

Pak-KSA defence deal:

Critically assess the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. What are the motives of both states? What are the likely effects of such pact on regional deterrence dynamics, and the principle risks of such a pact?

Outline:

- Introduction.
- Brief historic relations between KSA-PAK.
- What is SMDA?
- Motives of both states.
- Effects of such pact.
- Risks of such pact.
- Critical Analysis.
- Conclusion.

1. Introduction:

The Strategic mutual defence agreement signed between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is a "once in a history deal" and a "game-changer" for both states. It is a NATO style defence agreement where attack against one nation is considered attack against the other. Although discussions about such a pact were long going, the immediate signing of it was due to Israel's

attack on Hamas in Qatar, questioning the U.S. security guarantees to Gulf countries. This pact is helpful to both as Pakistan is seeking economic investment while KSA wants security. However, the ambiguities, extended nuclear deterrence, around the pact makes it a little risky too. Overall, the pact has changed dynamics and power balance in both the Middle East and South Asia.

Through Strategic defence agreement, Pakistan not only provides security to Saudi Arabia but opens ventures for whole Middle East.

Maleeha Lodhi.

2. Brief historical relations between KSA-Pak

↳ KSA recognized Pakistan within a month of its creation.

↳ Pakistan and Saudi Arabia shared mutual brotherhood relations.

↳ Saudi Arabia funded OIC Summit in Lahore.

↳ Faisal Mosque, the tent of KSA built by Shah Faisal as a gesture of KSA and Pakistan brotherhood.

↳ Pakistan-Kingdom Saudi Arabia 1982 defence protocol to secure Saudi oil sites from Iran backed Shia uprisings.

↳ Pakistani troops^{contributed} in 1979 operation against "False Imam Mahdi" in Grand Mosque seizure.

↳ Pakistan secured Saudi border during first Gulf war.

↳ Pakistan has trained 8000-10,000 KSA soldiers.

(Belfer center)

↳ Pakistan's nuclear programme supported through KSA's oil payments deference for almost 4 years, when the West sanctioned Pakistan.

↳ Pakistan received aid, financial support, and delayed oil payment rewards during crisis.

↳ Pakistan and Saudi Arabia fought simultaneously against U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan

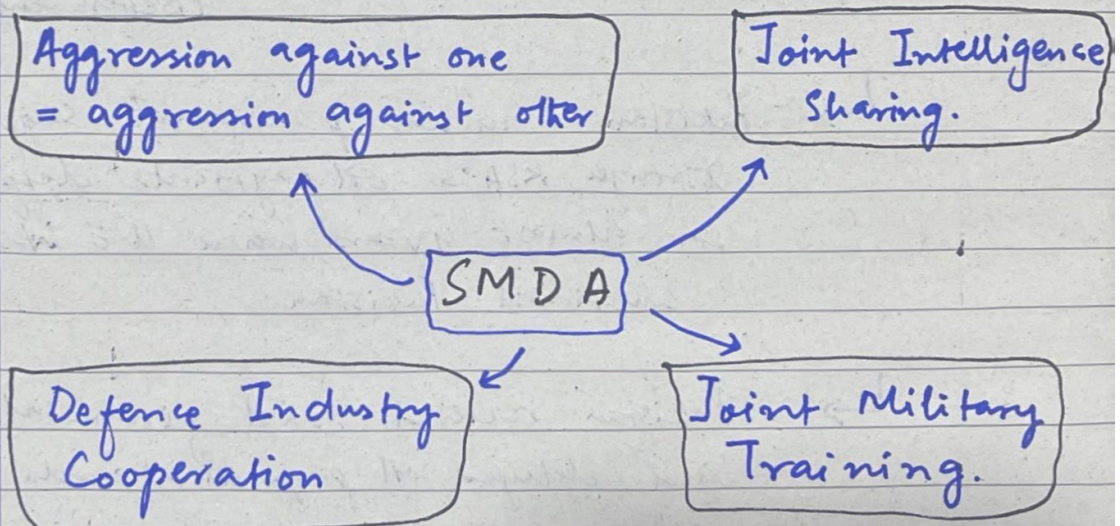
↳ Mutual defence exercises between both militaries:

- Al-Samsam exercises (Military)
- Al-Sagoor exercises (Air force)
- Naseem al-Bahr (Navy)

3. A glance at SMDA:

Strategic Mutual defence agreement is a NATO style defence deal between both countries where attack on one country is considered as an attack against both countries. It includes the following:

~~SMDA~~



∴ Defence Cooperation: Both countries will contribute in defence of each other and aggression against one will

be considered aggression against both.

ii. Joint Intelligence Sharing: Both countries will share intelligence and work co-ordinately.

iii. Defense Industry Cooperation: Both countries will cooperate in defence industries and weapon production. Saudi money injection in Pakistan's weapon production can significantly enhance Pakistan's arsenal, speed, scale of weapon production and export.

iv. Joint Military training: Both countries will coordinate in military training to enhance coordinate action in case of any aggression.

v. Does SMDA also includes nuclear umbrella to KSA?

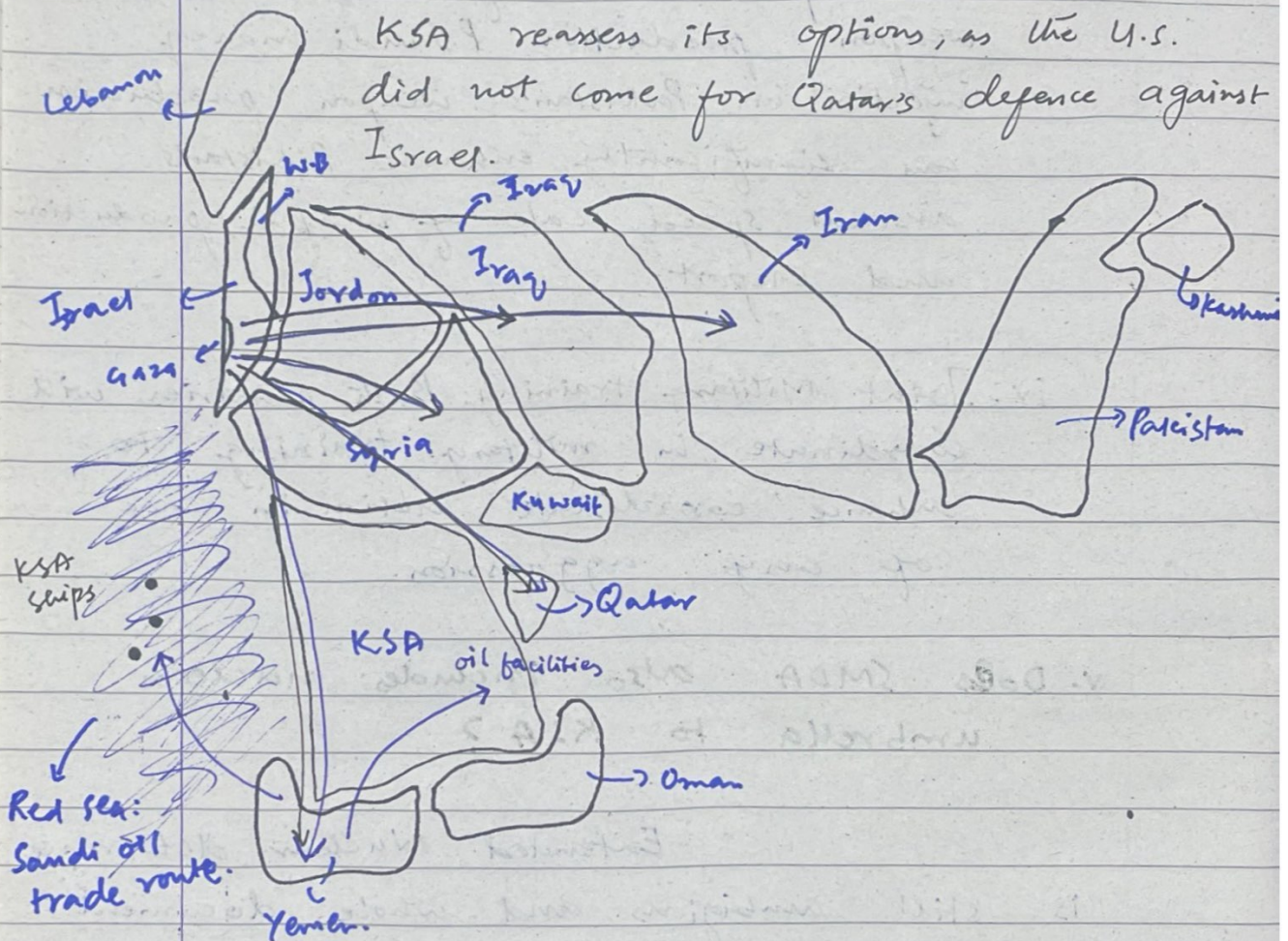
Extended Nuclear deterrence is still ambiguous and whole document has ~~not~~ not yet proclaimed. But, according to a Saudi Defence official:

Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement is an all encompassing agreement.
Saudi Defence official

4. Motives of both states:

i. Motives of KSA:

Saudi Arabia has long wanted security guarantees from the U.S, which it has failed to provide, making Saudi Arabia insecure. The recent Israel's attack on Qatar made KSA reassess its options, as the U.S. did not come for Qatar's defence against Israel.



- Kingdom get security guarantees from any ~~Saudi~~ aggression.
- Israel's madness has led it to attack Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Yemen,

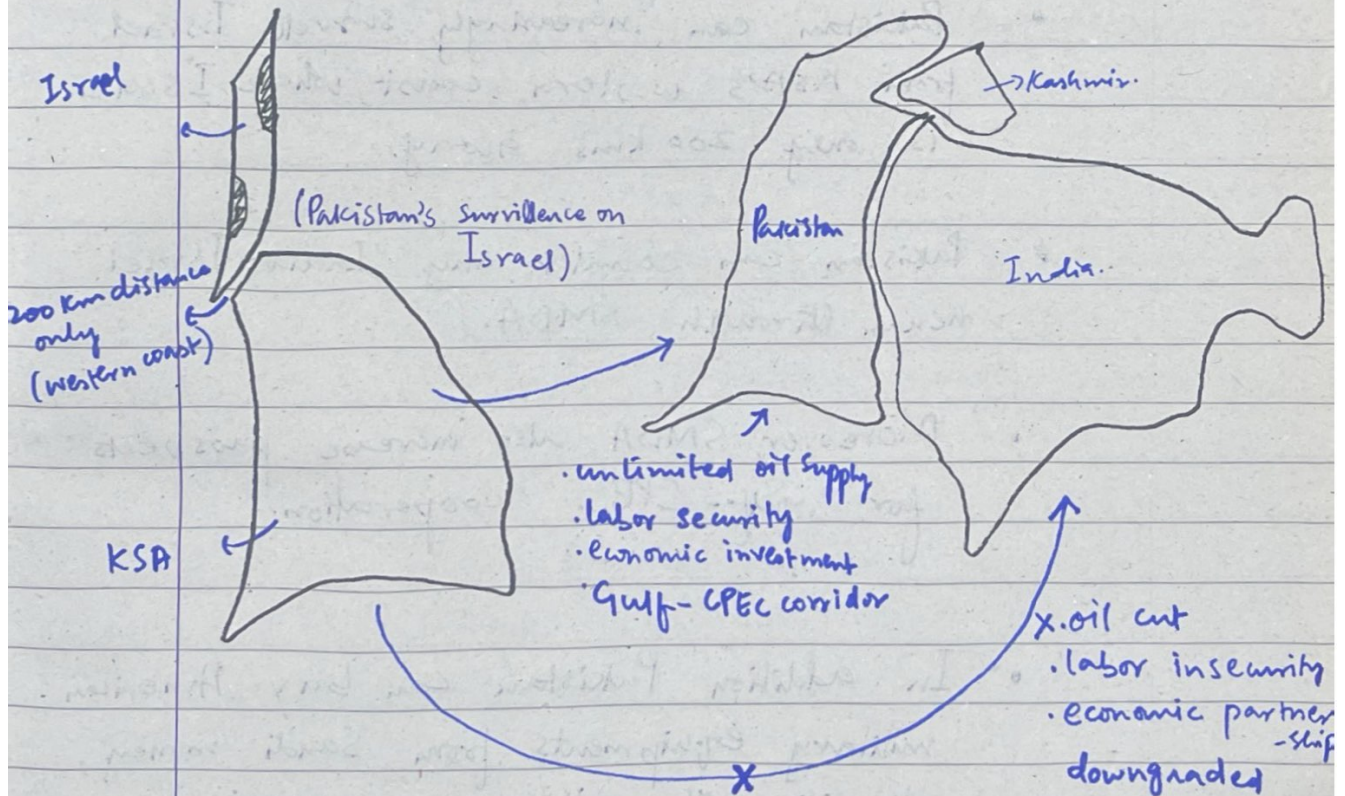
Qatar due to its decreased "Strategic depth"

- Yemeni Houthis have frequently attack oil facilities in KSA and oil ships in the Red sea.

- Saudi wants to diversify, as soon as possible, in security and economy to expedite its Vision 2030.

Only Pakistan can provide such security against any attack to Saudi Arabia in Middle East.

ii. Motives for Pakistan:



- In case of aggression by India, Pakistan can get unlimited oil supply.

- SMDA ensures labor security to Pakistan. Moreover, it also attracts Gulf investment. According to The Economist, SMDA can attract >100 Billion dollar investment in Pakistan.

- Israel's role in destabilising Pakistan is evident from Kahuta plant attack in 1980s and more recent supply of HAROP Drones to India, which the latter used in May attack of 2025.

- Pakistan can increasingly surveil Israel from KSA's western coast, where Israel is only 200 kms away.

- Pakistan can counter any India-Israel nexus through SMDA.

- Moreover, SMDA also increase prospects for Gulf-CPEC cooperation.

- In addition, Pakistan can buy American military equipments from Saudi money, diversifying its military capabilities.

Pakistan can now buy American military equipments with Saudi's money, which the Trump administration is likely to sell.

Hussain Haqani

5. Effects of such Pact on regional deterrence dynamics:

SMDA has totally changed the regional dynamics in aspect of deterrence in both Middle East and South Asia:

i. In Middle East:

- ↳ Israel's monopoly on nuclear deterrence has been significantly countered through SMDA.
- ↳ Gulf countries' perspective of "rogue state" has changed from Iran to Israel, and for this reason they are actively countering it.
- ↳ Pakistan has become the new security provider in Middle East, with U.S. influence decreasing.
- ↳ China's role in Middle Eastern dynamics has increased as Pakistan is an ally.

of China.

↳ Israel's strategic depth has downgraded, and it has become insecure.

ii. In South Asia:

↳ Pakistan's image has been emboldened as "Fortress of Islam" and a "reliable partner".

↳ Prospects for Pakistan's economic and military upgradation has risen, making India rethink its military doctrines.

~~India's two largest oil~~
↳ Saudi is within two largest oil exporters to India, SMDA has created an "energy deterrence" on India for Pakistan.

↳ India - Saudi trade is > 50 Billion dollars. SMDA has created an "economic deterrence" on India.

↳ Moreover, India's 2.5 million labors working in KSA have become insecure because of rising KSA-Pakistan partnership.

↳ China's influence in Gulf affairs have significantly risen as Pakistan

is China's ally and uses its military equipments.

↳ Iran, although welcomed this deal, is closely watching this partnership as KSA has been its long enemy, though a peace deal has been concluded by China's mediation.

6. Risks of such a pact:

Although this pact has boosted economic and defence cooperation of both countries, it has certain undeniable risks that can potentially detract the whole region if not countered.

i. For KSA:

- India is a potential economic destination for KSA's investment, especially Vision 2030 integration. India's hostility towards Pakistan can damage KSA's partnership.
- KSA's tilt toward Chinese military technology can averse American relations.

ii. For Pakistan:

- Pakistan can get involved in Middle Eastern wars and proxy conflicts,

harming its already fragile economic balance.

- KSA's misadventures, such as an attack on Yemen in 2016, can drag Pakistan into war with Muslim Nations.
- KSA's rivalry with Iran, Turkey, and Malaysia can damage Pakistan's relations with these countries. Previously, Pakistan did not attend "Kuala Lumpur Conference" under KSA's pressure.
- Israel's aggression towards Pakistan can increase significantly for its nuclear deterrence in Middle East. This can also enhance Israel-India cooperation and intelligence sharing.

7. Critical Analysis:

The Strategic Mutual defence agreement between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is a ground-breaking movement in the rise of regionalism and multipolarity in the world. It is a sign of "Crumbling Pax Americana" and transition towards "multipolarity". Although this agreement has guaranteed security for both nations, it is still ambiguous on

nuclear deterrence and the question of muslim countries in war with any one of them. Moreover, it also has conflicting points such as Pakistan v.s. Iran, if KSA attacked and India v.s. Saudi Arabia, if Pakistan got attacked. But still it is a positive sign towards ^{broader} peace in Middle East and also opens horizons for Muslim defence.

SMDA has not deterred India from attacking Pakistan, but with China, Turkey, and now KSA on Pakistan side - Pakistan is definitely in a good position.

Michel Kugeman

8. Conclusion:

Israel's rogue attack on Qatar has changed the dynamics of security in Middle East. U.S. role as the sole security provider has decreased, and Pakistan's role as a security guarantor to Middle East has increased. The SMDA pact brings economic, security, and diplomatic prospects for both the nations; By utilising these prospects, Both nations can ^{move towards} prosperity, become secure, and further integrated.