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Strategic Pacts in a Shifting World Order: The Pakistan–Saudi Defense Pact 2025

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Abstract

This era marked by fluctuating geopolitical dynamics and growing security designs, the 2025 Pakistan Saudi Defense Pact represents a significant repositioning in regional and global strategic alliances. Israeli airstrikes on Doha and the subsequent exposure of vulnerabilities in Gulf air defense systems, this agreement highlights a growing desire among Middle Eastern powers to expand their security partnerships beyond traditional Western contexts, particularly the United States. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement in Riyadh by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, signals a deepening of military and political ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The pact encourages that any act of aggression against either nation shall be regarded as an act of aggression against both. By putting this agreement within larger geopolitical shifts and applying Neorealist and Regional Security Complex theories, the study assesses the motivations, possible risks, and implications for both bilateral ties and the larger strategic calculus in the Middle East and South Asia. Eventually, the paper contends that the pact is not just a defense agreement but an indication of a new regional security planning, less dependent on the West and more agreed to localized strategic requirements.

Keywords. Strategic, Pact, Pakistan–Saudi, US, Middle East, Reliance

Introduction

In this age of fast geopolitical readjustment and evolving power dynamics, strategic alliances have become vital tools for states those looking for defense of their national interests. The

traditional bases of international security are being redesigned by changing global centers of power, rising regional influence, and the redefinition of old alliances. Within this changing landscape, nations are increasingly following bilateral and multilateral defense pacts not only to counter emerging threats, but also to project influence in key regions. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed the agreement on September 17, 2025, during Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's official visit to Saudi Arabia. The signing took place at Al Yammah Palace in Riyadh. The deal, called the Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA). It means both countries will come to each other's assistance if one is attacked. This is the first time a nuclear country has signed such a military pact with an Arab nation. The agreement was signed after an Israeli airstrike in Qatar on September 9, 2025. It shows that regional powers are starting to rely more on each other for defence, instead of depending too much on the United State or any other Western country. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have had close ties since the 1960s, especially in military and economic areas. This new deal strengthens a partnership that has been developing for decades. The agreement reflects changing power dynamics in the region. It could also influence how other countries, like India, plan their own security strategies in response.

The 2025 Pakistan–Saudi Defense Pact emerges as an essential development in the security design of the Middle East and South Asia. The defense agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signifies more than a mere military collaboration it reflects the junction of strategic priorities in response to both regional instability and global hesitation. For Saudi Arabia, diversifying its defense partnerships aligns with its wider Vision 2030 goals, while Pakistan, with its robust military infrastructure, seeks to strengthen its role as a key player in regional security. This pact builds on a long-standing relationship grounded in religious sympathy, economic cooperation, and mutual security concerns, yet marks a significant shift toward institutionalized military coordination in an increasingly unstable environment. The 2025 Pakistan–Saudi agreement highlights the growing importance of flexible, interest-based strategic alignments in the 21st century. In this study the following research question will be discussed.

Research Questions.

1. **What strategic motivations led Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to formalize a defense pact in 2025, and how do these reflect broader shifts in the global geopolitical order?**
2. **In what ways do the 2025 Pakistan and Saudi Defense Pact reshape traditional security designs in the Middle East and South Asia?**
3. How might this bilateral Defense pact influence future multilateral security arrangements in the Islamic world.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology based on completely secondary sources to analyse the Pakistan-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement of 2025. The case study is contextualized within wider moves in international order including regional security tensions in the Middle East, shifting perceptions of U.S. influence, and Pakistan's strategic position in South Asia. Secondary materials include articles, official government statements, policy papers, strategic analyses from think-tanks, media reports, historical records of Pakistan-Saudi defense cooperation, and expert commentary. By synthesizing multiple elements of documented

evidence, the research aims to rebuild the motivations, content, and anticipated consequences of the pact. To ensure validity and reliability, the study employ cross verifying facts and interpretations among multiple sources like official statements, independent think-tank reports, media. Finally, transparency in analytic decisions have been maintained.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the 2025 Pakistan–Saudi Defense Pact, **Defensive Realism**, a theory by **Kenneth Waltz**, is very useful. This theory postulates that, in the absence of a global governing authority a condition referred to as *anarchy* in international relations states prioritize their own national interests and security. In today's growing global landscape, the unipolar supremacy of the United States is lessening, while regional powers are gaining influence. As a result, nations are gradually seeking self-reliance and forging strategic alliances to safeguard themselves against external threats. One example of this is the failure of US -led security systems in the Gulf. When **Israeli airstrikes hit Doha**, it presented that the U.S. could not always protect its allies. Because of this, countries like **Saudi Arabia** are looking for new partners for defense. The agreement with **Pakistan** is part of this shift. It shows **external balancing**, where a country builds alliances to protect itself from stronger threats like **Israel's military power** or **the U.S. becoming less reliable**. Both countries benefit from this pact. **Saudi Arabia** gains a stronger military position by working with Pakistan's experienced army. **Pakistan**, in return, increases its importance in the region and gets economic support. The world is moving from U.S.-led control (**unipolarity**) to a more shared system (**multipolarity**), where countries like **China, India, and Turkey** are becoming more influential. This defense pact is also part of a bigger trend where countries are forming **non-Western security trusts**, instead of depending on the U.S. Another helpful theory is the **Regional Security Complex Theory** by **Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver**. This theory explains how nearby countries often form their own security systems because they face shared threats. The Saudi-Pakistan deal shows how security concerns in the **Gulf and South Asia** are now linked, especially after the Israeli attacks. These shared fears are pushing the two regions to work more closely together.

Explanation of Theoretical Framework

Primary Theory: Neorealism Defensive	ANARCHY	SECURITY DILEMMA	RELATIVE GAINS	MULTIPOLARITY
	No central authority	States seek alliances to balance threats	States compare gains	U.S. unipolarity decreasing
	U.S. failed to stop Israeli strike on Doha	Saudi Pakistan pact = external balancing	Saudi Arabia gets experienced military support	Rise of China, India, etc Regional independence rising

	Saudi seeks alternative defense support	against Israel/U.S.gaps)	Pakistan gains political & economic benefit	Pact = Non-Western security realignment
RSCT (Regional Security Complex theory)	REGIONAL SECURITY INTERDEPENDENCE EMERGES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulf + South Asia form a connected defense complex • Triggered by shared threats (like Israeli strike) • Saudi-Pakistan alliance = regional security coalition 			

Literature Review

There is plenty of literature available on Pakistan Saudi relations. In present scenario different institutes in Pakistan even in the world including media reports presented their views about Pakistan Saudis defense pact 2025. The scholars employ some relevant literature in this study. Strategic alliances are important between states and play a crucial role in international relations. Strategic alliances are serving as instruments for harmonizing power, discouraging adversaries, and projecting impact across regions (Walt, 1987; Mearsheimer, 2001). In today's multipolar world the decline of Western unipolar supremacy, the rise of regional powers, and the spread of nuclear competencies the nature and purpose of alliances are go through significant alteration. Pakistan understands that Saudi Arabia as a main partner because it has continually supported Pakistan on important subjects. Their defence, political, and economic ties go back to the 1960s. Saudi Arabia supported Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 wars with India and has supported Pakistan's position on Kashmir and encouraging peace among Pakistan and India (Safdar Sial, 2015). The Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA), signed in 2025, is a main example of this growing dynamic. This pact validates decades of informal military cooperation between the two states, founding that an attack on one will be considered an attack on both. Experts regard the SMDA as a milestone development in Islamic world geopolitics, exclusively uniting religious solidarity with realistic security interests (Al Jazeera, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Key provisions of this pact include combined deterrence efforts, intelligence-sharing, training programs, and collaboration on defense technologies (The News International, 2025). Beyond its military consequences, the pact also serves as a strategic signal to regional powers. (Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2025). The agreement is probable to motivate similar defense alignments among Gulf States, possibly redesigning the Gulf Cooperation Council and broader Middle Eastern security designs (Gulf News, 2025). On the other hand, domestic support in Pakistan remains strong, mainly due to religious ties and the representational defense of holy places, yet questions about the long-term strategic payoff and operational details continue. These considerations highlight important gaps in current learning and emphasize the need for further research into how alliances like the SMDA will influence regional stability amid a gradually unpredictable global order. In this study scholar try to address the proposed questions in following headings.

A: MOTIVATIONS BEHIND PAKISTAN–SAUDI DEFENSE PACT

The drives behind the Pakistan–Saudi defense pact stem from mutual strategic interests and fluctuating regional dynamics. Saudi Arabia views that its overreliance on traditional Western security guarantors needs to be decrease, particularly on the United States, by expanding its defense trusts to increase its regional deterrence and security self-sufficiency. Pakistan in turn goals to uplift its regional impacts and key security provider within the Muslim world. Both states share concerns over evolving threats, regional uncertainty, and growing Israeli military activities, which drive their desire for stronger, dignified defense collaboration. The pact imitates a union of political, military, and ideological goals, creating a new strategic alliance based on shared Islamic identity, geographical closeness, and complementary military capabilities. Motivations behind Pakistan–Saudi defense pact are discussed in following headings.

I. Deterrence and Shared Apparent Threats

Saudi Arabia's decision to enter into a defense pact with Pakistan is mainly driven by growing regional security challenges that have intensified the kingdom's sense of defenselessness. Recent Israeli military actions, particularly the extraordinary strike on Qatar, have emphasized the unpredictable security situation in the Gulf and wider Middle East region. Along with this, Saudi Arabia remains extremely concerned about Iran's ongoing nuclear development program and its wide link of proxy forces, which pose threats to Saudi territorial integrity. This defense agreement's essential clause specifying that any attack on one party will be treated as an attack on both serves as a strategic deterrent aimed at discouraging antagonistic actors from considering violence. This mutual defense guarantee indicates a shift toward cooperative security provisions designed to stabilize an irritable region and discourage adversaries from manipulating alleged weaknesses (Reuters, 2025; Al Jazeera, 2025; AP News, 2025). For Pakistan, the pact signifies more than just a deterrence instrument; it is a planned move to uplift its geopolitical stand-up and enlarge its influence in a region progressively shaped by ever-changing alliances. By strengthening formal military relations with one of the richest and most strategically key Gulf states, Pakistan increases not only security guarantees but also significant diplomatic influence. This partnership agrees Islamabad to assert itself as a key regional player at a time when India is violently spreading its influence across South Asia and the Middle East. Also, the alliance offers Pakistan access to advanced military cooperation, possible economic assistances, and improved international tallness, which jointly strengthen its security stance and diplomatic track in a multifaceted geopolitical setting (Arab News, 2025; Business Standard, 2025). This pact highlights that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, because of their robust political, economic, and military power, as well as their important locations, will become more valued and well able to protect themselves as world-wide and regional situations (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025). The pact shows that Saudi Arabia is making its own choices about its trusted allies. It no longer wishes to depend on just one external power but as an alternative build alliance based on its national interests. Although regional tensions have increased like the recent Israeli attack in Doha this agreement wasn't made just in reaction to those events. It's the consequence of long and vigilant discussions between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. From the time when the start of the war in Gaza, Saudi Arabia has seen rising threats from Israel, including its efforts to push

Palestinian issues sideways and increases its territory. These threats became graver after Israel attacked on Qatar. This has pushed Saudi Arabia to form strong defense partnerships. Pakistan also realizes Israel as a threat, particularly after Israel supported India in its conflict with Pakistan (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025).

II : Financial and Mutual Strategic Benefits

States in the world frequently act in their own interest, concentrating on security and strategic advantages (Lebow, 2024). Presently economics and defence strategic interest both are important for any state. Pakistan is presently facing significant macroeconomic challenges that impend its financial constancy and growth prospects. These include severe foreign exchange deficiencies, a rising national debt burden, and persistent inflationary gravities that have crumpled purchasing power and increased the price of living for its population (Business Standard, 2025). In this context, the recently signed defense pact with Saudi Arabia is observed by Islamabad as a planned prospect to get much-needed economic assistance. Pakistan expects that the pact will pave the way for enlarged Saudi investment, which could offer an influx of investment to support its stressed economy. Moreover, Islamabad hopes for more favorable terms on oil expenses, which would help ease its balance of expenses crisis by reducing the instant fiscal burden of energy imports. The pact is also estimated to increase two-sided trade, expanding economic links that could produce new business prospects and employment. Beyond economic deliberations, the deal aims to build up security cooperation, which in turn is seen as a basis for healthier, security-backed economic partnership between the two states (Arab News, 2025; Khaleej Times, 2025). From Saudi Arabia's viewpoint, this defense agreement makes closely with its larger strategic desires sketched in Vision 2030, an all-inclusive plan to transform the kingdom's economic and security setting. The pact allows Riyadh to expand its security relationships beyond traditional coalitions, reducing dependency on expensive external supporters for its defense needs. By expanding military cooperation with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia seeks to gain access to dedicated military capability and training, which could improve the operational competences of its armed forces. Moreover, the agreement is calculated to motivate the development of Saudi Arabia's domestic defense manufacturing through joint production initiatives and collaborative training programs. These efforts support the kingdom's goal of becoming more self-sufficient in defense industries, eventually contributing to economic variation and job creation as planned in Vision 2030 (AA News / Anadolu Ajansı, 2025; Financial Times, 2025). The pact among Saudi Arabia and Pakistan demonstrates an emergent tendency in international relations where diplomacy, economic influence, and military strategy are becoming unified and mutually strengthening. Saudi Arabia, leveraging its significant financial resources and economic impact as a means to make stronger its strategic treaties. By offering financial reserves, aid packages, and economic businesses, Riyadh improves its geopolitical impact and secures faithfulness from key regional and global allies. On the other hand, Pakistan take advantage of on its important military capabilities, and experienced armed forces, to exchange and get vital economic relief and support. This strategic discussion reflects a refined approach where economic incentives are straight tangled to security commitments, thus guaranteeing that cooperation is both strong and mutually beneficial. Such a method also signals to other states

that power in today's world is not only derived from military might or economic wealth alone, but gradually from the strategic integration of both realms to attain national objectives (Business Standard, 2025; Arab News, 2025). Pakistan and Saudi Arabia work closely together in defence. They have made numerous contracts to support each other in military matters. Pakistan also helps to train and guide the Saudi military (Karim, 2023). The continuation of these military ties underscores the importance of the relationship for both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. For Saudi Arabia, it provides a strategic backup to strengthen its defence capabilities, while for Pakistan, it offers a valued strategic and economically beneficial partnership (Yaseen, Muzaffar & Tariq, 2023; Karim, 2023). Pakistan traded defence equipment to Saudi Arabia, as well as an \$81 million deal in 2016 (Mateen, 2016). Saudi Arabia also capitalized in Pakistan's construction area. In February 2025, Saudi Arabia joined Pakistan's AMAN-2025 naval trainings, which focused on maritime security. This assisted Saudi militaries learn from Pakistan and enhanced ties with other Muslim countries.

III : Erosion of Reliance on Old Guarantors

Although Gulf States like Qatar have security deals with the United State, but the United State did nothing when Israel attacked Doha even though the airstrike occurred near a major U.S. airbase. This has elevated uncertainties about U.S. support, prompting Saudi Arabia to seek new defense allies. For Pakistan, working watchfully with a powerful country like Saudi Arabia helps make stronger its own position (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025). Many Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, observe that U.S.-led security guarantees are becoming less reliable or predictable during recent conflicts and shifts in U.S. foreign policy (Financial Times, 2025; Al-Jazeera, 2025). The Saudi-Pakistan pact is part of Riyadh's policy to expand its security partnerships and develop more self-sufficient, regionally fastened defense structures (Arab News, 2025; Reuters, 2025). For Pakistan, this pact permits it to reaffirm itself not only in South Asia but more largely in the Islamic world, leveraging its military abilities as resources in a regional deterrence posture (AP News, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Even though Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have worked together on defense matters for many years such as training and military support the new 2025 defense pact makes their cooperation official and legally obligatory. This agreement moves their relationship from informal support to a formal pact with clear procedures and responsibilities for both countries (Al Jazeera, 2025; Arab News, 2025). One important aspect of this pact is the "attack on one will be considered an attack on both" clause. This means that if either Saudi Arabia or Pakistan is attacked, the other will come to its defense. This strong promise helps both countries to make best strategy for their security, expands their military enthusiasm, and makes sure that their mutual defense is more than just words it becomes an actual, actionable promise under international law (AP News, 2025; FT, 2025). By sanctifying these defense responsibilities, the pact reinforces the pledge between the two nations. It also helps them work together more carefully on military actions, making their cooperation more real and reliable in times of crisis. This pact expands both countries' standing on the world platform. It provides them more power in international dialogues and provides replacements to trusting on just one ally. It also reflects a global shift toward more elastic pacts.

IV: Multipolarity and Regional Security Autonomy

The new defense pact among Saudi Arabia and Pakistan marks a significant move. By tradition, both states have depended on profoundly on external superpowers, particularly the United States, for military support and strategic support. However, this agreement reproduces a change away from that one-dimensional dependence, signaling a wish to shape stronger, more regionally focused partnerships. By firming up ties with each other, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are marking to create a more balanced and independent security outline that does not depend on only on Western powers. This development is part of a wider tendency across the Middle East, where many states are gradually dodging their gambles by varying their security dealings. As a replacement depending on only powerful ally, regional states are shaping numerous alliances to enhance their strategic choices and increase their resilience against probable threats. By founding an official defense pact, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are joining this design of creating more elastic and multi-layered security systems, which better reproduce the complex and evolving geopolitical authenticities of the region (Financial Times, 2025; Arab News, 2025). General, this move highlights a rising recognition among Middle Eastern countries that security in the modern era needs collaboration with multiple partners. It also determines a desire to reduce weaknesses that come with over-reliance on exterior superpowers, helping these nations take great control over their own defense and foreign policy choices.

V: Responsive and Unified Defense Attitude

In today's security situation, threats have become gradually impetuous. Modern threats such as missile strikes, drone attacks by non-state actors, and cross-border spillovers from regional clashes no longer follow traditional patterns of fighting. These threats require more elastic and rapid replies, which conventional military strategies alone cannot sufficiently address. Recognizing this truth, the defense agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan highlights not just conventional military cooperation but also joint efforts in intelligence sharing and harmonized replies. This method permits both countries to better do in advance, and counter emerging security challenges that may rise from unusual sources (Al Jazeera, 2025; Dawn via Arab News, 2025). The pact enables closer partnership in areas such as real-time intelligence exchange and rapid deployment of forces, enabling a more responsive and unified defense attitude. By combining resources and capability, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan can rejoin more effectively to irregular threats those modeled by smaller, non-state groups using advanced tools like drones. This joint tactic also helps to manage risks stopping from instability in neighboring regions, where conflicts can easily spill over borders and create new security dilemmas. Eventually, the agreement reflects a modern understanding of defense that goes beyond traditional battlefield actions. This pact ensures that both nations are better prepared to defend their security interests in a complex regional landscape. The timing of this new pact among Saudi Arabia and Pakistan carries important geopolitical weight, particularly when well-thought-out in the context of current regional developments. This pact also monitors Israeli strike on Doha, which has intensified tensions and hesitation across the Middle East. By solemnizing their cooperation, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are gesturing to numerous audiences that they intend to adopt a more self-confident and independent approach to their national security policies. For

regional competitors, this serves as a warning that both nations are prepared to encourage their defensive and offensive abilities collaboratively. For their domestic communities, the treaty is a demo of sovereign strength and strategic foresight in an unsettled geopolitical environment. In the meantime, worldwide powers are repeated that these two countries remain key players with the ability to impact regional constancy and security dynamics on their own footings. This multidimensional message highlights a deliberate effort by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to declare greater agency and recalibrate power balances in a complex international landscape (Reuters, 2025; Arab News, 2025).

B: PAKISTAN–SAUDI DEFENSE PACT RESHAPES SECURITY DESIGNS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Pakistan–Saudi defense treaty meaningfully redesigns security dynamics across the Middle East and South Asia by presenting a new layer of strategic collaboration that bonds these two regions. By ratifying deterrence commitments, the alliance challenges traditional security designs mainly subjugated by Western powers. It forces regional actors such as India, and Israel to reevaluate their military stances and deterrence strategies. Moreover, the pact covers the way for broader multifaceted defense collaborations between Muslim countries, possibly creating a substitute security bloc that highlights self-sufficiency and collective defense. This evolving style not only alters power balances but also raises the complexity of regional diplomacy and conflict management. This defense pact reshapes security designs in the Middle East and South Asia in following ways.

I. Formal Mutual Defense & Collective Security

Usually, alliances between South Asian and Middle Eastern states have a tendency to be informal and realistic, focusing on limited defense cooperation. These measures often involved military training programs, arms procurement contracts, and advisory roles where qualified staffs provided strategic guidance. The 2025 Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia marks an important move from this historic pattern by solemnizing their security partnership. Under this treaty, any armed attack on either state will be measured an attack on both, thereby inserting a stronger collective security aspect within the regional security structure (AP, 2025; Reuters, 2025). This approach changes beyond ad hoc collaboration and establishes a treaty-based alliance. Imitating this, Pakistan’s Defense Minister has openly described the agreement as a mutual guarantee of security rather than a vehicle for offensive military action (Times of India, 2025). This pact indicates that it is an intention to foster stability through mutual protection, which could redesign the strategic dynamics in both the Middle East and South Asia. One of the important features of the afresh shaped Saudi–Pakistan Military Alliance is its clear move away from overdependence on traditional external security guarantors, mainly the United States. In history, Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia have trusted deeply on U.S. military and strategic guarantees to defend their national security interests. However, new developments have emphasized increasing uncertainties within these states about the constancy and dependability of American commitments. Reports from the *Financial Times* and *Reuters* in 2025 underline a growing nervousness among Gulf leaders, who question whether the U.S. will always act probably or in alignment with their security priorities in a changing global geopolitical

landscape. In response to apprehensions, Saudi Arabia's decision to enter into a defense treaty with Pakistan marks a strategic effort to expand its security dependencies. Pakistan's military capabilities are noteworthy, featuring a well-established conventional force. This partnership not only provides Saudi Arabia with a substitute source of military support but also improves its deterrence stance in an unstable regional environment. For Pakistan, the alliance represents a notable elevation in its regional stature. Pakistan is now positioning itself as a key player in regional defense dynamics. By shaping this alliance, Pakistan transitions into a more powerful player, capable of projecting power and shaping security arrangements in the Middle East. During the 2024 Gaza calamity, both states called for a cessation of hostilities and humanitarian support, showing a united posture (Riedel, 2020). This development could redefine Pakistan's geopolitical role, allowing it to move beyond its conventional links and assert greater influence in shaping the security design of the Gulf and adjacent regions. This pact increases Saudi Arabia's position as a key regional power that supports peace and stability. At the same time, it gives Pakistan a strong partner to help improve its defense. Together, both countries are building a joint security system that protects the Gulf and South Asia. The pact also helps to Saudi Arabia for expanding its defense options. It sends a message to the world that Gulf countries are updating their defense strategies to deal with new security threats.

II : Reshaping Regional Threat Perceptions and Realignment

The newly established Saudi–Pakistan Military Alliance (SMDA) expressively redesigns how regional threat insights are constructed and understood within the Middle East and South Asia. In current years, rising Israeli military actions, including high-profile strikes in Doha and Gaza, have produced a heightened sense of alarm among Gulf States. These operations, extensively reported by outlets, which highlight the instability of the security environment and the direct challenges faced by Gulf States in safeguarding their interests and populations (Al Jazeera, 2025: Reuters, 2025). The violent nature of these strikes has contributed to a persistent sense of susceptibility, pushing Gulf States to reconsider their strategic postures. These dynamics have forced Gulf States, chiefly Saudi Arabia, to seek partnerships that can collectively address these multidimensional threats. Importantly, these new security trusts are being forged not just on the basis of historical alliances but are driven by shared insights of emerging threats. This marks a change from traditional, often inflexible alignments towards more pragmatic coalitions centered on common security concerns. This pact demonstrates this trend by combining elements of Islamic identity, geographical closeness, and military capabilities into a comprehensible strategic alliance. By involving Saudi Arabia a main Gulf power with Pakistan, a regional military powerful with significant conventional, the pact signals a reconfiguration of regional security design. This treaty reflects a mindful effort to construct a collective deterrence agenda capable of responding to the complex and evolving threat environment. The junction of religious-cultural sympathy with real security needs creates an innovative partnership that challenges current patterns. As reported by *Al Jazeera* and *Reuters* in 2025, this rearrangement may not only enhance the individual security of member states but also redefine power dynamics in the Middle East and South Asia, influencing diplomatic, military, and strategic designs for years to come. Beyond representative signaling, the pact is expected to institutionalize defense collaboration between

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. This comprises joint training, intelligence sharing, potential joint force planning, cooperation in defense production, and mutual hosting of forces (Al Jazeera, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Over time, these institutionalized mechanisms can move how regional militaries coordinate moving from periodic and project-based cooperation to long-term planning, stable command-and-control arrangements, and integrated deployments (Al Jazeera, 2025).

III : Impact on South Asia's Security Dynamics

The current defense pact between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan introduces a new aspect to the old India-Pakistan rivalry. Usually, this conflict has been mainly bilateral, focused on historical clashes, territorial claims most especially over Kashmir and periodic military hostilities. However, by ratifying Saudi Arabia as a defense friend of Pakistan, the dynamics of this enmity are altered (Khaleej Times, 2025; Al Jazeera, 2025). Saudi Arabia's entrance as a formal security partner confuses India's strategic calculus by increasing the network of agreements that India must consider, possibly exerting pressure on its security posture. The Saudi military and financial impact, combined with its geopolitical weight in the Middle East, offers Pakistan with an influential partner. This development force India to rethink not only its bilateral relationship with Pakistan but also its engagement with Middle Eastern actors, reshaping its foreign policy and defense strategies. Besides, Pakistan's raised international profile resulting from this pact may permit it to exceed its traditional focus on the India-Pakistan conflict. The alliance offers Pakistan a stage to act as a critical speaker linking Middle Eastern security concerns with South Asian geopolitical realities, including energy security, counterterrorism cooperation, and balancing regional powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. By serving as a bridge between these unstable regions, Pakistan could contribute to forging a more interconnected security framework addressing multiple layers of regional instability. As highlighted by Al Jazeera (2025), this move could allow Islamabad to leverage its strategic position for regional influence and stability, moving outside the narrow confines of bilateral tensions with India. The Saudi–Pakistan defense pact represents not merely a bilateral military agreement but a multifaceted strategic development that opens new pathways for Pakistan's engagement in regional security designs across South Asia and the Middle East (Khaleej Times, 2025; Al Jazeera, 2025).

IV : Treaty-based Alliances:

The Saudi–Pakistan Military Alliance (SMDA) signifies an important shift in the bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which historically had been largely transactional. Before, Saudi Arabia's support to Pakistan mainly took the form of financial aid, arms supplies, and advisory assistance, without formalizing these connections into a structured military partnership. This informal arrangement allowed for cooperation but lacked compulsory commitments or clearly defined responsibilities, leaving the relationship dependent on fluctuating political and strategic contexts. This pact institutionalizes and deepens this connection by founding a legally obligatory defense treaty. Unlike prior pacts based on goodwill, the new pact clearly outlines mutual obligations, responsibilities, and rules of engagement, requiring both nations to come to each other's defense under specified conditions. This formalization increases expectedness and accountability within the alliance, providing a clear framework for coordinated military support, joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and operational

planning. Furthermore, it indicates a long-term strategic commitment, reflecting uniting interests and sending a strong message to regional and global actors about the durability and seriousness of the partnership. Reports by Al Jazeera and Reuters (2025) highlight that this transition from informal cooperation to a structured defense pact marks a ripening of Saudi-Pakistan relations. Moreover, the legal systematization of the pact may act as a deterrent to potential adversaries by indicating that aggression against one party would trigger a unified and robust response, thereby add strategic depth and altering regional power dynamics (Al Jazeera, 2025; Reuters, 2025).

V: Emergence of Muslim World Security

The Saudi–Pakistan Military Alliance (SMDA) has sparked extensive speculation among experts and policymakers about its possible to catalyze a wave of defense agreements between Pakistan and other Muslim states. This pact is seen as the emergence of a new security framework that reshapes the strategic planning of the Islamic world. According to *Al Monitor* and the Associated Press (AP) reports from 2025, such a trend may lead to the creation of a network of unified defense pacts, demonstrating an equivalent security style distinct from the ancient alliances dominated by Western powers, mainly the United States . This possibility stems from several factors. Firstly, many Muslim and Gulf states share overlying security concerns, including the instability caused by regional conflicts, and the volatility of Western security guarantees. This pact signals an alternative model for collective security one that is rooted in shared religious and cultural identities as well as aligned geopolitical interests, rather than dependency on external Western actors. If other Gulf and Muslim-majority countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, or even Turkey and Malaysia were to follow similar defense agreements with Pakistan, this could lay the foundation for a healthy web of mutual defense commitments. Such an alliance network could facilitate joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, coordinated diplomatic initiatives, and collective responses to threats, enhancing the security autonomy of these nations. This emerging network would represent a significant shift in global security dynamics. Traditionally, the security design of the Middle East and South Asia has been heavily influenced by Western military alliances. The rise of an Islamic defense coalition would introduce a new alliance of power, balance Western influence and creating greater strategic independence for member states. It would also strengthen Islamic solidarity and foster deeper cooperation on defense and security matters, thereby increasing the collective deterrence capacity against regional threats. Also, this development could encourage greater political unity among Muslim states, overcoming some of the sectarian and national rivalries that have historically disjointed the region. A more formal security network might provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation, contributing to regional stability and collective crisis management.

VI : Existing Alliances and U.S. Role:

The formation of the Saudi–Pakistan Military Alliance (SMDA) is likely to prompt important recalibrations in how the US involves with both the Gulf region and South Asia. In history, the U.S. has been the primary security guarantor for Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia, providing military support, intelligence, and diplomatic backing. However, Riyadh’s seeming move to diversify its security partnerships and reduce dependence on Washington signals a potential shift

in the balance of influence. This shift could force the U.S. to rethink its strategic approach in these regions. To maintain its position and prevent losing influence to emerging alliances like the SMDA, Washington may need to offer new or enhanced security guarantees, deepen military cooperation, or adjust its diplomatic stance. This could involve renegotiating existing agreements, increasing military aid, or taking a more flexible stance on regional conflicts to better align with the interests of Gulf partners. Moreover, the U.S. might also reconsider its policies in South Asia, particularly regarding Pakistan and India, to adapt to the changing dynamics resulting from Pakistan's elevated regional role. Maintaining influence in these strategically vital regions will require Washington to be more responsive to evolving alliances and threat perceptions. Pakistan and Saudia recommend that the United States, as a main partner of Israel, should urge the Israeli government to stop its constant aggressive actions, especially in Gaza and the West Bank, because risk is deteriorating regional instability and humanitarian calamities. By promoting negotiation, adherence to international law, and protection of civilian lives, the U.S. can play a positive role in fostering peace and protection of human rights in the region.

C: PACT AND FUTURE MULTILATERAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

The Pakistan–Saudi defense pact is composed to serve as an initial model for future multidimensional security arrangements across the Islamic world. By formalizing this mutual defense pledges between two leading Muslim states, the pact signals a shift toward greater regional self-sufficiency and collective security cooperation. This agreement reassures other Gulf and Muslim countries to consider similar alliances, development a network of defense pacts that could improve coordination on intelligence sharing, joint military exercises. As shared threat perceptions such regional instability grow more urgent, the pact's example may stimulate political will among Islamic nations to establish more institutionalized and binding security outlines, potentially reforming the geopolitical landscape of the Muslim world. The influence of this pact on future multilateral security arrangements in the Islamic world can be explained in following headings.

1. Pattern for Collective Defense Among Muslim States

Muslim and Arab countries have not had a joint defense system to defend against growing threats. This pact may be the first step in building such a better system, which could comprise more countries over time. The aim is to avoid conflicts and to stop the risky actions of countries that cause unpredictability (International Institute for Iranian Studies, 2025). Pakistan has openly stated that its mutual defense agreement with Saudi Arabia is not limited to the two countries alone but is intended to be expandable, inviting other Arab and Muslim-majority states to join the pact in the future. This directness indicates that the Saudi-Pakistan defense agreement could act as an opening framework for a wider multilateral defense coalition within the Muslim world. By setting this model, the pact lays important basis for the development of more unified and institutionalized security styles across Islamic countries, promoting greater unity and collaboration among states that share common religious, cultural, and strategic interests. Such

a coalition would move beyond traditional bilateral security arrangements, potentially creating a broad network of allied Muslim states committed to collective defense. This emerging vision of collective security is underscored by reports from *Dawn*, *Reuters*, and the Associated Press in 2025, highlighting the strategic significance of the pact as a compound for deeper regional integration in defense matters (Dawn, 2025; Reuters, 2025; Associated Press, 2025). Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian showed support for this new defence agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, calling it a step toward building a stronger regional security system. The pact means that if one country is attacked, the other will see it as an attack on both. Speaking at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, Irani President said Iran sees this deal between the two Muslim nations as a positive move. He added that it could lead to great cooperation among Muslim states in areas of politics, defence, and security (Dawn. 2025).

II : Shift toward Institutionalized Security Collaboration

The agreement solemnizes what has historically been an informal relationship characterized by military training, and advisory support, transforming it into a treaty-based framework with clearly expressed mutual defense obligations. This pact marks a major shift towards institutionalized military cooperation, encouraging the involved parties to engage in coordinated planning, logistics, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises. Such formalized cooperation not only enhances operational readiness but may also inspire other Muslim states to pursue similar treaty-based defense agreements, fostering a new norm of collective security commitment within the Islamic world, as noted by *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The News* in 2025. One of the most important influences of the Saudi-Pakistan defense pact is its double symbolic and practical improvement of regional deterrence capabilities. By uniting Saudi Arabia's considerable strategic and economic influence with Pakistan's healthy military and nuclear capabilities, the alliance efficiently extends the deterrence across both the Middle East and South Asia. This development not only strengthens collective security but also sets an example that may inspire other Muslim-majority states to pursue similar extended deterrence arrangements. According to reports by the Associated Press and Reuters in 2025, while this synthesis of economic and military resources enhances regional deterrence, it also introduces better density into the geopolitical and strategic setting, requiring careful diplomatic and security supervision (Associated Press, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Security analysts extensively foresee that the Saudi-Pakistan agreement could activate many consequences, like prompting other Gulf, Arab, or Muslim-majority countries to explore similar defense partnerships. These states are motivated by a desire to expand their security arrangements beyond traditional Western alliances and to enhance their own deterrence capabilities. Countries such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which face their own regional security challenges, may be mainly motivated to enter into similar defense agreements with proficient military partners like Pakistan. This trend could lead increasing strategic cooperation among Muslim states and regional security dynamics, as suggested by reports from *Reuters* and *AP* in 2025.

III : Pakistan's Standing in Islamic World

Pakistan is recognized as a peaceful Islamic country in the world that have faith in in living in harmony with others. It follows a foreign policy based on common respect, non-aggression, and

peaceful cooperation. Pakistan has never shown aggressive intents toward any country. Its defence collaboration with Saudi Arabia is an important phase that sends a strong message to all Islamic countries, particularly those in the Middle East for having alliance. Its demonstrations that now is the time for Muslim nations to come closer, backing each other, and work in organized manner to protect their shared interests. This kind of unity can help to build unity among Islamic countries. By standing together, Muslim states can help peace, stability, and security in the region. In Pakistan, the new coalition with Saudi Arabia is extensively regarded as a transformative development that meaningfully raises the country's role as active provider of security within the broader Muslim world. Pakistani experts and domestic commentators highlight that this defense pact not only strengthens Pakistan's diplomatic standing but also enhances its strategic influence on the regional stage. By validating this treaty, Pakistan is positioned to engage more actively in multilateral defense forums, joint security initiatives, and cooperative calculations involving Muslim-majority states. This development marks a shift toward Pakistan taking a leadership role in shaping the collective security framework of the Islamic world, expanding its influence beyond traditional bilateral rivalries and conflicts. Such a development has been highlighted in reports by *Dawn* and the Associated Press in 2025, which note that the pact increases Pakistan's regional prestige and strategic leverage, allowing it to act as a fundamental security actor within a rapidly changing geopolitical environment (Dawn, 2025; Associated Press, 2025). On other hand regional institutions like the Gulf Cooperation Council formerly maintain some joint defense plans, but the new Saudi-Pakistan pact could act as a facilitator to strengthen these bodies or inspire the formation of new multilateral defense agendas. This could involve expanding joint military competences, intelligence coordination, and crisis management mechanisms within established organizations or through newly created alliances designed to reply together to common dangers, as underlined by *Al Jazeera*, *Arab News*, and *Reuters* in 2025.

IV : Strategic Gesturing & Diplomacy Among Muslim States

The Saudi-Pakistan defense agreement refers an important diplomatic signal representing Muslim and Gulf Arab states. This treaty reflects a strategic move towards greater self-reliance by fastening the pact in shared religious and cultural values, geographic closeness, and military capabilities. By validating their defense cooperation, these countries demonstrate a commitment to building indigenous security bases that reduce dependency on traditional Western guarantors. This emerging harmony holds the potential to stimulate political will across the Muslim world, fostering enhanced collaboration on a wide range of collective security challenges. These include intelligence sharing, coordinated counterterrorism operations, fast military reaction mechanisms, and unified diplomatic initiatives aimed at addressing common threats. Such developments, decorated in reports by Reuters and the Associated Press in 2025, underline an extensive strategic shift toward regional security affairs and the establishment of alternative security designs within the Islamic world (Associated Press, 2025: Reuters, 2025). Despite the momentous promise of expanded multidimensional defense cooperation among Muslim states, many challenges may hinder these efforts. Different threat perceptions whether focused on Israel, or South Asia could complicate consensus-building. Differences in political distrust, sectarian divides and leadership hostilities present persistent obstacles. Moreover,

extended deterrence arrangements carry legal and diplomatic risks which may cause some states to hesitate before fully committing to such pacts. The vision for a collective Muslim defense style is compelling; its realization will require careful steering of deep-rooted strategies (Reuters, 2025, Associated Press, 2025). This pact can be seen as strategic gesturing & diplomacy among Muslim States.

Conclusion:

The 2025 Pakistan–Saudi Defence Pact stands as evidence to the growing nature of international security cooperation in a multipolar world. As traditional alliances centred around Western powers like the United States become less reliable or strategically inadequate, regional powers are recalibrating their defence strategies to address evolving threats more autonomously. The pact not only solemnizes military alliance between Islamabad and Riyadh but also signifies a growing trend where states with shared strategic susceptibilities seek mutual security guarantees rooted in regional realities rather than reserved alliances. This pact reflects a mindful shift by both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to emphasize greater agency in shaping their security environments. For Saudi Arabia, positioning with a nuclear state like Pakistan sends a strong message about it's determined to build more diversified and resilient defence partnerships, especially in the face of growing regional tensions exemplified by the Israeli airstrike on Qatar. For Pakistan, the pact strengthens its strategic significance beyond South Asia and into the Gulf, increasing its geopolitical track. Through the lens of Neorealism, this pact demonstrates a classic case of states balancing against apparent threats, while Regional Security Complex Theory explains how organized security dynamics in the Middle East and South Asia are driving new patterns of cooperation. The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement is a clear sign of friendship, unity, and trust between two states associated by shared beliefs and history. It's a pledge to stand by each other, to work together, and to grow stronger side by side. As Pakistan and Saudi Arabia look to the future, the world will see how this pact helps them play a key role in maintaining peace and stability in the Muslim world. Based on their past, this new step is likely to bring them even closer, showing that their strong relationship can thrive even in a changing world.

Conflict of Interest: The scholar declares on Conflict of Interest.

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