worried by the strengthening of the military cooperation between Turkey and Qatar, since this basically means that radical movements like the Muslim Brotherhood will be getting even more active, equating to greater adversity for a number of regional players. Under these circumstances, taking into account the well-known unpredictability of Erdogan's behavior, in the near future we may witness the worsening of Turkey's relations with a number of Arab states and the further destabilization of the region.

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