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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND
COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The Honorable Glenneda Zuiderveld
State Senator
Idaho State Senate

The Honorable Josh Kohl
State Senator
Idaho State Senate

The Honorable Lucas Cayler
State Representative
Idaho House of Representatives

The Honorable Clint Hostetler
State Representative
Idaho House of Representatives

The Honorable Christy Zito
State Senator
Idaho State Senate

The Honorable Faye Thompson
State Representative
Idaho House of Representatives

The Honorable Kent Marmon
State Representative
Idaho House of Representatives

The Honorable David Leavitt
State Representative
Idaho House of Representatives

Dear State Legislators,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the potential Qatari training facility at Mountain Home Air Force Base (MHAFB). As a former state legislator and now member of Congress, I understand and relate to many of your concerns and sincere desire to seek answers for those you represent.

Since the October 10th announcement by Secretary Hegseth, I have been in touch with various federal sources to learn as much detail as possible. In addition, I have reached out directly to the Secretary of War, expressing my disappointment with the lack of communication and to request a briefing. The Secretary's office has acknowledged receipt and pledged a response.

There are numerous training facilities for foreign allies based across the U.S. (with one being for Singapore at MHAFB). The prevailing notion within Congress is that they have yielded positive outcomes. However, to my knowledge, this would be the first for a nation who, until recent years, has not always been in alignment with our nation's interests.

The Trump administration has done wonders to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our warfighters, and I'm confident the intent for this facility is to benefit our foreign relations and strategic military interests.

In the pages that follow, my staff and I have done our best to compile the most current information available and respond to your questions. Please know that we will also do our best to learn more from the Secretary and insert local stakeholders into the planning process such that Idahoans' interests are prioritized and their concerns are adequately addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russ Fulcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Russ" and last name "Fulcher" clearly distinguishable.

Russ Fulcher, M.C.
1st District of Idaho

Answers to Idaho Lawmakers' Questions Regarding Qatari Air Force Training and Stationing at Mountain Home Air Force Base:

The following is based on our understanding of the arrangement as of October 17, 2025. The Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) will station 12 F-15QAs at Mountain Home AFB (hereafter, MHAFB) for training. Similar to the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), the squadron for the QEAF will be U.S. Air Force-led and U.S.-flagged. The training facility and barracks (living quarters) will be housed on MHAFB and will be under U.S. jurisdiction. The training facility and barracks (living quarters) will be built from the ground up and used to help train QEAF pilots, along with helping U.S. Air Force pilots learn how to work with QEAF pilots.

QEAF Leadership requested expedited Interim Operating Capability (IOC) at MHAFB construction of temporary flightline facilities and munitions storage containers. IOC can be achieved within two years of final approval of the proposal. Permanent facility construction needed to achieve Full Operating Capability (FOC) would occur simultaneously and take 5-6 years to design/construct. FOC can be achieved within 5-6 years from the final approval of the approved plans. That would put it roughly in the 2030-31 range.

1. How many Qatari personnel will be included in the training mission?

According to the U.S. Air Force Community Partnership Manager at MHAFB from March 2025, the proposed personnel structure is approximately 270 Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) servicemembers and U.S. contractor personnel (120 Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) servicemembers and 150 contractor personnel). This is based on a March 2025 estimate from the U.S. Air Force.¹

2. What is the expected duration of their deployment?

The plan is for the Qatar Emiri Air Force to train for 10 years, with the option of extending the time per training and interoperability requirements.

3. What are the housing arrangements for Qatari personnel? Will they reside on or off base? Will families be allowed to accompany them, and what restrictions, if any, will be placed on their travel within the state?

The QEAF requested use of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programmed funds that go with the sale to be used for barracks that will be co-located with the training facility located on MHAFB.

As for travel within the state, foreign servicemembers in the U.S. for training or other official purposes through the FMS program are authorized to travel through the U.S. government's Defense Travel System (DTS) and receive a Travel and Living Allowance (TLA). The travel and associated allowances are authorized and funded through the specific FMS case, which is a legally binding agreement between the U.S. and the foreign country.

¹ This is a fluid and incomplete number. This number is down from an earlier estimate (2019) of 210 QEAF personnel (39 Officers; 171 Enlisted) from the U.S. Air Force. This estimate was working off the Republic of Singapore Air Force experience, given both countries are training 12 aircraft. If the number changes, it could be due to the need for more support personnel and would be negligible. Further, many of the contractors are American due to this being from U.S. equipment providers.

In other words, the foreign servicemembers can only travel based on the agreement signed and only through the U.S. government's DTS. Family Involvement is unclear at this time.

4. What is the total cost to American taxpayers to house, train, and feed foreign military personnel?

It is our understanding the Qatari government will pay for the full cost of the training facility – no U.S. tax dollars will be part of it. Qatar is paying for the construction of barracks to house the pilots and support crew. This will be on MHAFB. Qatar is bearing the cost of the barracks as well – no U.S. tax dollars will be part of that. Third, the FMS program is funded from appropriated dollars.

While we are not clear of the cost to U.S. taxpayers, this arrangement is part of a larger “economic exchange agreement” that includes \$38B in investments Qatar is doing to pay for some of the costs of U.S. stationing of defense capabilities at the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and a mix of U.S. and Qatar spending for the training and living accommodations at MHAFB done by the Trump Administration. As noted, the QEAF asked that some of the FMS program money be used for local living accommodations. The \$38B in potential investments did include “future defense capabilities related to air defense and maritime security.”

5. How is this program being funded, and under what federal authority?

As noted above, the full cost of the training facility and the cost of the barracks are being paid for by the Qatari government. In terms of other parts of this, when foreign countries buy U.S. military weaponry and equipment, they do so through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program that is under the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) of the Department of War. The FMS program that includes appropriated money manages this process, along with State Department offices.²

Funding is three-fold: One, through the FMS program that Congress appropriates each year; Two, this defense, technology, and energy deal the U.S. signed with Qatar includes Qatari money; and Three, funding by the government of Qatar that comes with their purchase of the 36 F-15QAs.

6. How does this agreement align with the constitutional purpose of the U.S. military, which is to defend the United States and her borders, rather than to train foreign forces?

According to the Office of the Secretary of War, the mission provides for the establishment of a training location for Qatari F-15QA aircraft at Mountain Home Air Force Base. This provides Qatar with strategic flexibility to operate and sustain their advanced fighter aircraft, which, in turn, supports American interests in the Middle East. It will also enable combined training opportunities between Qatar and the United States, fostering stronger defense partnerships and enhancing joint operational capabilities. This effort will increase the lethality of our warfighters and improve interoperability among allied and partner nations.

The role of the U.S. military is to defend the Constitution, deter war, and ensure the security of the United States and its interests at home and abroad. The purpose of having foreign militaries train with U.S. forces is to help U.S. forces learn how to work with foreign forces who are used to their terrain and geography.

² Because this is part of a larger deal, there could be other costs the Qatar government is paying, and it is possible of some costs being picked up by the U.S. government.

This increases the chances that U.S. airmen will survive and avoid injury, along with helping them be more effective in war. The formal QEAF mission and training with the United States at MHAFB is key to interoperability and a strategic, tactical deterrence of threats in the Middle East.

U.S. active duty and Guard units across the country have trained with allied, partner, and select friendly foreign forces for decades. The goal remains the same: Improve the ability of U.S. forces to fight in different parts of the world as needed to defend and advance U.S. interests. This is demonstrated with Mountain Home's 366th Fighter Wing, along with the 389th Fighter Squadron and the 391st Fighter Squadron, which have trained with the Republic of Singapore Air Force's 428th Fighter Squadron since 2009. Additionally, National Guard and Air National Guard units from across the country have State Partnership Programs with Army and Air Force units from other countries.

7. What assurances exist that training foreign militaries on U.S. soil does not compromise national or state security? How can both America's and Idaho's safety be guaranteed under this arrangement?

First, note that the U.S. is selling Qatar not simply "F-15s," but "F-15QAs." The F-15QA does not have all the most technologically advanced and other capabilities and systems available to U.S. Air Force pilots. This is standard practice when selling weapons and equipment to different foreign countries. It depends on the treaty and security agreements it has with that foreign country. It also depends on the restrictions, limitations, and/or conditions Congress sets on sales. Sales typically go through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program that determines what can be included with a weapon and equipment, or if warranted Direct Commercial Sales with vetting and permission for the U.S. company selling the weaponry or equipment to get an export license to do so and to outline the articles being sold, the country to whom they are being sold, and any conditions or limitation set upon their use.

8. What screening, intelligence, or vetting processes are in place to ensure that no trainees have ties to hostile or extremist organizations?

Per the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, the military departments are required to conduct checks to ensure any foreign military servicemember does not pose a security risk. This occurs prior to any travel to the U.S. for training.

Further "visa screening" occurs by the U.S. State Department, looking at whether the individual has committed violations of human rights. This could include acts of terrorism against innocent populations. Vetting covers both servicemembers and any accompanying family members.

From October 1, 2019, through March 31, 2023, the DoD vetted over 29,000 cases and identified a small number of security findings, resulting in a denial of access for some individuals.

During the training phase, servicemembers will be subject to periodic checks while in the U.S.

Finally, all personnel must provide two official forms of identification on the DoD List of Acceptable Identity Documents, ensuring all names are identical across documents.

9. Are any other foreign militaries currently stationed in Idaho besides those from Qatar and Singapore?

Not that we are aware of.

10. What are the political implications of having both Singapore and Qatar operating from the same airfield?

Servicemembers of both militaries are bound by codes of conduct that limit their behavior lest they face punishment from their chain of command for any misconduct. Additionally, both militaries have worked with foreign militaries, including the U.S., in the past. For example, the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has been at MHAFB since 2009.

Also, the proper conduct of foreign military servicemembers is part of the FMS requirement that the foreign country's military must ensure.

The U.S. military has a long history of working with various foreign militaries, including helping these militaries strengthen their professionalism – particularly in countries throughout Latin America, so they can deal more effectively with drug and human trafficking and fighting drug cartels. This helps prevent drugs from getting into the U.S.

11. What specific security concerns exist for the surrounding communities and for U.S. military personnel stationed at MHAFB?

The intent is not to create a security concern, but rather to enhance long-term American security.

12. Is there a long-term plan to convert MHAFB into a multi-national training facility for multiple foreign allies?

Not that we are aware of.