

PAKISTAN-KSA DEFENCE PACT:

OPPORTUNITIES AND REGIONAL

IMPLICATIONS

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"Aggression against one will be considered aggression against both." On the basis of this principle, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a defence pact. There were several motives that force both countries to ink the pact. Moreover, this agreement will bring opportunities for both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. These opportunities include mutual deterrence and defence-industrial collaboration both for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, this agreement will enhance security cooperation between both countries and elevate geopolitical significance of Pakistan. However, this defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia causes not only opportunities

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but also strategic implications. This pact can result into formation of new alliances and also impact Pakistan and India rivalry. Moreover, enhanced non-proliferation concerns and security dilemma, and change in Iran - Saudi Arabia dynamics are also regional implications of Pakistan - Saudi Arabia defense pact. The defense pact inked between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia brings opportunities for both countries, as well as regional implications.

Since 1967, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were in informal defence collaboration, that shows both countries were defence partners for so long. But, on 17th of September, 2025 Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's have signed a defence pact. This agreement was inked by Prince Muhammad Bin Sulaiman and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

The main principle of this defence agreement is that "**Aggression against one will be considered aggression against both**". This principle is based on the Article 5 of NATO. According to this principle, both countries will provide defence to each other at the time of any aggression, and this would be possible through mutual cooperation by both.

However, this pact is signed due to several motives from both countries. The main motive was Saudi Arabia's urge to strengthen its security. Moreover, the Israel attack on Qatar on 9th September, 2025 has further deepened the security concerns in the Middle East especially Gulf countries. Because of these reasons, Saudi Arabia choosed Pakistan to be its defence partner. It was due to Pakistan's special role in "war on terror" and response of Pakistan against India in recent May, 2025 conflict. Pakistan has defended itself very well. These roles of Pakistan have forced Saudi Arabia to make a defence collaboration to strengthen its security.

The Defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia brings several opportunities for both countries. One of the opportunities of the defence pact is mutual deterrence. The defence agreement can be best explained by understanding the concept of **The balance of threat theory**, developed by Walt. This theory explains that states primarily form alliances for balancing the threat. Likewise, this defence agreement will help in balancing the threat by causing the mutual deterrence to other states.

Specifically, it deters the regional rivals of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, that are India and Iran respectively.

Because, if any state will attack on one of them i.e., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, it will be considered attack on both. Thus, it is enough to deter other states to prevent aggression.

In addition to mutual deterrence, defence-industrial collaboration is also an opportunity of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence agreement. This can be done through Military-Industrial Vector (MIV) in which Saudi Arabia can collaborate with Pakistan under its Vision 230 ambitions. There is need to collaborate Saudi Arabia's financial capacity and vision 2030 ambitions with Pakistan's defence production expertise and human capital. By joint facilities, aircrafts, drones, and sensors for both nations and global market can be produced. Moreover, for Pakistan, this agreement can institutionalize sustained and diversified financial support. This financial assistance will help in managing the crippling economy of Pakistan. As a result, this defence agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will bring not only defence but also industrial collaboration, which can be advantageous for both countries.

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Furthermore, beside defence-industrial collaboration, there lies another opportunity in the form of enhanced security cooperation. Back in 1967, there was an informal defence collaboration between both states. But, now this formal pact results into enhancing security collaboration between both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. It involves joint military exercises and intelligence sharing. Through this, Saudi Arabia will be under the nuclear umbrella of Pakistan. In past, Pakistan has trained number of Saudi Arabia troops. According to officials, since 1962, Pakistani soldiers have trained more than ⁸²⁰⁰ Saudi Armed Forces personnels. It shows that, this defence agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will enhance security cooperation between both countries, that can help Saudi Arabia in enhancing ~~strengthening~~ its security against its rivals.

Additionally, enhancing geopolitical significance with the help of this agreement is also an opportunity of the defence pact. Pakistan is already strategically significant. But, this agreement enhanced or elevated the Pakistan's strategic presence. Moreover, it influences the importance of Pakistan in the middle east and Gulf

countries. It results in positioning Pakistan as a key security guarantor for major Islamic and economic powers.

However, along with opportunities, this defence agreement also has some regional implications. One of these implications is the formation of new alliances. There could be possibility of India's new alliance either with UAE or Israel for cooperation. Saudi Arabia has invested about \$10 billion in India for cooperation. This cooperation includes in construction, telecommunications, IT, Software development and pharmaceuticals. This investment was made under Vision 2030, from Public Investment Fund, Saudi backed vision fund and other companies as well. Being major trade partner of India, Saudi Arabia has made a defence agreement with India's rival i.e., Pakistan. It can push India towards other states such as UAE or Israel for trade cooperation and new alliance formation.

Moreover, another implication of this defence pact is on Pakistan and India rivalry. Pakistan and India are regional rivals since their inception. Their relations always remained in the context of ugly stability. This defence agreement with

Saudi Arabia, has caused deterrence to India. As, India and Saudi Arabia are trade partners but according to the principle of this agreement, attack on Pakistan will also be considered attack on Saudi Arabia. Due to this principle, the chances of India's attack on Pakistan have minimized. Back in May conflict, between Pakistan and India, Saudi Arabia has played the role of mediator, by engaging diplomatically in the matter and not taking the side of one. In future, it is also expected, that Saudi Arabia will engage diplomatically due to India being its trade partner.

Additionally, this agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have raised non-proliferation concerns and security dilemma along with implications on Pakistan and India rivalry. Non-proliferation treaty was signed to ensure that no state will make nukes. But, this agreement has raised concerns to non-proliferation. By joint facilities both countries will make more nukes. This will cause security dilemma in the region. Security dilemma is created when efforts of one country to enhance its defence capabilities are perceived as a threat by the other states, and the other

state also start making efforts to enhance its defence capabilities. This defence agreement has resulted into security dilemma, where the other states will feel deterrence from this pact and start acquiring weapons, thus increasing the weapons race in the region and causing concerns to non-proliferation.

Furthermore, beside non-proliferation concerns and security dilemma, this agreement significantly impacts the Saudi-Iran dynamics. Iran and Saudi Arabia have been regional rivals for a long time. This rivalry is followed by a number of unprecedented events i.e., assassinations or attacks from both sides, thus raising the aggression over time. However, in 2023, China played the role of a mediator to foster better relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. This defence agreement providing nuclear umbrella and to Saudi Arabia and strengthening its security cause deterrence to Iran. It helps in preventing any escalation between both states. As a result, it will cause stability in the region and help to better relations with time.

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In a nutshell, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have inked a defence agreement on 17th September, 2025. There were major objectives in signing the agreement. However, this agreement has some opportunities in the form of mutual deterrence and defence-industrial collaboration as well as security cooperation. Moreover, it elevates strategic influence of Pakistan on Middle East and Gulf states. However, there also come regional implications such as formation of new alliances impacting India-Pakistan rivalry, as well as enhanced non-proliferation concerns and security dilemma, and also impacting Iran-Saudi dynamics.