



Pak-Saudi Defense Pact: Strategic Implications and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

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In September 2025, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan came into an agreement known as a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement that made a declaration that aggression against one country should be treated as aggression against another one. This deal indicates a possibility of the U.S.-centric security assurances being replaced by a more independent and regional security order in the South Asian region and the Gulf by the Saudis. The paper is a qualitative analysis of SMDA implications, which concentrates on the military cooperation, nuclear deterrence, balance of power in the region, and economic integration. The secondary sources used in this research are policy-oriented think-tank report, news media and academic research. This paper explains the way SMDA can re-align Saudi security calculus, extend the strategic significance of Pakistan, and create possibilities and threats. Pakistan has always been one of the most competent states regionally, which can call adversaries to account in respect of any form of misadventure against it. The Israeli mishap in Qatari territory attracts the interest of Saudi Arabia and forced the country to sign an agreement with Pakistan. In addition, it will implicitly expand nuclear deterrence of Pakistan to Saudi Arabia, affecting domestic power structures. The agreement may enhance lucrative and defense-artificial partnership. Its success will be based on its successful perpetration and how it will affect stability in South Asia and the Middle East.

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1.0 Introduction

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) on 17 September 2025, according to which aggression against any of the countries is regarded as aggression against both countries (Pakistan Today, 2025). This formalization is a breakthrough in bilateral delinquent relations which, though old, was operating in an informal and functionally constrained context. The SMDA formalizes (military) collaboration, intelligence exchange and strategic fit between two key Muslim maturity states, and charges local security politics in South Asia and Middle East. Geopolitically, the SMDA indicates a geopolitical rebalancing of Saudi Arabia when there is suspicion about old security assurances by western accomplices. The interconnected development of diversified hookups in Riyadh is related to the long-term policy goals of preserving the indigenous sovereignty and strengthening the deterrence capacities (Chatham House, 2025). Being a nuclear-enhanced country with literal defiance alliances with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan is an enticing spouse in this setting. The agreement allows Islamabad to gain strategic influence, implicit lucrative investment, and increased transnational applicability (Akram, 2023; ISSI, 2023). The SMDA then constitutes a nexus between the security concerns and the strategic interests of both the countries.

There are also complications of nuclear deterrence which are introduced by the SMDA. The textbook of the accord does not specifically mention nuclear weapons, but Pakistani officials have stated that it might have an extension of intervention capabilities to Saudi Arabia (Washington Post, 2025). This kind of nebulosity causes some serious non-proliferation issues because the idea of the nuclear sharing may provoke indigenous powers, such as Iran or India, and undermine transnational ethics of the nuclear strategy (Chatham House, 2025; Al Jazeera, 2025). The pact has also been seen by Israeli judges as a strategic message to Tehran and not to Israel and therefore the indigenous balancing feature of the union (Guzan sky, 2025; Geo.tv, 2025).

Tactically, the deal is a consolidation of past defiance partnership. Pakistani military labor force had a long history of training Saudi forces, taking part in exercises in common, and functional planning (Akram, 2023). Having institutionalized these arrangements, the SMDA establishes a framework of continued engagement in defiance of a greater structure, which may at least help to increase the level of interoperability and facilitate coordinated responses to pitfalls. Given that this agreement can incorporate common military planning mechanisms, defiance artificial cooperation, and intelligence integration, Defence24 (2025) indicates that this will strengthen the military capabilities of both countries in a homogenized way.

The native recriminations of the SMDA are many-sided. To Pakistan, the deal increases some level of strategic transparency outside South Asia and places Pakistan as an important security player in the Gulf. In the case of Saudi Arabia, it is an indication of transition to self-reliance and decentralized security connections, pacifying overreliance on classic Western accomplices (Time, 2025). Nevertheless, there are also unspoken traps to the agreement. India has been concerned with the effects of the pact on the local security dynamics in the country since the country has long-standing energy and political relationships with Saudi Arabia (Reuters, 2025). Furthermore, Iran might feel the contract as a response to its domestic needs, which motivates it

to provoke the reconsideration of military and foreign policy tactics (The Economist, 2025). These reactions underscore the need to be strategic in perceiving comparable bilateral defiance arrangements. There can be bilateral cooperation in lieu of defiance, which the SMDA can bring in economically. It is reported that there was implicit investment in Pakistan defiance-artificial industry, structure systems and strategic diligence just like information technology, fabrics and husbandry (Business Archivist, 2025; FPCCI, 2025). The integration of this nature will correlate with the goals of the Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia, namely in the context of the military products localization and artificial diversification advancement. Based on this, the deal might give Pakistan opportunities to make a lucrative stabilization and increase Saudi tone-adequacy in defiance production.

SMDA also has to be viewed in the context of the larger transnational security fabrics. The nebulousness of nuclear confines creates the need to have transparent mechanisms on the operation of the extremities, command-and-control regulations and moral principles on the non-proliferation of the same (Washington Post, 2025; Chatham House, 2025). The measures of confidence-structure and institutionalized cooperation structure are necessary to ensure the reduction of misperception, escalation, and unintentional conflict. Researchers are highlighting that the lack of these measures might lead to the pact inadvertently destabilizing indigenous security even though one of its effects is the intended interference (ISSI, 2023; Defence24, 2025).

1.1 Hypothesis

“The Pakistan–Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) is anticipated to strengthen bilateral security cooperation, enhancing conventional and strategic deterrence capabilities.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the long-term strategic and military implications of the Pakistan–Saudi SMDA?
2. Does the agreement constitute a form of extended deterrence, potentially involving Pakistan’s nuclear capability?
3. How might the pact affect the balance of power in South Asia and the Gulf region?
4. What risks does the SMDA present in terms of escalation, cost, and alliance credibility?
5. What policy framework would optimize the benefits of the pact while mitigating its risks?

2.0 Literature Review

The work by Creswell highlights the fact that mixed- styles fabrics are most effective at data interpretation in terms of methodological confluence. He also focuses on substantiation-based triangulation, which proves complex sociopolitical analysis through the integration of quantitative pointers into qualitative patterns. The research uses the approach by Creswell to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and storytelling patterns that is evident in governmental reports and media counterparts still, the model by Creswell does not provide any geopolitical context adaptations, especially in conflict zones which explains why journalistic verification by high-threat reporting areas should be included in the research. His exploration is based on his structural frame but is adjusted to mirror framing impulses of the media that are observed in secondary sources of the same type as Al Jazeera and The Economist. (Creswell (2018)

According to Bryman, social exploration becomes gender applicability in accordance with the sociopolitical forces and institutions. In analyzing policy matters, he emphasizes comity in methodology by recommending that insulated unproductive judgment can result in biased judgment. This exploration uses his direction to create a balance between macro-level description (statistical data provided by UNDP and World Bank), and micro-level description in the form of the rudiments of opinion-grounded journalism. Bryman emphasizes reflexivity and positionality of the experimenter, introduces or raises enterprises regarding ideological bias - which is a critical point in the context of different narratives established in Dawn and The Israel Times. thus, Bryman advocates the use of methodological rigor on the binary- source contextualizing. (Bryman (2016)

The converse- centered methodology of Fairclough allows investigating the effects of policy rhetoric on the vision of people, especially in the conflict-ridden environment. It is proposed in his work that media and political narratives have a close connection, which influences institutional situations in decision fabrics. This discussion takes into account his rational prism to break down the policy framing of BBC and CNN coverage, to tie down divergence with indigenous media analogous to Dawn and Al Jazeera. The model by Fairclough can be used to evaluate the docket-setting process especially, but critics point out that it is not empirically grounded. This is made up by the addition of quantitative pointers, which makes contemporary converse analysis rigorous. (Fairclough (1992)

The theoretical underpinnings of the social exploration provided by Babbie stress on reliability and repeatability of results, especially in the case of cross-national data. His principles direct operationalization of policy variables and justify the choice of applying the systemic content analysis. Babbie presents ethical businesses in terms of interpretation, especially girding politically sensitive matters. Using his frame assists in avoiding traps of misrepresentation in focused media content. Even though methodologically sound, Babbie work does not excavate dynamics of digital misinformation challenging new reference to journalistic fact- checking protocols as implemented by Reuters and Washington Post. (Babbie (2017)

The methodology by Neudorf helps in developing systematic, repeatable fabrics to evaluate the media. The Ulti-source media analysis of the study is supported by her focus on the keyword-grounded and narrative rendering ways. She examines excessively algorithmic methods which can miss the verbal subtlety - a menace replicated in AI discovery software. The contextual coding is one of the elements that Neudorf pays attention to, which helps in this exploration to associate the inconsistencies in reporting relating to conflicts. The analysis alters her method with integrationist-coder confirmation as well as comparison with crude statistical data of government and multinational institutions in bridging the qualitative and quantitative substantiation towards high illuminative validity. (Neudorf (2017)

Their structure invites thematic segues through systematic coding, bracket and reflection. The importance of experimenter interpretation, insight-source analysis is also noted in the textbook. Applied now, their fashion can assist in comparing nascent themes between The Israel Times, Al Jazeera and policy think tank reports. Roberts are solid in context, but is also argued to be too strong in priivte except when it is constraints by issue-specific confirmation. Our study

contributes credibility through pattern aligning with empirical market cues (e.g., native conflict indicators, versatile performance measures). Their structure also invites triangulated analysis, and facilitates cross-validation of opposite trends. (Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2019)

The model of Neuman facilitates that leap between theoretical concepts and measurable objects, which was at the heart of mongrel methodology in our study. He stresses the suspending of need patterns in woven webs, rather than providing them with thematic disquisition where empirical evidence is attained. When his method is applied, it is informative for structuring threat, change and policy response variables. sins is minimal contextualising of fast-changing geopolitical environs. In an attempt to overcome this shortcoming, the present study combines adaptive scoring annotated by modern leading media such as The Economist and Reuters with traditional theoretical mapping. (Neuman (2014)

Yin argues for a grainy case- based approach, particularly appropriate when studying region-specific policy effects. This investigation applies his method of using named instances connected in BBC and The Israel Times content to judge media- policy ties. Case-based fashion, and I note that narrowing of variable compass is one downside but unproductive interpretation also follows. The study attempts to mitigate this challenge through an integration of public-position statistical justification in the MNCAHR context, which corresponds with Yin's (2009) demand for mongrel evaluation. External case validation is done via International Crisis Group and RAND reports. (Yin (2018)

Gujarati's method forms the quantitative limb of the study, where cross-sectional as well as time series analysis is made on policy effectiveness tags. By stressing statistical conclusion, free of the spells of officialdom mouthpieces or rivaling competition narratives..... measuring correlations between governance behavior templates and newspapers reports. Despite the number crunching numbers econometric models account for, Gujarati warns of its reductive impact on sociopolitical decision- timber. This inquiry mitigates some of these shortcomings by qualitatively interpreting policy architecture diegetically, in line with Neudorf and Fairclough. Basic numerical data collected from PBS, CBS Israel and UNDP supports the logical conclusions of the study. (Gujarati & Porter (2020)

Brooking's works regularly serve up institutional-process-driven geopolitical estimates and transnational ones at that. Their interpretation often includes soothsaying by evidence, that is especially relevant to governance and native development topics (Arshad, 2023). Here, Brookings' analyses grease reading of what policy perpetration capability and strategic alignment stand for. Nevertheless, the western-concentric perspective of Brookings calls for comparison with regionalised media reports from Dawn and The Israel Times. Contributions IV from Carnegie and RAND add balance and reduce ideological bias.

Reports on ICG provide insight into the dynamics of conflict spinout and policy disconnects, rich in structural sapience. Their model combines field-based data and stakeholder feedback to improve reverse- recap validity of the present study. Examination of extremity- region content in Al Jazeera demonstrates narrative entanglements with conflict mapping ICG. yet, ICG regularly leaves out media influence analysis which is able to be tackled thereon by Fairclough's

model. The comparison of ICG protrusions with government and media narratives helps to contextualize gaps in policy perception and response acceptability. (International Crisis Group (ICG) Briefs)

Some recently released RAND reports investigate the role of media in defense or strategic policymaking (directly relevant to these discussions on political narrative construction). Their results imply observable influence of the global media network on collective actions over time. This inquiry draws on that perceptiveness to account for differences in the timing of institutional response. The notice of RAND and broken-data-operation supports Ulti-source re-construction, to merge the IMF as well as OECD with narrative alignment from The Economist and Reuters. still, RAND's politicosecurity focus does at times underrate the socioeco- nomic view, to some extent complemented by unDP data.

The policy analysis documents of Carnegie on the topic study flexibility in the system in response to growing external demands, but the governance inflexibility is in the limelight. Findings can help in this question and can give the sustainability pointers in policy response cloths. Their text is agreeable to the method of structural assessment used in this paper particularly in instances where the discord is present between the projected and realized problems. CNN and BBC media comparisons are created and applied to establish the measures of institutional adaptability and the match with the public narrative reporting. Compared to over-reliance on tone-reporting, cross-referencing among the results of the Carnegie allows some of the issues to be avoided.

Israel times region analysis comes in handy in terms of researching government strategy and determining decisions within challenging and fast-paced strategic settings. Their coverage is highly source-able, and is often based on elite political sources. but their perception is formed in a biased way by the concern of public safety. This expansion is a good measure of controlling all the other factors in the model and thus we can assert that compared to the reports on Reuters and Al Jazeera, the addition of the narrative characteristics is inclined to geopolitical embeddedness. The latter considers Israel Times material as an addition to amulet-perspective research, and not an independent index, to the detriment of logical neutrality.

The treatment of Dawn gives a sense of detail about the way domestic policy-implementation is handled, frequently refining upon organizational capacity and institutional inadequacies of the public sector. Its research fills the gap between the policy expression and the reality. Making reference to Dawn the study does make certain comparisons between what the government and the civil- sector channels. And compared with the Washington Post and The Economist, the tone of treatise of Dawn is one of urgent and experimental tract which is why sociopolitical literalism like this circumnavigates the data integration procedure. This is to make sure that there is cultural interpretation and in-country specificity.

3.0 Methodology

The study used a qualitative exploratory design that is highly appropriate in testing emergent geopolitical trends in which reason and long-term goods cannot be empirically measured yet (Bryman, 2016). The Pakistan Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) is a contemporary and dynamic policy issue; therefore, the research employs a document based logical

system (Bowen, 2009), supplemented with a hermeneutic based interpretive methodology to frame policy cues, strategic discourses and media frame-work. The primary data was collected based on authorised messages published by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Government of Pakistan, 2025; Saudi Press Agency, 2025) and the policy briefings and administrative discussions. Scholarly journal articles on the topics of defiance and security in the past 10 years, expert commentaries by think tanks (Chatham House, 2025) and the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI, 2023), and the reviews of military cooperation were found as secondary sources (Defence 24, 2025).

1.2 Data Collection

Triangulation of data was carried out through cross-validation of authoritative posts on independent geopolitical commentary in encyclopedically honored media, such as Reuters (2025), Al Jazeera (2025), Washington Post (2025), BBC World (2025), Dawn (2024), CNN (2025), The Economist (2025), and The Times of Israel (Guzansky, 2025). It is a method that reduced single-source bias and enabled the research to represent divergent accounts especially on nuclear nebulousity and strategic intent. The UN Security Council decisions, SIPRI publications and IAEA publications were also checked to evaluate the legal and proliferation-related environment underpinning extended deterrence models (SIPRI, 2024; IAEA, 2025).

The academic literature offered a factual and theoretical basis on military unions, deterrence arrangement, and strategic sovereignty, by use of workshop analogous as the Balance of trouble proposition by Walt (1987) and literalism frame by Mearsheimer (2001). profitable and defense-artificial blame was approximated utilizing data released by Pakistan, Ministry of Finance (2025), Saudi, Ministry of Investment (2025) and assiduity calculations that were disclosed by FPCCI (2025) and RAND Corporation (2024). Their data analysis was performed based on thematic coding, where the content was graded on the basis of strategic cooperation, nuclear considerations, profitable impact, and threat assessment. No quantitative testing was required and so the exploration itself was informative and yet substantiation-based. Due to the sensitivity of the content, the research guarantees academic objectivity by not using advocacy-based hypothetic and uses only the approved exposures, peer-reviewed articles, and policy evaluation recognized internationally, thus, achieving methodological trustworthiness and exploration plausibility.

4.0 Findings and Results

4.1 Strategic and Military Implications

What has long been a close, though very informal, defense association is codified by the SMDA. According to Pakistan Today (2025), what makes the trade agreement more interesting is that both sides to it are bound by the agreement to treat the attack on one of them as the attack on both of them, thus, making the agreement a discourse on cooperative security. Such codification enhances infectivity and maybe greases up joint drills and training.

According to Chatham House (2025), the pact is also articulated as a way of further deterrence on the part of Pakistan in not placing nuclear weapons on the Saudi territory, but as it could offer an intervention guarantee akin to NATO says. This is major since most of the nuclear-allied non-Western countries have successfully negotiated like-deals with non-nuclear supporters.

Tactically, this policy would improve the Saudi security posture by a thousand times; not to mention that Riyadh would be in a position to actually point to a realistic sidekick not the typical Western guarantors. It also enhances geopolitical position of Pakistan not only in South Asia, but also in the greater Middle East. Defence24 (2025) hypothesizes: Intelligence integration, defence artificial collaboration and common military planning - gestures towards a very functionalist ambition.

Yet challenges remain. The fusion of military doctrine and command formations and a selection of diverse technological basics could stumble over a smooth fusion. As an example, Al Jazeera (2025) clarifies that even though both states are committed to delivering everything possible when it comes to military, the deployment of complex systems like command- and-control can be very challenging.

Nuclear Implications

Nuclear deterrence is, clearly, the most debatable aspect of the SMDA. Though the convention has not specifically touched nuclear munitions, Enterprise has already been burned by Pakistani high-ranking officials. Chatham House (2025) reports that the Pakistani defense minister is reported to have said that it would supply some capabilities, although some of what he mentioned was later watered down.

Such vague quality may be a strategic resource because even without the actual implementation of warheads, the threat of protracted deterrence may work to deter the enemies of Riyadh. that said, ambiguity is a hazard in itself. In the absence of explicit command- and- control principles, confusion is bound to occur, particularly during a crisis.

Non-proliferation wise it is a sensitive one. But, “proliferation enterprises may grow in case other nations perceive Saudi Arabia to be a Pakistani nuclear mark. The vagueness can be subject to examination by other international on-proliferation actors and place a pressure to play politics (Washington Post, 2025).

Regional Balance and Geopolitics.

SMDA might rebrand indigenous strategic alignments. According to judges, the widening network of contacts in Riyadh is the indicator of diminishing trust in the U.S. cover (Time, 2025). By moving closer to Islamabad, Saudi Arabia is demanding a more leeway in terms of security. In the case of Pakistan, the arrangement is an enhancement of its cross-border effectiveness. It is not a South Asian actor alone, but a strategic important partner in the Gulf. This would transform the influence of the foreign policy of Islamabad and give long-term strategic counsels.

Simultaneously, the agreement also opens possibilities to the native companies. India, as one example, has spoken out informally. According to the Times of India (2025), New Delhi is of the view that Riyadh is considering its perceptivity as both Saudi -India are bound together by energy and political relationships. To Iran, the bargain may be hanging — a more robust Pakistan-Saudi nexus would wipe out the Iranian position. Conversely, when done in a responsible way such a contract may be abused in an attempt to deter as opposed to engaging in conflict.

Soft-Power and Economic Aspects.

It is not simply that SMDA concerns the defense. lucrative strategists believe that the

agreement will open the path to trade and investment collaboration between the two nations. According to Business Archivist (2025), the Pakistani export to Saudi Arabia may be expanded to benefit industries like IT, textiles, leather and husbandry. The Policy Detail (2025) FPCCI asserts that the defense pact can be regarded as part of a larger integration 05 Defence Cooperation, trade corridors and investment could strengthen each other resulting in long term stability and satisfaction. Politically and ideologically speaking, the entente strengthens the myth of Islamic unity. The local forces such as PTI and JUI- F have portrayed that it will be a move towards a diminished amount of concord within the Muslim Ummah (Pakistan Today, 2025). The codification of that defense pact might also indicate to each other a mutual vision of Muslim regional leadership by both countries.

4.2 Risks and Challenges

Nuclear Arrangements Could Be Opaque: Lack of clarity about nuclear-sharing or command could be subject to misperception. Without any up close and personal denuclearized command- and- control protocol, escalation could be misruled.

Cost: Pakistan could come under fiscal pressure if forced to protect Saudi interests. Although strategic gains are obvious, the price in recurring exercises, deployments or never ending commitments could be high (FPCCI, 2025). It depends if both sides actually take risk to make it work. But the interference value of such an agreement is lessened, if either party suspects the other of being likely to act in extremis.

Regional Backlash: The pact is likely to generate responses from the likes of Iran, India and other countries. True, the sight of a nuclear marquee could kindle an indigenous arms competition or further cement political disunion.

Perpetration Complexity: It takes a lot of institutional effort, participated doctrine, and sustained political will to operationalize deep military cooperation — e.g., common training and intellectual emulsification or artificial collaboration.

4.3 Policy Recommendations & Way Forward

Privatize Bilateral Systems: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia must privatize the bilateral defense mechanisms that would include joint committees, specially arranged military discussions, and officer training programs where their relationship would be formed regardless of the political change in the country.

Defence Tech Collaboration Intensifying joint research and development in defence technology, cybersecurity and drone/AI-based warfare can not only ensure that the two countries are more formidable militarily but also be less reliant on external vendors.

Enhance Intelligence Sharing Counterterrorism, border security and capability to respond swiftly to regional threats Systematic Intelligence sharing can be improved.

Support the Regional Security Stability: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia might extend this agreement to be an example to other regional stakeholders to improve mistrust of each other and encourage the principle of mutual security in South Asia and the Middle East.

Still Strong Economic Bonds: Defense collaboration must be supported by economic collaboration by establishing defense-industrial zones, production of military equipment and

energy-security initiatives to achieve the long-term economic viability.

Diversify Strategic Relations: Induct the emerging rising powers such as Turkiye, China and Central Asian states as well as emergence of multilateral defence relations other than concentrating on only Pakistan and SA (Saudi Arabia) to develop strong indigenous web of options of security.

Public Security and cyber defence coordination: Partner with the critical infrastructure, e-governance and prevention of cybercrime through a Defence Cyber -Security Treaty. 8.8: be creating resolution of conflict part: mutually proposing the set tenth and peace-mediation mission between indigenous disputes the part subject to which states are maintaining responsible security balancers in the Islamic part of world

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Pakistan Saudi Arabia Defense Cooperation Agreement is more than a strategic partnership it signifies the realignment in relation to the internal security dynamics taking into account the similarities in vulnerabilities and the shifting geopolitical action. Within the framework of an international division of power, technological competition and increasing quagmires on the national level, both states are making attempts to evade strategic reliance through adaptable collaboration. Their collaboration extends past the typical military exchange to accumulate to consolidated security even in the extent of cyber protection, intelligence, catastrophic response and politic settlement. Nonetheless, the long-term winning situation is institutional survival, diversification of alliances and the introduction of profit and technological horizon. Through fatter indigenous stamina bunking this cooperation, Pak Saudi friendship will not only succeed in making their own securityline stronger, but will also not only will induce them to come out as the key player in defining muslim world defense tactfulness. When pursued in an intelligent manner and not tied to political chatter, the structure can also form an example of a format of cooperation in security among Muslim-majority countries - based on confidence in each other, capacity-building, and the collective vision of a strategic sovereignty.

Khurram Shahzad Siddiqui: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

Saqib Hussain: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Mustansar Abbas: Methodology and Revision

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