



THE MAKKAH JOINT DEFENSE AGREEMENT 2026: IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY AND THE EMERGING SAUDI ARABIA–PAKISTAN–TÜRKIYE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract

The Makkah Joint Defense Agreement of 2026 signed between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye is one of the latest developments which are shaping the regional security architecture of the Middle East and its broader geopolitical landscape. In this agreement, three already engaged countries are enhancing their relations and ushering in a new era of diplomatic and security immunity.

This research examines the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey and explores its implications for regional security and the emergence of a new strategic partnership. An examination is made of the motivations behind the agreement and how the agreement is based upon the principle of collective defense.

This research study uses qualitative analysis, drawing on realism, the balance of power and the balance of threat in order to analyze how changes in regional dynamics, as well as security perceptions and uncertainty surrounding current security arrangements, are driving increasing defense cooperation.

The study goes on to examine the implications of the agreement for Iran, Israel and the Gulf states, as well as for the US and other actors in the region. It suggests that the agreement has the potential to strengthen deterrence, increase defense cooperation and enhance the strategic influence of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye.

Keywords. *Makkah Joint Defense Agreement, Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, geopolitical landscape. Islamic NATO, US & Iran war, balance of power, strategic alliance, etc.*

Introduction

On the fateful day of August 27, 2026, Saudi Arabia's prince Mohamad Bin Salman along with president Erdogan of Türkiye and prime minister of Shahbaz Sharif signed a MOU on Makkah Joint Defense Agreement a tri lateral collective security and defense protocol which dictated that "A



attack on any one state will be treated an attack on all state”

The agreement is not a spontaneous diplomatic flourish; rather, it builds on the September 2025 bilateral Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, now widened to bring in Türkiye’s NATO-integrated military machine and its formidable defense-industrial base, chiefly Baykar’s drone ecosystem (Firstpost, 2022) and the KAAN fighter programmer (Firstpost, 2024). What has emerged is a framework anchored in collective deterrence, joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, defense-industrial cooperation, and interoperability, an arrangement its own architects describe, cautiously, as “purely defensive” and open to future members, but conspicuously silent on any nuclear dimension in its public text.

This pact is less a finished alliance and more a strategic hedge, necessitated by the gross insecurity of Saudi Arabia amid the ongoing war in West Asia. It represents three states insuring against uncertainty by pooling reputational and military weight, without yet building the institutional scaffolding that would make the guarantee credible like NATO, which itself is undergoing a credibility crisis of its own (Firstpost, 2026a)¹. Three converging pressures explain the timing of the agreement. First, the widening US-Israel-Iran confrontation since late February 2026 has rattled Gulf shipping lanes and exposed the limits of Washington’s single-handed security umbrella over the Kingdom. Second, the post-October 7 regional recalibration pushed Riyadh towards diversifying its guarantors rather than depending on any one patron.

Third, the three states bring genuinely complementary assets to the table: Saudi financial depth and geography astride Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb, Turkish NATO-standard military doctrine and an export-ready drone and naval industry, and Pakistani manpower plus the distinction of being the only nuclear-armed Muslim-majority state. What is being witnessed, in this sense, is less an ideological “Islamic NATO” awakening than a pragmatic risk-pooling exercise by states that no longer take American reliability for granted (Asthana, 2026).

This article manifest that the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement should not simply be interpreted as the creation of an “Islamic NATO”. But it should be considered as a diversify security partnership, strong deterrence, and improved military coordination and opt great strategic monopoly. Its long-term significance will therefore depend less on the symbolism of its signing than on the institutional and military mechanisms developed after the agreement enters its implementation phase.

Background:

From Bilateral Cooperation to Trilateral Security

Middle East has always been in centered attention of economy and military hub station for nearly a decade which has been intensified since three years. The October 7 2023 Hamas attack on Israel and the war waged by Israel in Gaza and South Lebanon and as also seized the territory in Syria. Along with launching two medial strike on Iran which coincides with USA not showing resolution of solubility in the ongoing US & Iran war.

Following the midst of the US & Iran war. Tehran has also fired arms at Kuwait, Bahrain UAE

¹ Maj.Gen SB Asthana, *What the Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan defense pact means for Asia’s strategic balance*. First post accessed on 9 August 2026.



Qatar, Oman and Jordan, as the Houthis forces had intensified their military exercise and threats against Saudi Arabia interest and nuclear mission.

Agreement remains tied to the broader question of Saudi Arabia and Saudi linked interests. At the same time, the recently signed US Saudi civil nuclear cooperation agreement remains tied to the broader question of Saudi Israeli normalization, with Washington linking the nuclear arrangements implementation to Riyadh imping the Abraham Accord. The evolving Gaza situation, including discussions over the implementation of a possible peace framework, is also creating pressure on major Muslim countries to play a create role in regional security and diplomacy.

As for Saudi Arabia the agreement itself reflect a preceding vulnerability to threats from Iran and Iran backed groups (Houthis). And because Riyadh has heavily invested in its economic expenditure under the oat of vision 2030, thus with this regional security and safety insecurity, the ambition seen as threaten. The closure of the strait of Hormuz and renewed Houthi threats to Red Sea shipping have demonstrated how quickly regional conflict can disturb Saudi trade, energy, exports and investor confidence. Saudi therefore needs military partners capable of providing man power, intelligence, technology & strategic depth. Pakistan offers one component of this equation; it possesses a large military establishment, expensive operational experience, and a long standing defense relationship with Saudi Arabia. Under president Erdogan Ankara has increasingly slight to expand its strategic influence beyond its immediate neighborhood and project itself as a major power across the Muslim world.

Türkiye ambitions are particularly relevant in this regard. Ankara has become increasingly active in Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, & South Asia, seeking to strengthen its political, Military, and defense industrial relationships with Muslim majority countries. Erdogan's own drive to expand Türkiye regional and international influence in an important factor behind this strategy. Its involvement in Syria its confrontation with the Kurdish group and its broader regional reach demonstrate that Türkiye has interests extending well beyond borders. (Khurshid,2026).²

The most concrete step towards institutional alignment came on September 17, 2025. As MJDA was signed between Türkiye, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Its central clause that aggression against one state would be treated as aggression against both, introduced and collective deterrence into bilateral relationships. While officially the, agreement holds some defensive strategic implications. For Saudi Arabia the Partnership enhances military resilience through access to Pakistan operational expertise, man power missile capabilities, and Strategic deterrence.

For Pakistan, the agreement anchors its military diplomacy with in the Gulfs security architecture, transforming longstanding cooperation into institutionalized alliance behavior. The idea that such cooperation represents an "Islamic NATO" oversimplifies this reality, since religion plays far less a role than strategic pragmatism. The potential alignment is instead driven by shared interests: deterrence stability, regional autonomy, defense-industrial cooperation, and crisis-management capacity.

As the global order that prevailed since the end of the second world war give way to competing initiatives. Bidding to replace it, a new regional bloc centers on military cooperation between

² Imran Khurshid, *Unpacking the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan-Turkey defense pact. Asia Time*. 9 August 2028



Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye is emerging that could reshape relations in the region. These developments suggest a potential model of middle power influence in a changing geopolitical landscape. (Klasra, 2026).³

Strategic Threshold of the Middle East Joint Agreement

The geopolitical landscape starts with Pakistan as it connects South Asia with the Arabian sea and Central Asia. Along with Saudi Arabia bridges the Middle East and Türkiye connects Europe, the Mediterranean & Eurasia. The tristate coalitions share trade routes, maritime corridors and geopolitical checkpoints. Such geography influences the economical & security dynamics of the Indian ocean to the Eastern Mediterranean regions. Which is both cost effective and joint deployment strategic realities.⁴

The reliance of the Trump administration on regional actors through its Board of peace concept has accelerated this trend by encouraging capable states to assumes responsibility for regional stability. Pakistan contributes to remedial crisis management and military drills. On the contrary, Saudi Arabia offers diplomatic immunity and economical frenzy ties. While Türkiye provides technological innovation and strategic mobility. Together they form a model of cooperative deterrence suited to multipolar world.

Despite growing momentum, however, significant challenges remain. Divergent regional priorities could complicate coordination. Türkiye maintains complex relations with NATO and with Europe. Saudi Arabia balance ties with the United States. While diversifying partnerships. Pakistan must manage regional tensions in South Asia. Alliance formation in 21th century often occurs gradually, through dramatic treaty announcements, and bone of the three governments has officially confirmed a trilateral alliance framework ad such, strategic ambiguity may itself be international, allowing cooperation to deepen without providing adverse reactions. (Klasra, 2026).

Operational Architecture of the Agreement

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told Türkiye state tum Anadolu news agency that the pact would be operational under a political and military committee comprising foreign and defense ministers and chiefs of general staff, similar to NATO structures. The committee would translate the vision set by the leaders into decisions and carry out related work, while a secretariat would be established to implement those decisions.⁵

At the first committee meeting, ministers would likely present proposals to the leaders on the establishment, structure, and functioning of the secretariat, as well as its initial tasks. The pact would cover a broad range of military issues, including interoperability, or the ability of countries with different military structures to operate together. Other area would include intelligence sharing, and most importantly, defense industry cooperation.

The committee would meet at certain interval during the year, and a permanent secretariat

³ Kaswar Klasra, *Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey: Is a New Middle-Power Bloc Emerging?* Global Asia. March 2026 (Vol.21 No.1)

⁵ *Ibid*



would be established in Saudi Arabia. The structure, functioning, and additional units of secretariat would be determined through discussions among the members, joint exercise and training would be necessary to establish the ability of the countries to operate together. (Anadolu Agency, 2026).⁶

Implications for Iran

Iran reaction to the security agreement between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan reflects a cautions and complex approach regarding its implications. At this stage, most commentators do not view the agreement as cohesive anti Iranian military alliance or an “Islamic NATO” capable of shifting the regional balance power. These commentators emphasize the gaps between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, & Pakistan, as well as the ambiguity Surrounding their military commitments.

However, others identify the agreement as an expression of a broader shift in the regional security architecture: a transition from near-exclusive reliance on the United States toward more diversified regional security networks. Reactions to agreement as proof of the failure of American deterrence and Iran’s success in undermining the old regional order, while more pragmatic circles warn of the strategic cost of continuing Iran’s current policy, which could have encouraged the formation of a regional security framework that would challenge Iran. (Zimmt, 2026).⁷

For Tehran, the immediate challenge is to ensure that the New arrangements does nor evolve into explicitly anti Iranian coalition. Iran s existing relationships with Pakistan and Türkiye could provide channels for maintains dialogues with the member of the soft, while its efforts to improve ties with Saudi Arabia could also limit the scope for the agreement to become a direct vehicle for confrontation.

The longer term significance of the pact may depend on whether regional states can establish a durable security framework independent of outside powers. For now, the agreement appears to be as much a potential signal as a military alliance, with its practical implications likely to depend on how the three members translate their commitment to Mutual Defense into policy. (Reuters, 2026b).⁸

Implications for India and South Asia

The Pakistan & India conflict of May 2025 was a confrontation that reshaped perceptions of military capability in South Asia and elevated Pakistan’s strategic profile internationally. Pakistan’s rapid and coordinated response to Indian military action demonstrated advances in the joint operations, electronic warfare, & air power integration. Its claims to have shot down six Indiana aircraft, including Rafael fighter jets (advance French tech), capture global attention and reinforce the credibility of Pakistan’s deterrence posture, although India admitted to some losses while disputing the numbers (Ahmad, 2026).

For India nascent coalition poses several concerns, foremost among them the lead military role

⁶ Anadolu Agency, “Mecca Joint Defense Agreement Technically Same as NATO’s Article 5, Turkish Foreign Minister Says,” August 8, 2026.

⁷ Raz Zimmt, *How does Tehran view the defense agreement signed between Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan?*

the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). No. 2182, August 10, 2026

⁸ *Iran sees Saudi-Pakistan-Türkiye defense pact as sign of shifting regional order.* Reuters. 10 August 2026



being played by Pakistan and the attendant expansions of Pakistan's presence in West Asian affairs over the last year, particularly its increasingly substantial ties with Türkiye.

According to news reports, Türkiye has been providing Pakistan with modern military equipment such as armed UAVs, precision-guided munitions, stealth-oriented corvette warships, and electronic countermeasure technologies. There would be legitimate concerns in Delhi about the tripartite coalition collaborating in the development of new capabilities which Pakistan could use against India.

Through out the conflict that have engulfed west Asia over nearly three years, India has largely kept itself detach from regional developments. This is despite having crucial stakes in regional stability in terms of energy, economic, technological, & logistical connectivity interest. The welfare of its ten million string community in the region which sense hone forty billion dollars annually and supports about fifty million family members.

While India has generally ignored the wars and their implications, other countries have been actively pursuing and shaping various political and military option and alignments to safeguard their interest. The joint defense Agreement concluded at Mecca is only the latest expression of such crucial interactions among different players in the region. There is, however, still scope for course correction: India should actively engage with leaders across West Asia to promote peace, stability, and longer term collective security arrangements.

India's absence from regional Confabulations has provided the space for other states to pursue engagements in India's strategic space that are not necessarily in India's interests, and India has every reason to view with concern the latest attempts to shape militarily alliances on the basis of shared Islamic Identity. (Ahmad, 2026).⁹

Implications for Israel and The Eastern Mediterranean

Israel represents another important variable, although describing the Mecca Agreement as an anti Israeli alliance would similarly oversimplify the picture. The three signatories maintain different relationships with Israel and do not share a unified threat perceptions regarding it. Nevertheless, Israel has long occupied a central position in the Middle Eastern security because of the military superiority and its alliance with Washington.

The emergence of a Saudi, Turkish and Pakistani security framework could gradually contribute to a more pluralistic regional order in which security is produced through several centers of power rather than a concentrated around a limited number of external regional actors

For Israel, this may be strategically significant. The issue is not whether the agreement immediately threatens Israeli military superiority, which it does not, the more consequential. Question is whether Israel will remain indispensable to the way regional security is organized. An increasingly autonomous regional security network could reduce the centrality of any single actor in shaping the region strategic architecture. Furthermore, Israel may prefer to confront the emerging framework. An openly confront responses that could encourage the three states to deepen their cooperation. While dismissing the agreement as symbolic could allow it to develop gradually into a

⁹ Talmiz Ahmad, *Makkah defense pact: Should India be worried?* Aug 10, 2026



more institutional mechanism (Al Shaher, 2026).¹⁰ Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan collectively shares a strategic arc encompassing several maritime and corridor routes with which industrial defense cooperation represent major opportunities. (Uddin, 2026).¹¹

The Chinese Strategic Connectivity

The tri-lateral partner's are also linked to borders across Asia, particularly China which is expanding its economic influence in the Middle East and South Asia. With trade investment, energy, and infrastructural investments. China response to the Mecca joint defense agreement has been cited calculated rather than confrontational. Chinese media reacted to the pact as ambivalence framing, a sign of shifting regional power dynamics that exposes the USA security strategy.

Beijing's clearly wants to weaken the US defense without inheriting the monopoly of regional security & the burden of the Washington's role and that Saudi Arabia's move toward a diverse security partnership open doors for China in training, arms sale, & military diplomacy an opportunity aided by the fact that Pakistani operated Chinese system is embedded in Saudi Air defense.

Afghanistan: A Test Case for Regional Cooperation

Afghanistan represent one of the most significant areas where the trilateral partnership could demonstrate its practical value. Pakistan views Afghanistan primarily through the lens of immediate security, broader management and regional stability due to its geographic proximity.

Saudi Arabia and turkey approach towards the Afghanistan issue focuses on regional stability and safety dynamics which involve countering violent extremist groups and in volatile humanitarian crisis and economic development. Although NATO allied forces left Afghanistan in 2021 after Trump-Biden preceding Washington still monitors activities related to regional threat, political and human right instability through diplomatic or socio-political channels. Any involvement will acquire coordination by stakeholders and shared commitment to political incursion, institutional development and longitudinal stability.

Geopolitical Implications for Russia

By contrast, Russia's role is two fold. Moscow is embroiled in its war against Ukraine, welcomes any agreement that reduces American influence in the region. At the same time, Russia does not want the pact to turn into an anti Iranian coalition, since Iran remains Moscow's strategic ally. Russia will therefore likely maintain a dual position, political support for regional independence, but

¹⁰ Prof. Dr. Shaher Al Shaher, *The Mecca Agreement and the Reshaping of Regional Security: Is a New Security Order Emerging in the Middle East?* Middle East Political and Economic Institute. Published on: August 9, 2026

¹¹ HRM Rokan Uddin, *The Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan Defence Pact: Promise and Peril*. daily-sun.10 Aug 2026



opposition to any military action against Tehran. (Burhani, 2026).¹² Despite elevated global oil prices with crude oil averages around \$ 90 per tab, fossil fuel dropped to 12% as compare to July 2026. Russian oil supply plunged to 45% as compared to 2025 (Strohecker & Jones, 2026)

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Bangladesh's Position on the Defense Pact

Bangladesh has emerged as one of the countries actively weighing possible entry into Mecca Joint Defense Agreement through it has stopped short of committing. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman told parliament in Dhaka that Bangladesh views the pact positively, adding that question of joining has not formally arisen yet since it depends on the intentions of the current states.

According foreign advisor of affairs Bangladesh maintains a positive approach toward joining a potential economic or defense framework involving Saudi Arabia, Pakistan & Turkiye, guided by it "Bangladesh first" policy.¹⁴

Prime minister Tarique visits to Riyadh was likely to be finalized doon that Dhaka was strengthening bilateral ties with Pakistan in trade and people to people connectivity. An op-ed in the daily times cautioned that that the security priorities of MJDA parties and the tension with Iran, Houthis attacks, and conflict in Lebanon, Syria, Libya, & the Caucasus problems aren't necessarily Bangladesh own, and warned that membership could draw the country into disputes in which it has no direct stakes, while risking economic exposure through oil, LNG, shipping and insurance costs.¹⁵ (tribune,2026).

Meanwhile, Pakistan in situated in the west hemisphere of India and spent 50 years learning to manage through deterrence, & offensive diplomacy. Bangladesh lies in the east of India connected to the "Chicken Neck corridors" a belt insurgence that have depends on Dhaka s cooperation. What is emerging is not a formal alliance or a mere imaginative coalition against India. The practical result is a security structure on India eastern borders that India did not design, doesn't control and

¹²Dr. Ubaidullah Burhani, *The Trilateral Partnership: Emerging Trends in Regional Security Cooperation and the*

Evolving Role of the United States. Afghanistan Voice Radio, 9 August 2026

¹³ Seyyed Hassan Hosseini, *Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey Defense Pact; Geopolitical Ambition Versus*

Structural Realities

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs -Fourth Consultative Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, & the Republic of Türkiye, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt - 21 June 2026

¹⁵ *Bangladesh signals openness to joining Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye defense agreement*. Web Desk, The Express Tribune. 23 August 2026



can't easily counter. (Mirza, 2026).¹⁶

Prospects for Expansion

The Makkah joint defense agreement between Saudi Arabia, turkey, and Pakistan has the potential to develop beyond a three-state security arrangement into broader framework for regional cooperation.

However, its expansions are likely to be gradual and selective rather than and immediate transformation into NATO style regional alliance. the agreement is significant because it builds upon already established bilateral defense relationships rather defense relationship through strategic Mutual Defense Agreement of September 2025, under which aggression against either country would be regarded as aggression against both. The Makkah agreement therefore represents an attempt to connect these existing bilateral relationships within a wider trilateral framework. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2026).¹⁷

One possible avenue for expansion is the inclusion of additional regional powers. Egypt represents the most obvious potential partner, given its military capabilities, geopolitical position, control of the Suez Canal, and longstanding relations with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. Indeed, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan have already developed a consultative mechanisms know as the "R4".The four countries met in Cairo in June 2026 and reaffirmed the importance of continue consultation and coordination on regional peace and security (Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2026).¹⁸

Relapse of the Middle East has reached 6 months and the global market present a striking turmoil. As crude topped to \$120 per barrel higher form \$ 70 last years. While food inflation0.7% and the global market surges up to 105\$ trillion evaluation, gaining 9% (7 trillion dollars) since the conflict. Meanwhile US dollar gains 1.4% , treasury dropped to 3.5% and gold fall to 25 percent, rebounding in august up to 15%. The gulf record plummeted with 70% Qatar, 30% Saudi exports fell short with UAE14% alongside a up surge of 40 %. (Strohecker & Jones, 2026)¹⁹

This existing diplomatic framework provides a foundation upon which more extensive security cooperation could potential kit be constructed. However, diplomatic consultation should not automatically ne interpreted as evidence that Egypt will join the Makkah defense arrangement, as Cairo has its own strategic relationships and security priorities, particularly regarding Israel, Libya, the Red Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Qatar and the other Gulf states would also participate in elected allocation with in the

¹⁶ **asad mirza**, *bangladesh's indication to join makkah pact, cause of concern for india. Raksha anirveda*, august 21, 2026

¹⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) — *useful analytical assessment of the Pakistan–Saudi defence relationship and its regional implications.*

¹⁸ Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs — *official R4 statement involving Türkiye, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia*

¹⁹ Strohecker, K., & Jones, M. (2026, August 27). *Six months of war: How the Middle East conflict has shaped financial markets. Euronext.*



cooperation without necessarily becoming fledge members of the joint defense pact. As Qatar is already responsible of state medial defense and remedial relation with Turkiye, Jordan, UAE and Indonesia in a Joint diplomatic position on regional security. (Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2026). ²⁰A flexible model involving intelligence sharing counter terrorism, maritime security, military exercise, defense industrial cooperation and diplomatic consultation may therefore be more realistic than rapid enlargement into formal collective defense organization. Nevertheless, several structural constraints could restrict the alliance's expansion. The most important is the divergence of national threat perceptions.

Pakistan's principle security remains a concern to India and the security environment of South Asia, while Saudi Arabia is primarily concerns with threats emanating from the Gulf, Yemen, missile and drone warfare, and the wider regional balance of power. Meanwhile Turkiye, has security interest extending across Syria, Iraq, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, and the Black sea. These different threat priorities make it difficult to establish a single strategic doctrine: a crisis involving India, for example, necessarily be viewed by Saudi Arabia or Turkiye in the same way as a direct threat to their own security

A second constraints is the absence of the fully integrated military institutions. Although the Makkah Agreement establishes a stronger political commitment into an operational alliance would require mechanisms for joint planning, intelligence coordination and decision making. Analysts have predicted to be caution against treating the agreement equivalent to NATO in institutional terms. Its effectiveness will depend upon the condition that the three governments develop a practice mechanism capable of translation political solidarity into coordinated military action. (Reuters, 2026c).

A third constraint concerns that different external alignments of the three states. Turkiye is a NATO member, along with Pakistan has a longstanding strategic relationship with China, and Saudi Arabia maintains deep defense and economic times with the United States While simultaneously seeking greater Strategic regional self-reliance without completely abandoning their existing International partnerships. The Makkah arrangements is therefore more likely to function initially as a mechanism for strategic diversification rather than as an attempt to replace NATO, the United States, or China's regional role.

The future of the Makkah framework will consequently depend less on the number of states that eventually join and more on the degree to which the three founding members institutionalized their cooperation. Also the political difference among members could limit expansions. Regional state would not share an identical position with Iran, Israel, the United States, the Muslim Brotherhood, Yemen, Syria, or the future regional order, and event among the three founding members. If they manage to establish a regular defense consultation their strategic interest would collide, creating s new internal disagreement.

If such mechanism remains limited, the Makkah Agreement itself be a political and deterrent agreement. In this respect, selective expansion may be more sustainable than rapid enlargement. The R4 consultations involving Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye demonstrate that a flexible,

²⁰ Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs — official account of the June 2026 R4 meeting.



multi – layered regional architecture is already emerging. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt *Rio times* , 2026).²¹

The most plausible trajectory is not the creation of the single unified “Muslim NATO”, but the gradual development of overlapping security partnerships centered on Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan. Ultimately the durability the Makkah alliance will be determined by whether its members can reconcile shared strategic interests with divergent national priorities.

Conclusion

The Makkah Joint Defense Agreement 2026 marks a major development in the security relations of the Middle East and South Asia. By bringing Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Türkiye together under a collective defense framework, it created a new strategic triangle based on complementary military, economic, and geopolitical capabilities. The agreement builds directly upon the Saudi Pakistan strategic Mutual Defense Agreement of 2025 and formalizes trilateral security trend that had already been developing during 2026.²²

Three Muslim middle powers located in three regions, South Asia, the Arabian / Persian Gulf, and the Eastern Mediterranean, are having three identical security challenges: the jeopardizing spillover effects of prolonged civil wars in their neighboring countries; the vulnerability of their sea trade to non-state actors; and the threat posed by transnational terrorism syndicated to their internal security. Hence, the trilateral MJDA appears more substantive than symbolic.

The civil wars in Yemen have been haunting Saudi Arabia's national security; during the last week, Iran-backed Houthis forces unleashed missile attacks against the Saudi-led coalitions and government military sites located in the Yemeni provinces of Hadramout & Marib, making it difficult to ignore Iranian proxies.

Turkey's national security has been vulnerable due to the spillover effects from the ongoing civil conflict in Syria and friction points involving regional actors such as Iran and the Gulf states. Meanwhile Pakistan is one of the biggest victims of state-sponsored terrorism and the anarchical situation in Afghanistan. The MJDA certainly provides these states an opportunity to jointly confront extremism and terrorism.

Still through this trilateral alliance they may pursue their national security objectives without ensnaring themselves in regional cross-border conflicts. Islamabad can be an effective interlocutor between Riyadh and Tehran.

Similarly, Ankara and Riyadh can mediate between Kabul and Islamabad or help lower tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi, while Islamabad and Riyadh can assist in normalizing relations between Ankara, Damascus, Türkiye and Gulf states, including Iran and resolving chronic disputes between Türkiye and Cyprus and Greece. Precisely for this reason, the MJDA is not anti-India, anti-Iran or anti-Cyprus, Greece or Syrian platform. It is quite significant but also exaggerated. The agreement is not yet equivalent to NATO's collective defense as supposed by

²¹ Türkiye Says It Expects Egypt to Join the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement accessed on 10 august.2026

²² Ibid



decades of institutional integration, military interoperability, and establishment command structure, whereas the Makkah framework is still developing its institutional and operational mechanisms.

Nevertheless, its strategic implications are substantial. For Saudi Arabia, it provides another layer of security diversification; for Pakistan, it expands its role as a regional security actor and strengthen its strategic relationship with the Gulf, and for Turkiye, it reinforces Ankara's strategic autonomy while opening new avenues for regional influence and industrial defense cooperation.

Ultimately, the success of the Makkah agreement will not be determined by the symbolism of its signing in the Holy city, but rather by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye can convert political solidarity in to credible deterrence, institutional coordination, military interoperability, and crisis management mechanisms while avoiding unnecessary regional polarization. The agreement therefore represents less the creation of a finished military bloc then a beginning of a potentially important new regional security architecture. If successfully institutionalized, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye & Pakistan partnership could become expose to the limitation of collective defense diplomacy. The coming years will determine which of these two trajectories ultimately defines the Makkah partnership.

However, the MDJA will not directly pose any challenges for the great powers, namely China, the Russian federation and the United states. While the pact does not involve China directly, it opens a path for Chinese weapons system and larger coordination to play a wider role in western Asia. On the broadest level, it also signals how United states regional role is shifting, another sign of how the Iran war is changing regional strategic calculations in ways that are likely being watched closely in Beijing



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