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## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE SAUDI–PAKISTAN DEFENCE DEAL FOR SOUTH ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN SECURITY DYNAMICS

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### Abstract

*The new, intensified Saudi-Pakistan defence partnership is an indicator of a significant change in collaboration in interregional security, combining South Asian with Middle Eastern strategic interests. In this work, the historical background behind the partnership, the driving forces, and the overall geopolitical implications are examined. As Saudi Arabia tries to expand its military capacity and diversify its security partners through the current tensions with Iran, and Pakistan tries to obtain a helping hand economically, maintain the urgency of its military, and improve its relations with the Gulf. The article assesses the impacts of this cooperation on Middle Eastern security processes, especially the Iran-Saudi conflict, GCC military arrangements, counterterrorism activities and their repercussions on South Asian stability with respect to India-Pakistan relations as well as the Chinese contribution to this balance. The conclusion is that despite the advantages of improved security cooperation, the deal also brings risks of increased rivalries and leads to a more complex, multi-polar and connected regional order.*

**Keywords:** Interregional security, strategic interests, dynamics, motivations, counterterrorism, Asian stability, cooperation, diversify, regional order.

### Introduction

A significant breakthrough in the security relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan came with the signing of a historic Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) in Riyadh on September 17, 2025. Arriving amidst increased geopolitical tensions in West Asia, especially post-Israel and Qatar bombing, the agreement demonstrates that Riyadh has greater strategies to



depend on alternative defence partners and no longer lingers on traditional allies, such as the United States. Meanwhile, the agreement is aligned with the goals of Saudi Arabia, which strives to increase the internal and regional stability, which is essential to economic change. The Vision 2030 program, which was initiated by the Crown Prince in 2016, is a bold program which seeks to diversify the economy, empower citizens, create a vibrant environment to remain competitive both locally and internationally, and for Saudi Arabia to take the lead in the world. Moreover, there is a growing trend of making Riyadh a Centre of diplomacy and mediation, as the kingdom aims at turning it into a major middle power serving its interests through diversification of interests and objectives in the region, as well as diversification of the external relations. The Vision 2030 is also planned to change the traditional economic models by introducing the energy shift towards the creation of a diversified non-oil-dependent economy to have a stronger focus on tourism and business investments in the country. In the meantime, the military experience, the possession of nuclear weapons and the growing defence relations with China put Pakistan in a position as a valuable strategic partner as Saudi Arabia re-aligns itself in changing fast geopolitical environment. Evidently, the growing fit between Saudi defence priorities and the military capabilities of Pakistan, combined with its efficient narrative diplomacy inform that this accord could be used as one of the building blocks to construct the security structure of the future in the region.<sup>1</sup> This paper looks into the factors behind the Saudi-Pakistani defence alliance and discusses its strategic implications in the two areas. The paper aims to comprehend the contribution made by this developing partnership to a more integrated yet more complex and competitive regional order by assessing the effects of this deal on the continuity of rivalries, the development of alliances, and new types of security structures.

### **Strategic Motivations Behind the Saudi–Pakistan Defence Deal**

The Pakistan-Saudi defence alliance has its motives, which are strategic interests and the failure of the dynamics in the region. The Saudis believe that they should lessen their overdependence on the traditional security guarantors, mainly the United States, by diversifying their defence relationship in order to boost their deterrence and security independence in the region. Pakistan, on the other hand, wants to strengthen its influence in the region and is one of the main security providers in the Muslim world. The common denominators between the two states are the changing threats, regional insecurity, as well as increasing Israeli military operations, and their urge to have a better and more dignified defence cooperation. The treaty is a

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Angana Kotokey, *Beyond Oil & Allies: Saudi-Pakistan Defence Pact and Shifting Geopolitics*, Vivekananda International Foundation, October 4, 2025



facade of both a marriage of political, military and ideological interests, capitalising on a new geopolitical alliance in the form of shared Islamic identity, geography, and the mutual complements of military strengths.

### **Shared Security Threats and the Saudi–Pakistan Defence Alliance.**

The major factor that has made Saudi Arabia choose to sign a defence agreement with Pakistan is the escalating security issues within the region, which have heightened the sense of insecurity within the kingdom. Such unpredictable security conditions in the Gulf, as well as in the broader Middle East area, have been accentuated by recent Israeli moves, especially the unprecedented strike on Qatar. Coupled with this, Saudi Arabia is also highly worried about the Iranian scenario of pursuing its nuclear development program and a huge network of proxy forces that are threatening Saudi territorial integrity. The key provision of this defence agreement, which stipulates that any aggression on one side will be viewed as an aggression on both, is a tactical deterrent that will prevent antagonistic parties from resorting to violence. This joint defence assurance marks a change towards more cooperative security provisions that aim at stabilising a combative region and to dishearten enemies from exploiting so-called vulnerabilities (Reuters, 2025; Al Jazeera, 2025; AP News, 2025). To Pakistan, the agreement is not only a deterrent tool but also a strategic step to strengthen its geopolitical status and expand its influence in an increasingly dynamic region in a world of constantly shifting alliances. To be close to the formal military relations with the most valuable and rich country of the Gulf, Pakistan obtains not only the guarantees of its security but also significant influence in the sphere of diplomacy. It is these alliances which come to an agreement that Islamabad would declare itself to be a major player in the region, at a time when India is taking its stronghold in South Asia and the Middle East seriously through its bloodthirsty actions. In addition, the alliance also grants Pakistan an opportunity to possess high-level military co-operation that could assist it financially and enhance its financial policy and security in a complex geopolitical environment (Business Standard, 2025; Arab News, 2025). This accord highlights the fact that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, due to their formidable political, economical and military capabilities, not to mention their prominent positions, will be valued and well capable of defending themselves both regionally and internationally (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025). The accord shows that Saudi Arabia is making its own choices with regard to its immediate allies. It no longer wishes to be dependent on only a single external power, but on the other hand, form alliances as per its national interests. This was not a pact that was formed as a response to such incidences although in the region, the tension has been on the rise, as in the recent Israeli attack on Doha. It is the product of years of careful negotiation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.



Ever since the beginning of the war in Gaza, threats posed by Israel have been on the rise, together with its attempts to sideline Palestinian matters, as well as its attempts to gain more territory. Such threats were intensified when Israel went on the attack in Qatar. This has compelled Saudi Arabia to enter into good defence relationships. Pakistan too considers Israel as a threat, especially because Israel has been on the side of India in its rivalry with Pakistan (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025).<sup>2</sup>

### **Strategic and Economic Benefits of the Saudi–Pakistan Defence Partnership**

States around the globe commonly pursue their selfish interests, including their focus on security and strategic benefits (Lebow, 2024). As it stands, both economics and the defence strategic interests are crucial to any state. Pakistan currently experiences serious macroeconomic problems which hinder its financial stability and growth opportunities. These are sudden shortages of foreign exchange, escalation of national debt loads and endemic inflationary pressures, which has disembowelled the purchasing power and increased the cost of living of its citizens (Business Standard, 2025). In this connection, Islamabad may consider the recently signed defence contract with Saudi Arabia as an opportunity cost to get the much-desired economic support. Pakistan is optimistic that the deal will pave the way towards expanded Saudi investment that are able to deliver on investment influx in the economy that is represented by stress within the economy. Furthermore, Islamabad hopes that the terms of oil costs could be more favourable, and this will assist in alleviating the balance of payments crisis because the immediate fiscal burden of oil imports would be lessened. It is also estimated that the pact will boost bilateral trade, which will expand the economic interconnection that may generate fresh business opportunities and jobs. Besides the financial aspect of the agreement, it should create security cooperation, which in its turn, is seen as a foundation to a healthier and security-offering economic cooperation between the two states (Khaleej Times, 2025; Arab News, 2025).

In terms of Saudi Arabia, this military pact is in line with its greater strategic aspirations as outlined in Vision 2030, a comprehensive strategy of changing the economic and security landscape of the kingdom. The agreement enables Riyadh to increase security ties beyond the classic alliances and cut down on the reliance on costly overseas allies to provide defence assistance. Through increasing military collaboration with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia hopes to have

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<sup>2</sup> Wajid Al, Talat Shabbir, Ayesha Alam, Nazia Khalil Abbas, and Adeela Bibi, "Strategic Pacts in a Shifting World Order: The Pakistan–Saudi Defence Pact 2025," *Advance Social Science Archive Journal* 4, no. 2 (October–December 2025): 366–74.

access to specialised military capacity and training that would enhance the capabilities of its military. Additionally, the deal is determined as a way of encouraging the establishment of local Saudi defence industries by collaborating to produce and train modules. These initiatives help the kingdom to be more self-sufficient within defence industries and eventually add to economic diversification and the creation of jobs as envisaged in the Vision 2030 (AA News / Anadolu Ajansı, 2025; Financial Times, 2025). The Saudi-Pakistan alliance reveals a new trend in global relations in which diplomacy, economic influence and military strategy are now converging towards each other and supporting one another. By using its huge reserves in financial terms and economic influence as an instrument to cement its strategic agreements, Saudi Arabia can achieve its goals. Offering economic, financial reserves, and aid packages, Riyadh gets more powerful in its geopolitical impacts and gains followers among the most important partners in the region and worldwide. Conversely, Pakistan leverages themselves on their significant military assets and trained military forces, to trade and receive essential economic aid and assistance. This tactical argument points to such a clean way of hooking up economic interests directly to security obligations, hence ensuring that collaboration is robust, besides being beneficial. Such an approach also conveys to the rest of the world that power in the contemporary world does not solely lie in military strength or financial prosperity, but slowly but surely in the strategic convergence of the two spheres to achieve national interests (Business Standard, 2025; Arab News, 2025).

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have a close relationship as far as defence is concerned. They have contracted a lot to help each other both in military issues. Pakistan assists in training and mentoring the Saudi army, too (Karim, 2023). The very existence of these military relations is another indication that the relationship is important to both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, it provides it with a strategic back-up and war weapon to strengthen its defence capabilities and in Pakistan, with a beneficial strategic and economic partnership (Yaseen, Muzaffar & Tariq, 2023; Karim, 2023). In 2016, Pakistan sold defence equipment to Saudi Arabia and in 2016, there was a deal worth 81 million (Mateen, 2016). Saudi Arabia did not spare the construction sector in Pakistan either. In February 2025, Saudi Arabia also participated in the AMAN-2025 naval training with Pakistan, centred on training on the issue of maritime security. This assisted Saudi military forces in learning from Pakistan and enhanced ties with other Muslim countries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wajid Al, Talat Shabbir, Ayesha Alam, Nazia Khalil Abbas, and Adeela Bibi, "Strategic Pacts in a Shifting World Order: The Pakistan–Saudi Defence Pact 2025," *Advance Social Science Archive Journal* 4, no. 2 (October–December

### **Declining Reliance on Traditional Security Guarantors.**

Despite there being security arrangements between the United States and the Gulf States, such as Qatar, the United States failed to respond when Israel struck Doha by flying an airstrike despite the occurrence taking place within the range of an important U.S. airbase. This has increased some uncertainties regarding U. S. support, leading to Saudi Arabia finding other defence partners. In the case of Pakistan, it can be observed that the benefits related to working in a watchful position with a powerful state such as Saudi Arabia strengthen its own position to become stronger (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025). Many Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, are finding the assurances of security organised by the U.S. to be less predictable or more reliable in recent conflicts, transformations in U.S. foreign policy (Financial Times, 2025; Al-Jazeera, 2025). The Saudi-Pakistan agreement is a part of Riyadh policy consisting in security alliances, establishing more dependent and regionally fixed defence systems (Arab News, 2025; Reuters, 2025). The deal helps Pakistan to reclaim its position not just in South Asia, but the entire Islamic world, as it employs military might to scare anyone in the region (AP News, 2025; Reuters, 2025).

Even though Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been collaborating in various aspects of defence over a number of years such as training and military assistance, the recent 2025 defence pact solidifies their partnership and makes it a legal responsibility. The agreement transforms their informal agreement into a formal agreement with set procedures and obligations of the two countries (Al Jazeera, 2025; Arab News, 2025). The notable aspect of this pact is the fact that, so long as either of the two is attacked, then it is considered that the other is attacked. This means that, in a scenario whereby either of the two (Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) is attacked, the other will protect it. Such a firm commitment benefits both nations in their effort to devise the most effective security strategy, grips their military interests, and ensures that an international-law commitment of defence between them is not mere hype; it is a verifiable, practical commitment (AP News, 2025; FT, 2025). The pact strengthens the commitment between the two countries by making these defence duties sacred. It also assists them in collaborating more meticulously on military operations and makes their collaboration more authentic and valid in times of catastrophe. This agreement enhances the positions of the two countries in the global arena. It provides them with an enhanced level of power at least as far as the global negotiations are involved, and offers them the alternative to trusting only a single ally. It is also a pointer to an international trend towards a rubberier accord.

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## Regional Security Autonomy in an Emerging Multipolar Order

The signing of the new defence accord between Ali and Pakistan is a milestone. The two states have traditionally been very dependent on foreign superpowers and specifically the United States to offer them not only military support but also strategic support. However, this alliance is a reproduction of such a shift out of that one-dimensional dependence, which means a will to form stronger, more regionally oriented alliances. Firming up of relationships between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan will help the two countries develop a more balanced and autonomous security map that cannot rely on only the Western powers. It is also a constituent of a broader trend in the Middle East in which numerous states are slowly evolving their defence by diversifying their security transactions. Regional states, replacing a strong partner, are establishing many partnerships to maximise their strategic options and become more robust to the likely threats. Through forming an official defence alliance, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are entering into this design of establishing more agile, multi-layered security infrastructures, which more aptly capture the sophisticated and dynamic geopolitical circumstances within the region (Financial Times, 2025; Arab News, 2025). In general, this step allows outlining an increasing awareness of states of the Middle East that, in the contemporary world, security requires cooperation with various partners. It also establishes an urge to minimise weaknesses that accompany excessive dependence on outside superpowers to enable these nations to assume massive control over their respective defence strategies and foreign policy options.<sup>4</sup>

### Toward an ‘Arab NATO’: Incremental Coalition-Building in the Islamic World.

Its long-elusive idea of an Arab NATO has been failing miserably on numerous occasions because of ideological differences, leadership clashes and lack of sympathy for threat perceptions among Arab states. The Saudi-Pakistan SMDA (2025) offers, however, a less formal and more flexible path to this vision, not by becoming a part of a formal alliance, but by snowballing bilateral arrangements, which can result in a coalition of the like-minded in the entire Islamic world. Its bilateral quality provides states reluctant to strictly abide by treaties with an opportunity to engage in a gradual defence partnership in order to create a kind of coalition of the willing, shaped depending on regional factors and not an example of the West. Though ambiguous in terms of nuclear deterrence in this context, the strategic precedent that it creates is wide-ranging. The direction that the pact takes in the future and turns into a multilateral structure

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<sup>4</sup> Wajid Al, Talat Shabbir, Ayesha Alam, Nazia Khalil Abbas, and Adeela Bibi, “Strategic Pacts in a Shifting World Order: The Pakistan–Saudi Defence Pact 2025,” *Advance Social Science Archive Journal* 4, no. 2 (October–December 2025): 366–74.

will highly depend on the dynamics of the changing situation in the region and the defence policies of Israel, India, and the United States. Thus, not formally an Arab NATO, the SMDA, however, is an infantile stage of an experience-based, flexible coalition-building form of Islamic politics within a disaggregating, geopolitical order.

### **Indirect Chinese Strategic Influence in the Saudi–Pakistan Defence Framework**

The PRC (People's Republic of China) and Pakistan have developed an alliance over the decades based on arms sales, nuclear collaboration and access to Chinese naval/ports in the Arabian and Indo-Pacific seas to enhance a strategic relationship network in the two seas. This agreement involves Saudi Arabia as an intermediary, and one of the greatest economic partners of the PRC in the Gulf is included in a trilateral nexus, which enhances Chinese influence implicitly. Through Sino-Saudi relationships, particularly in terms of economic and military ties, Pakistan can increase its means of deterrence against India and the West, thus guaranteeing better and better assurances with plausible deniability towards a formal alliance. This setup illustrates a case of strategic deflection, whereby the PRC is free to expand its military influence over West Asia without any direct entanglements. It also has the advantage of Saudis being able to diversify their security relationships outside the realms of traditional Western assurances, gain some form of PRC technological and political support, and strengthen the defence position of Pakistan- an obvious example of multiple-layer geopolitics.

### **Strategic Implications for Israel and India**

For Israel, the Saudi-Pakistan SMDA would pose a challenge to its long-standing belief in regional nuclear supremacy, despite the absence of nuclear aspects to the pact. Although the military strategists of Tel Aviv will probably review the asymmetry of power in the region, the possibility of a direct Pakistani nuclear threat towards Israel is quite far-fetched, because the credibility of deterrence is based on credible ability and will. However, Israel could also boost cooperating of intelligence and contingency planning, as the military power of Pakistan is high and Saudi Arabia is becoming more aggressive.

The SMDA, in the situation with India, is facing a calculated strategic issue and not a crisis. The mutual-defence section in the agreement creates a new factor in the mini-crisis management in the region; however, the deterrence stance of India is yet to be diminished. The response of New Delhi is more reserved and official: the External Affairs Ministry assured that it will examine what the pact entails on the national and regional security without compromising the interests of the country. As a dynamic democracy and having professional armed forces



controlled by the civilian regime, the national security discourses in India are consensus-based and centre on strategic autonomy, energy security and the Gulf region stability.<sup>5</sup>

### **Reconfiguring Security Architecture in the Middle East and South Asia**

The Pakistan-Saudi defence treaty effectively reconfigures the security on the ground in the Middle East and South Asia through a new breed of strategic coordination that will tie together these two regions. The alliance undermines authentic security designs traditionally dominated by Western powers by ratifying deterrence promises. It compels local players to review their wartime positions and deterrence policies, like India and Israel. Besides, the agreement encompasses how to proceed to larger multifaceted defence efforts among Muslim nations, which may lead to a new security bloc, emblematic of self-reliance and communal defence. This changing style not only changes the balance of power but also increases the level of complexity of the regional diplomacy and conflict management.<sup>6</sup>

### **Global Strategic Implications of the Saudi–Pakistan Defence Pact**

The Pakistan-Saudi defence agreement is not only redefining alliances in the region but also has its political impacts on all other countries in the world. To Pakistan, the deal imprints much-needed economic and political capital by exploiting the economic strength and political impact of Saudi Arabia to boost its military strength and regional reputation. To Islamabad, this is not just a security arrangement but a strategic boost that also helps in boosting the soft power of Saudi Arabia, giving it a wider political support in Muslim-majority and world forums, increasing the diplomatic pressure and deterrence of India favourably. The agreement is a strategic hedge against perceived American withdrawal from West Asia and a variegated American approach to the Gulf, especially with the airstrikes by Israel on Qatar, as well as the ongoing fighting between Israel and Gaza. The mutual defence agreement by the Saudi leadership is seen as an indication that an independent security course is being plotted by Riyadh, and it is diversifying its relationships, decreasing over-dependence on Washington. Thus, this agreement, based on permanent military coordination by means of joint committees, sharing of

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<sup>5</sup> Suraj Yadav and Manish Kumar Yadav, "The Pakistan-Saudi Defence Pact," *The Defence Horizon Journal*, November 10, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Wajid Al, Talat Shabbir, Ayesha Alam, Nazia Khalil Abbas, and Adeela Bibi, "Strategic Pacts in a Shifting World Order: The Pakistan–Saudi Defence Pact 2025," *Advance Social Science Archive Journal* 4, no. 2 (October–December 2025): 366–74

intelligence, and training, establishes the role of Pakistan as a security stakeholder in the Gulf with an influence that covers further than its traditional South Asian venue.

The nuclear nature of the Saudi-Pakistan SMDA is unclear. Although the treaty text includes no mention of nuclear cooperation, commentary, such as that of Ahmed Rashid in the *Washington Post* (2025), theorises the existence of a possible Pakistani nuclear umbrella to protect Riyadh. The fact that it lacks explicit provisions implies that these claims are not proven. However, even regional deterrence equations are sensitive when a perception of possible nuclear cooperation is thrown into the fray, which forces Israel, Iran and India to re-evaluate their security posture. Therefore, a nuclear umbrella is a hypothetical yet important subject of conversation; it is important to work towards transparency to avoid redundancy and errors in calculation.

From the Indian perspective, this agreement requires a plan redefinition. By FY 2024-25, India and Saudi Arabia are most likely to have a bilateral trade amounting to approximately 41.88 billion, with Indian exports of 11.76 billion, and imports of 30.12 billion. With a population of approximately 2.5 million Indian expatriates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is already the largest remitter of India, which contributes to the country, placing it in the list of the best remittances per country in the global diaspora remittance of \$135 billion in FY 2025. Thus, although the trade and energy relationship with Saudi Arabia will continue to be strong since it is currently one of the largest suppliers of crude oil to India, the bilateral security alignment with Pakistan has contributed to the increased strategic dilemma of India. New Delhi has to deal with the dual tasks of balancing between the complicated diplomatic relations with Riyadh and Islamabad, which require increasing its cooperation with the major allies, including the United States, Israel, and Russia. Any potential interventions or larger regional alliances in an Indo-Pakistani conflict by Saudi Arabia implies increased uncertainty in South Asian security interactions and crisis management.<sup>7</sup>

### **Toward a Trilateral Security Axis: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.**

To become a member of the Pakistan-Saudi bilateral defence alliance would greatly enlarge the strategic range of the alliance, turning it into a trilateral axis, with regional implications. According to media reports, Ankara is brokering high-level talks to join the SMDA

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<sup>7</sup> Suraj Yadav and Manish Kumar Yadav, "The Pakistan-Saudi Defence Pact," *The Defence Horizon Journal*, November 10, 2025.



signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which, analysts reckon, could change power dynamics along regional lines in the Middle East and South Asia.<sup>8</sup>

The addition of Turkey would connect South Asia, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean with a fledgling security architecture, and augment the pact by increasing its geopolitical relevance.

Strategically, Turkey has what is referred to as advanced defence-industrial capacity, expeditionary military experience, and a proven track record of security co-operation both with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Its involvement would build up combined military drills, an intelligence-sharing system and defence manufacturing cooperation, especially on unmanned aerial vehicles and modernisation in the navy, where Turkey has displayed operational and manufacturing abilities. To Pakistan, Turkey's entry would additionally diversify the defence alliances it has, and to Saudi Arabia, it would be an addition to the current military reforms that are being achieved to meet Vision 2030.

The Turkish intervention in the region would realign security equations in the region. It can entrench in the Middle East a Sunni-led security convergence in the face of variable U.S. involvement and a historical antagonist relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In South Asia, the trilateral defence system may be viewed by India as an indirect strengthening of the strategic depth of Pakistan. Besides, the complicated relationship of Turkey with NATO and the European Union could create a further element of diplomatic risk that the agreement will be more independent of classical Western-led alliances.<sup>9</sup>

### **Economic and Energy Security Impacts**

The Saudi-Pakistan SMDA has some far-reaching consequences on both economic stability and energy security in the region. In the case of Pakistan, institutionalised strategic relations with Saudi Arabia can help to resolve entrenched financial weaknesses through enhanced financial and energy assistance. In the past, Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of energy and financial stability of Pakistan, through deferred oil payments, direct financial assistance, and investing in energy and infrastructure. To illustrate, Pakistan has made

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<sup>8</sup> Selcan Hacaoglu, Faseeh Mangi, and Firat Kozok, "Turkey Said to Seek Membership of Saudi-Pakistan Defence Pact," Bloomberg, January 9, 2026.

<sup>9</sup> Selcan Hacaoglu, Faseeh Mangi, and Firat Kozok, "Turkey Said to Seek Membership of Saudi-Pakistan Defence Pact," Bloomberg, January 9, 2026.



arrangements like deferments of payments on oil imports and investments in refining capacity to put pressure on foreign exchange reserves and to ease the immediate fiscal strain caused by the purchase of energy. Such assistance will stabilise the economy of Pakistan, ensure energy supply reliability, and increase the Saudi investment in the energy, mining, and infrastructure sectors.<sup>10</sup>

Energy security-wise, the agreement will bolster the strategic confidence of the uninterrupted flow of oil and fuel imports to Pakistan, even during instability in the region. As the world experiences more disturbances in its energy channels of vital importance, particularly recent clashes that have been caused by the Strait of Hormuz and derailment of the LNG stream and crude supply in other parts of the world, there has been a priority of assuring stable energy supplies. The disruption of the Hormuz caused by the conflict in Iraq is highlighting the practical necessity to break the energy supply routes and grow the perpetuation of importations through alternative routes like the importation of Saudi crude to Yanbu in the Red Sea. The fact that Pakistan has asked other countries, such as the State of Qatar, to provide alternative pathways to their oil supplies is also a point supporting the necessity to diversify the energy supply lines and ensure that imports remain.<sup>11</sup>

The multi-dimensionality of economic and energy security effects also applies to Saudi Arabia. Formalised defence cooperation would be able to boost investor confidence and fuel long-term Saudi capital inflows into the Pakistani economy that would contribute to the more technology, energy projects, and manufacturing-related areas of the Vision 2030 targets. The agreement provides an indication of some stability and dedication, which can appeal to foreign investors interested in more predictable security conditions in tumultuous areas. Going on further, as the largest oil exporter in the world, Saudi Arabia has a concern in securing the global energy transit routes and infrastructure, which would be important to its economic well-being as well. The growing regional instability in the form of attacks on energy infrastructure or threats on important shipping chokepoints can cause disruption in the world energy market, subsequent

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<sup>10</sup> Nazir Ahmed Shaikh, "Saudi-Pak Trade Hits New Growth Milestone," *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, September 22, 2025, <https://www.pakistangulfeconomist.com/2025/09/22/saudi-pak-trade-hits-new-growth-milestone>

<sup>11</sup> Pakistan Seeks Saudi Oil Supplies via Yanbu Port After Hormuz Disruption, Reuters, March 4, 2026, accessed March 6, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/pakistan-seeks-saudi-oil-supplies-via-yanbu-port-after-hormuz-disruption-2026-03-04> (referenced as "Pakistan Seeks Saudi Oil Supplies via Yanbu Port After Hormuz Disruption")



price instability that impacts not only Saudi income but also economies that count on energy imports around the world.<sup>12</sup>

Lastly, stronger economic relationships associated with the agreement, including Saudi investment in the energy sector, co-finance of the refinery plants, and possible joint venture in the downstream energy sector, can enhance energy sustainability in Pakistan over the long term and occur with Saudi diversification plans of Vision 2030. There are, however, benefits that require long-term implementation and working together because there is a sudden geopolitical shock in the Gulf that can still pose a challenge to energy supply lines and economic confidence.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

The Saudi-Pakistan defence agreement is a strategically important move that has far-reaching consequences to the security architecture of South Asia as well as that of the Middle East. Fundamentally, the alliance embodies an overlap of national interests: Pakistan would receive economic assistance, defence co-operation, and better geopolitical responsiveness, whereas Saudi Arabia would appreciate the fact that it has been diversifying its security partnerships, building up military readiness, and evading the continued reliance on its traditional Western allies. Since these interests coincide, the consequential cooperation re-calculates regional calculations in nuanced but significant fashions.

Pakistan: In South Asia, the strategy is being changed incrementally with the agreement reinforcing Pakistan defence posture by training cooperation, intelligence sharing and possibly through arms cooperation. Although the deal is not a contemporary military threat to India, they are most likely to be taken into consideration in Indian strategic calculations, which reinforces the current threat perceptions and affects the future defence strategies. Herein lies the role of extra-regional alliances in becoming an overlapping (and thus problematic) concern in the long-standing India-Pakistan rivalry, which contributed to an already shaky regional security situation.

On the Middle East front, the agreement solidifies Saudi Arabian ambition to have a multilayer and diversified security daisy chain in the face of continued Iranian infiltration, proxy

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<sup>12</sup> Said, Summer, Georgi Kantchev, and Benoit Faucon. "Attacks in Qatar, Saudi Arabia Drag Energy Sector Into Mideast Conflict." *The Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 2026. <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/saudi-oil-facilities-get-pulled-into-mideast-conflict-1607e138>

<sup>13</sup> Nazir Ahmed Shaikh, "Saudi- Pak Trade Hits New Growth Milestone," *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, September 22, 2025, <https://www.pakistangulfeconomist.com/2025/09/22/saudi-pak-trade-hits-new-growth-milestone>



wars, and insecurity as to long-term U.S involvement. The established military and institutional competence in Pakistan presents Riyadh with a credible defence preparedness and stabilisation ally that is indicative of a wider trend that sees regional powers adopt adaptable, non-committal security orientations in an ever more multipolar system.

At the systemic level, Saudi-Pakistani defence relationship underscores the flourishing interrelatedness of the South Asian and Middle East security dynamics. The coming prospects of its growth especially in case of its official inclusion to the framework would also escalate the geopolitical importance of the pact which is currently based on a bilateral alignment as it starts taking the form of a cross-regional strategic level. This kind of evolution would probably affect the calculations of the Iranian, Indian, Israeli, and Gulf states and the greater powers of China and the United States, each outlook in terms of alliances and strategic autonomy.

Finally, the agreement has both potentials and threats. When handled in an unveiled manner and with continued diplomatic contacts and confidence-building efforts, it may help create cooperative security, burden-sharing, and stabilisation of the region. On the contrary, when perceived to change military equilibriums or provide the blocs with the ability to compete in the region, it might increase local competition and strategic distrust.

Overall, the Pakistan Saudi defence agreement is a fledgling institution as opposed to a completely institutionalised alliance. Although it can be the germination of an expanded Islamic or regional security outfit, it is not an Arab NATO in its breadth and power. What is actually important about it is that it will begin a process of a gradual realignment, it will open some space to the involvement of China and Turkey, and will force some recalibration of strategies by the regional powers like Israel and India. This is an embryonic but evolving form of the partnership, which could form the new multipolar security structure of the West and South Asian regions in the long-term.