

INVITATION

QATAR

Strategic Partner or Destabilizing Force?

Panel Discussion

Monday, 17 July 2017, 6.15-8.15 p.m.
Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski
Maximilianstr. 17, 80539 Munich

Qatar is a peculiar country, a country of extremes. Located in the Arabian Gulf, the peninsular state has about half the size of Hesse. It has a population of approximately 2.5 million, of which less than 15 percent are Qatari nationals. Despite its smallness in size and population, Qatar has gained considerable economic, political, medial, and cultural influence over the past decades.

Besides being a sizeable oil exporter, the Gulf state is the world's third largest natural gas producer and the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Qatar has by far the highest GDP per capita. Its capital, Doha, has developed into an ultramodern city and Qatar Airways continues to be one of the fastest growing airlines worldwide. Qatar is the host of the pan-Arab TV news channel Al Jazeera as well as a multitude of international sports events, most notoriously the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Qatar has long been a strategic partner of the United States inter alia hosting the U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM) forward headquarters at Al Udeid Air Base. The Gulf state is a good customer of Western arms including French Rafale fighter jets and German Leopard 2 battle tanks. In the financial sphere, Qatar invests heavily in European companies such as Volkswagen, Deutsche Bank, Barclay's, and Credit Suisse.

However, there is a dark side to Qatar. Its autocratic rulers restrict the civic rights of their citizens and trample on basic human rights of the expatriate work force. The regime uses Al Jazeera as a tool to manipulate regional political developments in its favor. It supports the Muslim Brotherhood, radical Islamists in Libya, Hamas in Gaza, and jihadi militias supposedly including Al Qaeda in Syria. Doha cultivates good relations with Iran, hosts a political office of the Taliban, and funds institutions spreading radical thought in Europe.

This panel sheds light on Qatar's actions at home and abroad in addressing a pressing question: Is Qatar a trustworthy strategic partner or rather a destabilizing force?

Dr. René Rieger
MEIA Research

Dr. Anja Opitz
Akademie für Politische Bildung,
Tutzing

Ludwig Schulz
Center for Applied Policy Research
LMU Munich

PROGRAM

Monday, 17 July 2017

6:15 p.m. **Arriving**

6:30 p.m. **Welcoming and Opening Remarks**

Dr. Anja Opitz (Akademie für Politische Bildung, Tutzing)

6:45 p.m. **Panel Discussion**

Michael Bauer

Vice Chairman of MEIA Research
Associate Researcher at the Center for Applied Policy Research

Dr. Gudrun Harrer

Managing Editor at Der Standard, Vienna
Former Special Envoy of the Austrian EU Presidency to Iraq

Colonel (GS) Jörg Kunze

Course Director, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies
Former German Defense Attaché in Tehran

Dr. David B. Roberts

Assistant Professor at King's College London
Former Director of the Royal United Services Institute in Doha

Moderation:

Dr. René Rieger

Chairman of MEIA Research

8:15 p.m. **Welcome Reception**

MEIA Research, the Akademie für Politische Bildung, Tutzing, and the CAP would greatly appreciate your presence at the event.

Due to limited capacity, we kindly ask for your registration
via email to qatar2017@meia-research.org