



National Officers Academy
Mock Exams CSS-2026
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE-II
(CURRENT AFFAIRS)

PART-I(MCQS): MAXIMUM 30 MINUTES

PART-I (MCQS)

MAXIMUM MARKS = 20

NOTE: Part-I is Compulsory.

PART-I

1. Which two developments relating to Iran's nuclear program occurred in late September 2025?
A. Sanctions lifted and deal expanded B. Sanctions reimposed and deal with Russia to build a nuclear plant
C. Iran acceded to NPT and dismantled enrichment D. Joint US-Iran nuclear pact
2. Which four nations formally recognized Palestine on 22 September 2025 ahead of the UNGA?
A. Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada B. Britain, Canada, Australia, Portugal
C. Spain, Sweden, Norway, Finland D. France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg
3. Which country has developed the MQ-28 Ghost Bat unmanned military drone?
A. Australia B. USA C. Russia D. China
4. In Nepal, what action by the government sparked the "Gen Z Protests" in September 2025?
A. Cuts to university funding B. Suspension of social media platforms
C. Imposition of a national curfew without consultation D. A controversial land-reform bill
5. Which AI model uses a brain-inspired hierarchical reasoning approach in 2025?
A. DeepSeek R1 B. Claude 3.7 C. Sapient's HRM D. ChatGPT o3-mini-high
6. Which country has agreed to help the United States locate and return Americans who went missing in the war-ravaged country?
A. Palestine B. Syria C. Ukraine D. Sudan
7. By which year will Switzerland end its bilateral development program in Bangladesh, Albania, and Zambia?
A. 2025 B. 2026 C. 2027 D. 2028
8. Which sea's security is a focus of the UK-Ukraine partnership agreement?
A. Mediterranean Sea B. Black Sea C. Baltic Sea D. Caspian Sea
9. Which country has recently launched the CR450 prototype, the world's fastest high-speed train?
A. China B. South Korea C. Russia D. Pakistan
10. Which country was admitted to the D-8 organization as the 9th member on December 19, 2024?
A. Yemen B. Sri Lanka C. Azerbaijan D. Uzbekistan
11. Book "War", recently released on October 15, 2024, is written by: _____?
A. Josef Korbel B. Bob Woodward C. George S. Patton D. Barack Obama
12. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia mutual defence agreement was signed on:
A. 11 September 2025 B. 13 September 2025 C. 15 September 2025 D. 17 September 2025
13. On 24th August 2025, Pakistan's Federal Cabinet approved the establishment of which new regulatory authority?
A. Food Standards Authority B. National Digital Authority
C. Renewable Energy Authority D. E-Commerce Authority
14. Continent Australia is also known as _____?
A. Oceania B. Godwin Austin C. Pacific D. Austria
15. National Flower and National Emblem of Japan is ____?
A. Chrysanthemum B. Corn Flower C. Shamrock D. None of these
16. Official Book of UK is called _____?
A. Orange Book B. Green Book C. Blue Book D. None of these
17. Who is the author of "Pakistan: A Modern History"?
A. Anatol Lieven B. Ian Talbot C. Lawrence Ziring D. Ayesha Jalal
18. The Geneva Accords were signed on:
A. 14 May, 1988 B. 14th April, 1988 C. 14th June, 1988 D. None of these
19. Which country's Foreign and Defence Ministers jointly visited Pakistan on July 8-9, 2025?
A. Iran B. Turkey C. Saudi Arabia D. Qatar
20. "Operation Baam" was launched by which group in early July 2025?
A. TTP B. BLF C. Al-Qaeda D. Afghan Taliban

Question

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia have signed a historic defense pact. Critically evaluate the causes and implications of the deal?

16/20

↳ Introduction:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a historic 'Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement' due to various causes that range from security assurances to the economic imperatives. Both nations have previously engaged in various alliances and have a history of natural Islamic brotherhood. However, the defense pact has numerous regional and international implications, and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia need to tread carefully to make it a success.

↳ Background and Context of Defence Cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

1. Historical Defence Cooperation:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long standing military ties that were evident in

the security alliances during the Gulf wars. There had been Pakistani troops deployments to protect two Holy Mosques. The cooperations like 'Treaty of Friendship' signed in 1951 also show that the two nations have actively cooperated in the past as well. These engagements increased the prospects for a comprehensive defense alignments that emerged in the form of 'Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement' in the year 2025.

2. Immediate context for the 2025 pact:

(1) The pact came after the Israel's airstrikes in Qatar on 9th Sep, 2025 to kill Hamas leaders involved in negotiation efforts.

(2) The Regional Instability in the Middle East due to the Israel's actions against all its neighbouring countries provided immediate context for the pact.

(3) Perceived United States retrenchment in the Gulf Security also compelled the Riyadh

to seek reliable security partners.

4 Explanation of 'Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement' that is being hailed as a historic pact and a Golden Opportunity

(1) Mutual Defense Pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia

It is a mutual pact encompassing all military means to defend against external aggression. The agreement was signed on "17th September, 2025"

and is hailed as a gamechanger by both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

(2) Agreement uses NATO-Style language

The agreement uses NATO style language for the defence of both nations:

"An aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both nations"

Pak - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Date: _____

4 Critical Evaluation of the Sep, 2025 Defence Deal Pakistan and Saudi-Arabia:

Causes:

What were the driving factors that compelled both nations to pursue this strategic alliance

1. Saudi-Arabia's Perspective for signing the deal

(1) Reliable Security Partner in the region with historical ties

Saudi Arabia signed the deal in 2025 to secure a reliable security partner in the region with historical ties. Saudi Arabia has been actively trying to diversify its security alliances in the recent years especially with United States but the question of Palestinian statehood remains a major hindrance.

In the midst of this, Pakistan was a viable option for the alliance especially after its military success in May, 2025

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conflict against India. The conflict highlighted that Pakistan's military can defend itself against a much larger enemy.

These incidents make Pakistan a reliable partner in the region against the perceived threat to the Saudi Arabia's security.

(2) Due to Israel's Regional Hegemony and to create a balance in the security equation of Gulf Region

Saudi Arabia signed the deal as a counter-balance to Israel's aggression in the region with America's backing. In the recent years, Israel has attacked

1. Libya

2. Syria

3. Iran (12-day war)

4. Lebanon

5. Qatar → 9th September, 2025.

The attack on Qatar (that hosts America's biggest air base and is a major ally of it) make it evident to the Riyadh that security alliance is necessary to protect itself against any potential aggression from Israel.

keep in para form

(3) concerns about Iran and Yemen and regional peace also acted as a contributing factor

The concerns related to Iran and Houthis in Yemen also urged the Saudis to forge a strategic alliance. In recent years, the Houthis' attacks have also increased especially in the Red Sea, and the traditional rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran (that has declined a little due to China's rapprochement efforts) also played a significant role.

(4) Riyadh pursued the pact in alignment of its vision to diversify its alliances beyond just United States

The pact can also be seen as Riyadh's big game aimed at diversification of alliances.

Saudi Arabia is engaging with multiple nations at a time. It engaged with China that brokered rapprochement with Iran. On the other hand, it is also increasing its relationship with United States.

Example: November, 2025 deal with US

to secure F-35 jets and billions of dollars in investment.

At the same time, Riyadh is engaging with New Delhi through initiatives like IMEC (India-Middle-East Europe Corridor) and oil exports.

Therefore, the defence pact with Pakistan is one of the Riyadh's efforts to diversify its options and reduce dependence on just one Nation.

(5) United States Retrenchment in Gulf Security is also one of the major causes:

There are concerns about the US as a reliable security guarantor in the Gulf region. Despite its military presence, it didn't protect Qatar that was attacked twice.

1. As a retaliation due to US actions against Iran
2. By Israel which is unequivocally backed by US in all its actions.

Therefore, this perceived retrenchment have accelerated the diversification of alliances.

There are many causes for this major alliances but ^{the} above discussed provide the most clear view of Riyadh's decision to forge this alliance.

According to Council on Foreign Relations,

'The prospects of an all out war in the Middle East - and Israeli dominance in the region has put Saudi-Arabia on the offensive.

Riyadh has proactively recommitted to the cause of Palestinian statehood and sought to keep its strategic options open, engaging with United States on the one hand and Iran and China on the other.'

2. Pakistan's Perspective of Signing the pact:

shorten this part

(1) Economic Imperatives - the pact can lock in continued assistance

Pakistan pursued and signed the pact due to the economic imperatives related to it. Saudi-Arabia has historically provided Pakistan help while it needed it

most in the form of

1. Financial Aid

2. Deferred Oil facilities

3. Remittances

This agreement can lock in continued assistance to the ailing economy of Pakistan. The shift is

already evident through the agreements like

Economic Cooperation Framework (ECF)

launched after the pact. The goal of ECF is

to move beyond aid to longterm partnerships based on trade and investments.

This is one of the causes that compelled Pakistan to extend its security umbrella to the Saudi Arabia.

(2) Strategic balancing vis-a-vis India - gives Pakistan diplomatic and deterrent weight in South Asian calculations

In May, 2025, Pakistan faced unprovoked aggression from the India and its unilateral suspension of Indus Water Treaty. To neutralise the hostile eastern border, Pakistan pursued the pact with Saudi Arabia. As Riyadh enjoys good relations with New Delhi and

can act as a deterrent or mediator in Pakistan-India hostile relations.

It basically gives Pakistan an upperhand in case of any aggression.

(3) Pakistan's pursuit to reassert its leadership in Muslim World

The pact bolstered Pakistan's image as the only Muslim majority country with nuclear power and renewed its relevance in the Muslim world due to its image as a long time security partner for Riyadh.

The pact strengthened its claim to be a central player in Islamic geopolitics.

(4) Energy Benefits from the Saudi-Arabia also played significant role

The strategic alliance with Saudi-Arabia will provide Pakistan with stable oil supply to meet its energy needs.

Therefore, from above arguments, it is proved that both countries signed the deal due to numerous causes and mutual

benefits. But the dominant cause is the security assurances in the increasing hostile world where international norms and standards are being violated with blatant impunity.

As US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said:

"In the end, peace can be achieved only by hegemony or balance of power."

The pact provides balance of power to both Riyadh and Islamabad:

*1 Islamabad \rightleftharpoons New Delhi

*1 Riyadh \rightleftharpoons Tehran, Jerusalem, Houthi

This balancing is the major cause of forging this alliance.

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4 Implications of Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement between Islamabad and Riyadh

This defence pact brings several national and international implications and compels Pakistan and Riyadh to tread carefully to make it a success. Otherwise, this

"Golden Opportunity" $\xrightarrow[\text{turn into}]{} \text{Lost Opportunity}$

(1) Central concern - the 'back door Nuclear umbrella' thesis

The pact brought forward the question of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal i.e. whether it will be available to the Riyadh or not? Though the official language and statements revolve around defense and deterrence only and there is no mentioning of nuclear weapons involvement. But there are increasing speculations about Pakistan's Nuclear weapons being made available to the Riyadh on the backdoor and previous statements of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman ~~do not~~ ~~help~~ also reinforce this idea.

go with official stance

Day: _____

Date: _____

recounted

The journalist Bob Woodward ~~said~~ in his book, remarks of Muhammad Bin Sulman:

"I don't need uranium to make a bomb. I will just buy one from Pakistan, if Saudi-Arabia ever required nuclear arms!"

This concern of nuclear weapons being made available to Riyadh poses serious implications that will impact Pakistan in the near future.

(2) Pact has sparked the Proliferation debate

The pact has sparked the proliferation debate in the region. The contradictory statements by Pakistan's Defence Minister 'Khawaja Asif' also created ambiguity that fuels proliferation fear especially to a NPT member (Saudi-Arabia signed NPT in 1988).

Initially, Khawaja Asif said:

'Pakistan's Nuclear capability will be made available to Saudi Arabia'

Then later he walked back on what he said and claimed that:

rephrase

“Nuclear weapons are not on the radar?”

These contradictory statements by top officials are also increasing the proliferation debate that doesn't play well in Pakistan's and Saudi's favour.

(3) ~~US concerns about proliferation,~~
erosion of US monopoly as a Gulf security provider

United States ~~also~~ has acted as a security guarantor of Gulf for years. Now, this ‘SMDA’ could erode its monopoly in the region. ~~and~~ ~~could~~ The US has also actively worked to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world (as it could be seen from its action against Iran especially in 12-day war). This pact can enrage US and could bring serious implications for Pakistan and also Saudi Arabia.

(4) Saudi Arabia's demand for Pakistani forces could weaken Pakistan's own defence:

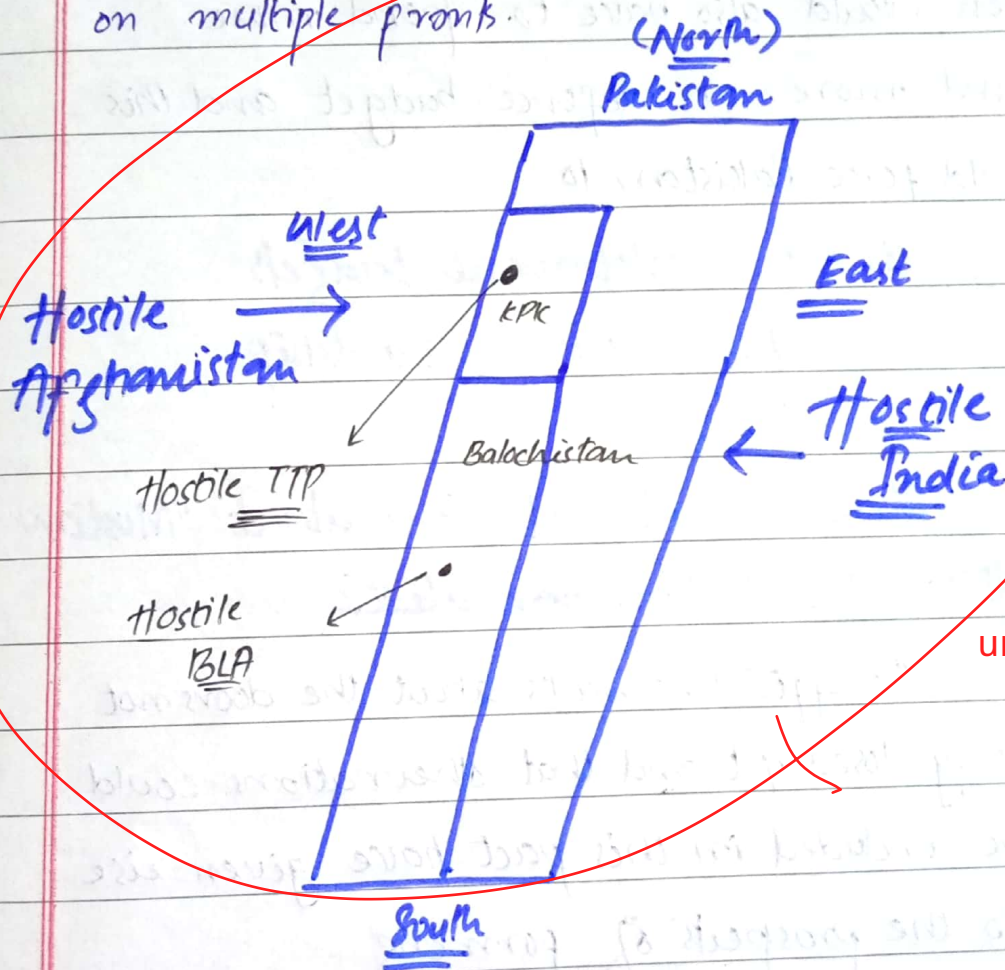
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The pact can weaken Pakistan's own
dependence if Riyadh asks for troops to be deployed
on its land. As it takes time to

Recruit → Train → Gain experience.

Not to mention the already fragile security
situation of Pakistan, in which it is facing threats
on multiple fronts.



Pakistan is already facing threats and
the increased demand by Riyadh (of troops)
under current situation could make
Pakistan extremely vulnerable.

(5) The pact could trigger an endless arms race and budget cuts in social sector:

It can start the endless arms race as each nation would strive to gain the military edge especially India. The Pakistan then would also have to spend more and more on defence budget and this could force Pakistan to

(1) Cut development budgets

(2) Deepen economic hardship

(6) There are speculations about "Muslim NATO", ~~but this is unrealistic~~

The official remarks about the doors not being closed yet and that other nations could be included in this pact have given rise to the prospects of forming "Muslim NATO"

Muslim Nations can pursue collective defense by ~~pooling~~ pooling in resources and can deter possible aggressors, reduce vulnerabilities and offer share defense benefits.

(7) Political Risks : More Militarisation, Less Democracy

The pact may turn Pakistan further into a hardline security state. The likely impacts are:

1. Increase in Military Influence

2. Decline in Civilian Governance

3. Growth of Authoritarian Tendencies

Therefore, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia need to tread carefully to achieve the desired goals of the pact and to avoid all other endeavours that could jeopardize this golden opportunity.

4 Way forward: Policy Recommendations and the Pragmatic steps for de-escalation and clarity

(1) For Pakistan:

(i) Clarify nuclear doctrine policy publicly and promptly:

Pakistan's nuclear policy is only India focused and is for deterrence and national defence and survival.

Explicitly mention that there would be no transfer of warheads to anyone and anywhere.

(ii) Pakistan should leverage the fact for economic relief,

→ Debt Relief

→ Investments

→ Energy Deals

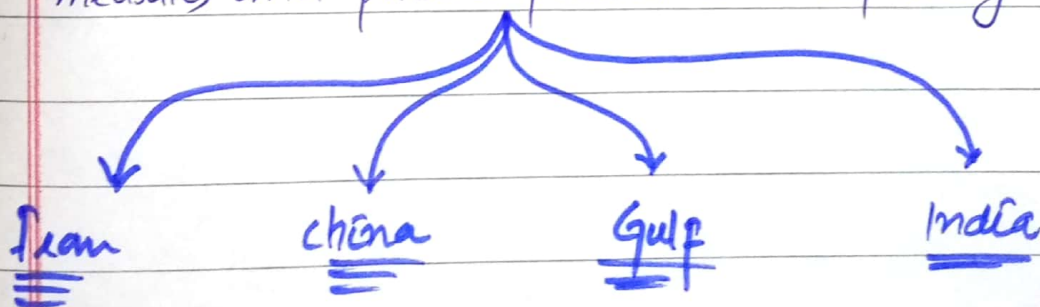
and not open military commitment that could bring international scrutiny and sanctions.

(2) For Saudi Arabia

(i) Saudi Arabia should reaffirm its non-proliferation commitments publicly ~~and~~
→ Reiterate NPT obligations; as it became its member in 1988
→ commit to transparency measures (IAEA Safeguards and civilian oversight on its nuclear programs).

(ii) Use the Pact to complement, not replace US ties, as it is already doing it to avoid enraging US.

(iii) Engage regionally in confidence building measures and pursue parallel track diplomacy with



→ Conclusion:

The defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is a historic alignment forged due to multiple causes. History and brotherly relations has also played a major role in it. The increasingly hostile conditions in the world has compelled nations to diversify their alliances and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are also part of these nations. The pact could cause various implications over the long term for both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is necessary to move with caution and take pragmatic steps to make this alliance historic in true sense.

excellent attempt. however limit length to under 8 sides. this is not sustainable length for exam

1. This is my first attempt; please give pointers to improve it
2. Grade it
3. Point out Mistakes
4. Is length suitable for 20 marks Qs??