

The Mecca Defence Pact and the Emerging West Asian Security Order: Implications for Iran, Israel and India

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Abstract—The Mecca Defence Pact between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan marks an important development in the changing security order of West Asia. Signed in 2026, the pact creates a framework for mutual defence, military cooperation, intelligence sharing, and defence production. This study examines the strategic factors behind the pact and assesses its possible effects on Iran, Israel, and India. It argues that the pact reflects the growing search for regional security arrangements and greater strategic autonomy among regional powers. For Iran, the pact may increase strategic pressure by bringing together Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan within a common defence framework. However, it does not necessarily indicate the formation of an anti-Iran military alliance. For Israel, the pact creates a new security environment because its members have different but often critical positions toward Israeli regional policies. For India, the agreement creates both challenges and opportunities. Pakistan's stronger links with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye may create new security concerns, while India's strong relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel provide space for strategic balancing. The study uses a qualitative research method based on official documents, academic literature, policy reports, and recent secondary sources. Regional security complex theory, balance-of-power theory, and strategic autonomy provide the analytical framework. The study concludes that the future importance of the pact will depend on military cooperation, institutional development, shared threat perceptions, and possible membership expansion.

Index Terms—Mecca Defence Pact, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan, Iran, Israel, India, West Asian security, strategic autonomy, regional security

I. Introduction

West Asia is undergoing a major change in its regional security environment. Long-standing rivalries, new partnerships, military conflicts, and changing relations among major powers are reshaping regional politics. The United States remains an important security actor, but regional states are increasingly seeking greater control over their own security choices. Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Iran, Israel, and other regional powers are developing wider diplomatic and defence relationships.

The Mecca Defence Pact between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan is an important development in this changing environment. The agreement, signed in 2026, provides for mutual defence and closer military cooperation among the three countries. It also creates possibilities for cooperation in intelligence, defence technology, military exercises, and defence production. The agreement is therefore important not only for its members but also for the wider security structure of West Asia and South Asia.

Saudi Arabia's participation reflects its search for stronger security arrangements during a period of regional uncertainty. Riyadh continues to maintain close relations with the United States, but it has also expanded its relations with China, Türkiye, Iran, Pakistan, and other countries. Its approach reflects a wider effort to diversify strategic partnerships while protecting economic transformation under Vision 2030. Regional

stability has become especially important for Saudi Arabia because conflict can threaten energy infrastructure, investment, trade, and transport networks.

Türkiye brings a different strategic perspective to the pact. It is a NATO member with a growing defence industry and significant military capabilities. Ankara has also pursued a more independent foreign policy and stronger relations with countries across the Middle East. Its relations with Saudi Arabia have improved after several years of political tension. Participation in the pact can strengthen Türkiye's role as a regional security actor while supporting its defence industry and wider strategic interests.

Pakistan provides another important dimension. Pakistan has long maintained close defence and economic relations with Saudi Arabia. Its military cooperation with Riyadh has developed over several decades. Pakistan also has growing defence relations with Türkiye. The Mecca Pact brings these relationships into a wider institutional framework. This gives Pakistan greater strategic importance in West Asia while connecting South Asian security interests with Gulf security.

The pact has important implications for Iran. Saudi Arabia and Iran restored diplomatic relations in 2023 after years of rivalry. That development reduced tensions but did not remove their strategic differences. The emergence of a Saudi-Türkiye-Pakistan defence framework may create a new security calculation for Tehran. Iran may view the pact as a potential source of strategic pressure, even if the three members do not identify Iran as a common enemy.

Israel also faces a changing regional environment. The Gaza conflict, tensions with Iran, and changes in Arab-Israeli relations have altered regional security calculations. The Mecca Pact is not formally an anti-Israel alliance. However, the participation of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan creates a new political and security setting for Israel. Türkiye has strongly criticised Israeli policies, while Pakistan does not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. Saudi Arabia has also maintained a cautious position on normalisation.

India has important interests in all these developments. India's relations with Saudi Arabia have expanded in energy, trade, investment, defence, and political cooperation. India also maintains important relations with Iran and Israel. Iran is important for India's access to Central Asia through Chabahar, while Israel is an important defence and technology partner. These relationships require India to maintain a careful balance as regional security arrangements change.

The Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz add another dimension to the issue. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are located close to major maritime routes linking the Gulf with the Indian Ocean. The Strait of Hormuz is vital for global energy trade, while the Arabian Sea is important for India's energy supplies and commercial shipping. India's earlier research on the strategic importance of maritime chokepoints and the Strait of Hormuz provides a useful basis for understanding these maritime dimensions.

The Mecca Defence Pact must therefore be studied as part of a wider regional transformation. It may represent a move towards greater regional strategic autonomy, but it may also create new patterns of balancing and competition. Its future importance will depend on the level of military cooperation, institutional development, shared threat perceptions, and possible expansion of membership.

This study examines the Mecca Defence Pact through regional security, balance-of-power, and strategic autonomy perspectives. It focuses on the strategic motivations of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan and examines the implications for Iran, Israel, and India. It also assesses whether the pact can develop into a durable regional security framework or remain a limited defence arrangement.

II. Statement of the Problem

The formation of the Mecca Defence Pact has created a new security arrangement linking Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan. Its mutual defence provision gives the agreement greater importance than ordinary defence cooperation. However, the actual scope, military commitments, and future direction of the pact remain uncertain. The three members have different security priorities and maintain different relationships with major regional and global powers.

The pact also emerges during a period of serious tension in West Asia. Relations among Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other regional actors remain affected by military conflict and political rivalry. At the same time, Gulf states are seeking greater strategic flexibility. The United States remains a major security partner, while China and Russia have increased their regional engagement. These developments are creating a more complex regional security environment.

For Iran, the pact may create additional strategic pressure because Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan possess significant military and geopolitical capabilities. Yet their different relationships with Iran make it difficult to view the pact as a simple anti-Iran alliance. Understanding this balance between deterrence and diplomacy is an important research problem.

For Israel, the pact creates another layer in an already changing regional security environment. Saudi Arabia's position, Türkiye's critical approach toward Israel, and Pakistan's absence of diplomatic relations with Israel make the agreement politically significant. However, the pact does not formally identify Israel as a threat. Its actual effect on Israeli security planning therefore requires careful examination.

The agreement also has important implications for India. Pakistan's participation may increase India's security concerns, while India's close relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel remain important. India's relationship with Iran adds another strategic dimension. Energy security, maritime trade, the Strait of Hormuz, the Arabian Sea, and regional connectivity make developments in West Asia directly relevant to Indian interests.

The central problem of this study is therefore to determine whether the Mecca Defence Pact represents a limited defence arrangement or an emerging regional security framework. The study also examines how the pact may influence the strategic calculations of Iran, Israel, and India within the changing security order of West Asia.

III. Literature Review

West Asian Security and Regional Transformation:

Research on West Asian security shows that the region has long been shaped by rivalry, external intervention, and shifting alliances. The United States has remained the main external security provider in the Gulf. However, regional states have increasingly sought wider partnerships with China, Russia, Türkiye, and other powers. This change has created a more complex security environment based on overlapping partnerships rather than one dominant alliance system (Bianco, 2024; Roberts, 2025).

The literature also shows that regional states increasingly seek strategic flexibility. Gulf countries are strengthening their own military capabilities while maintaining ties with major external powers. Parker and Bakir (2024) argue that defence diversification has become an important part of Gulf security policy. Roberts (2025) similarly finds that Gulf states are responding to uncertainty by developing several security

relationships. This literature provides an important background for examining why Saudi Arabia may support a new trilateral defence arrangement.

Saudi Arabia and Regional Security:

Saudi Arabia occupies a central position in studies of Gulf security. Its foreign policy has increasingly combined economic transformation, regional diplomacy, defence modernisation, and strategic diversification. Vision 2030 has strengthened the need for a stable regional environment because conflict can threaten investment, energy infrastructure, tourism, and trade. Samaan (2023) examines the efforts of Gulf monarchies to develop greater security autonomy. Almezaini (2024) highlights the expanding political and strategic role of Gulf states. Roberts (2025) argues that Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries are adapting to changes in American regional engagement.

The literature also gives considerable attention to Saudi-Iran relations. The restoration of diplomatic relations in 2023 reduced tensions between Riyadh and Tehran. Hwang (2024) explains that Saudi Arabia's approach was influenced by the need to reduce regional tensions and support its domestic economic programme. Kamrava and Bagheri Dolatabadi (2024) show that Iran has also sought better relations with neighbouring states. Albarasneh (2025), however, demonstrates that strategic competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran has not disappeared. These findings suggest that Saudi Arabia may pursue diplomacy with Iran while strengthening its defence partnerships with other states.

Türkiye and Strategic Autonomy:

Türkiye's changing foreign policy provides another important part of the literature. Ankara remains a NATO member but has developed stronger relations with Russia, China, Gulf countries, and other regional actors. This has led scholars to examine Turkish strategic autonomy.

Aslan (2024) links Türkiye's strategic autonomy with its growing defence capabilities. Aydın-Düzgit et al. (2025) examine the development and limits of strategic autonomy in Turkish foreign policy. Aran et al. (2026) argue that Türkiye seeks greater freedom of action amid growing uncertainty in the Middle East and Black Sea regions.

Türkiye's growing defence industry is also important. Its unmanned systems, missile technology, electronic warfare capabilities, and defence exports have increased its influence. The Mecca Pact can therefore strengthen both Türkiye's regional role and its defence partnerships.

Pakistan-Saudi Defence Relations:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have maintained close defence relations for several decades. Their relationship includes military training, defence cooperation, political consultation, and economic links. Recent developments have given this relationship a stronger institutional basis.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (2026) identifies the Pakistan-Saudi defence relationship as an important part of the changing security connections between South Asia and the Gulf. Shahab Ahmed and Karim (2024) also show the wider political influence of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan.

The addition of Türkiye changes the strategic meaning of this relationship. The trilateral framework connects Pakistan's South Asian security interests with the Gulf and Turkish defence capabilities. Existing literature has not fully examined this new three-country configuration.

Iran and Regional Balancing:

Iran remains central to any analysis of Gulf security. Iranian security policy combines conventional military capabilities, missile forces, maritime power, and regional partnerships. Wastnidge (2024) argues that Iran uses regional relationships to strengthen its position within a changing Middle East. Kamrava and Bagheri Dolatabadi (2024) also show the importance of neighbourhood relations in Iranian foreign policy.

The Saudi-Iran rapprochement has introduced greater diplomatic engagement. Yet rivalry remains because both countries seek influence in the Gulf and wider Middle East. The Mecca Pact may therefore create a new form of regional balancing. It could increase Iran's security concerns without necessarily producing direct confrontation. This distinction is important because the pact does not formally identify Iran as an enemy.

Israel and the Changing Regional Order:

The literature on Israel increasingly focuses on the changing structure of Middle Eastern alliances. The Abraham Accords created new relationships between Israel and several Arab states. At the same time, the Gaza conflict has altered regional political and security calculations.

Krieg (2024) argues that the Gaza war contributed to changes in the regional order and weakened confidence in the older US-led framework. Valbjørn et al. (2024) examine the wider regional consequences of the Gaza conflict. Israel's security environment is also shaped by its confrontation with Iran. The emergence of new regional security arrangements may therefore affect Israeli threat assessments.

The Mecca Pact deserves attention within this literature because Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan have different relationships with Israel. Its effect may be political and strategic even without the creation of an explicit anti-Israel alliance.

India and West Asian Security:

India's relations with West Asia have expanded significantly. Energy security remains important, but India's interests now include trade, investment, defence, technology, connectivity, maritime security, and the welfare of its large overseas workforce. Pant and Alhasan (2024) examine India's expanding relationship with the Gulf. This studies show that India increasingly treats the region as an important part of its wider strategic policy.

India's relationships with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel require careful balancing. Saudi Arabia is important for energy, investment, and regional diplomacy. Iran is important for Chabahar and access to Central Asia. Israel is important for defence and technology.

The Mecca Pact creates an additional challenge because Pakistan and Türkiye are both part of the new security framework. India must therefore assess the pact without damaging its relations with Saudi Arabia or other regional partners.

Maritime Security and the Arabian Sea:

Maritime security is closely connected with the strategic importance of the pact. The Gulf contains major energy routes, while the Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the wider Indian Ocean. Recent research on the Red Sea crisis has shown how regional conflicts can disrupt shipping and increase economic costs. Notteboom et al. (2024) identify significant effects on maritime operations and supply chains. Rodriguez-Diaz et al. (2024) similarly highlight the risks created by attacks on shipping. This issue has direct relevance for India because the Arabian Sea connects India's economy with the Gulf and wider global markets. Earlier research on the Strait of Hormuz highlights the interaction between maritime security, energy flows, regional rivalry, and international trade (Mangu, 2025).

Emerging Research Gap:

The existing literature provides strong explanations of Gulf security, Saudi-Iran relations, Turkish strategic autonomy, Pakistan-Saudi defence cooperation, Israel's regional position, and India's West Asia policy. However, these areas have mostly been studied separately.

The Mecca Defence Pact creates a need for an integrated analysis. It connects three countries with different strategic interests and links West Asian security with South Asian security. Its possible effects on Iran, Israel, and India also require examination within one framework.

The institutional future of the pact remains another important gap. It is not yet clear whether the agreement will become a durable security institution or remain a limited defence partnership. This study addresses these gaps by examining the pact through regional security, balance-of-power, and strategic autonomy perspectives.

Objectives of the Study:

The study focuses on five objectives. The first objective is to examine the political, security, and strategic factors behind the formation of the Mecca Defence Pact. The second objective is to assess the possible impact of the pact on Iran and the balance of power in the Gulf. The third objective is to examine the implications of the pact for Israel and the changing Arab-Israeli security environment. The fourth objective is to assess the effects of the pact on India's strategic, economic, energy, and maritime interests. Final and the fifth objective is to evaluate the prospects and limitations of the pact as an emerging regional security framework.

Significance of the Study:

The study is significant because the Mecca Defence Pact links three strategically important states across West Asia and South Asia. Saudi Arabia provides major economic and energy resources, Türkiye contributes substantial military and defence capabilities, and Pakistan brings significant military strength and long-standing Gulf ties. Their cooperation may influence the wider regional balance.

The study is also important for understanding Iran's changing strategic environment. The pact does not identify Iran as an enemy, but its membership may affect Tehran's assessment of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan. The study therefore examines the relationship between regional deterrence and diplomatic engagement.

The Israeli dimension is also important. The pact has emerged during continuing regional tensions involving Israel, Iran, and several Arab states. Its development may influence Israel's security calculations and the future pattern of regional partnerships.

India has major interests in West Asia. Energy supplies, trade, investment, maritime routes, Chabahar, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the Arabian Sea connect Indian interests directly with regional developments. The study therefore provides a focused assessment of the pact from an Indian strategic perspective.

Scope of the Study:

The study focuses on the Mecca Defence Pact and its emerging security implications. It examines Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan as the three members of the pact and assesses its wider effects on Iran, Israel, and India.

The study covers developments mainly from 2023 to September 2026. This period includes the Saudi-Iran diplomatic rapprochement, the Gaza conflict, changes in Gulf security policy, and the formation and early institutionalisation of the Mecca Defence Pact. The geographical scope includes West Asia, South Asia, the

Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Arabian Sea. The roles of the United States, China, and Russia are considered where they directly affect the regional security environment.

IV. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach to examine the strategic significance of the Mecca Defence Pact. A qualitative approach is suitable because the pact is a recent development, and its long-term effects cannot yet be measured through reliable quantitative data. The study focuses on political statements, strategic behaviour, security relationships, and emerging regional trends.

The research follows an exploratory and analytical design. The exploratory element helps identify the factors behind the formation of the pact. The analytical element examines its possible effects on Iran, Israel, and India. The study also assesses whether the pact can develop into a wider regional security framework.

The study relies mainly on secondary sources. These include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, government documents, defence reports, international organisation publications, policy papers, and credible news reports. Priority is given to recent sources published between 2023 and 2026. Official statements from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan, India, Iran, Israel, and relevant international organisations are used to establish recent developments.

The analysis uses thematic coding to identify recurring patterns across official statements, academic studies, policy reports, and credible news sources. The analysis identifies recurring themes such as collective defence, strategic autonomy, regional balancing, military cooperation, defence production, maritime security, energy security, and regional connectivity. Information from different sources is compared to reduce dependence on any single interpretation.

The study also uses comparative analysis. The strategic interests of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan are examined separately before assessing their areas of convergence. The possible responses of Iran and Israel are then considered. India's position is analysed separately because its interests differ from those of the pact members.

The study does not treat the Mecca Defence Pact as an established military alliance with predetermined objectives. Its stated commitments are distinguished from possible future developments. This approach helps avoid assumptions about the intentions of the member states.

V. Theoretical Framework

The study combines regional security complex theory, balance-of-power theory, and strategic autonomy. Regional security complex theory explains how the security concerns of neighbouring states become interconnected. Buzan and Wæver (2003) argue that states within a region often face security problems that cannot be understood separately. The Mecca Pact fits this approach because its effects may extend from the Gulf to Türkiye and South Asia.

Balance-of-power theory explains why states create partnerships when they perceive changes in regional power or security. The Mecca Pact can be examined as a possible balancing mechanism within a region marked by competition among Iran, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Israel, and other actors.

Strategic autonomy explains the desire of regional powers to maintain freedom in foreign and security policy. Saudi Arabia seeks wider security options, Türkiye seeks greater freedom of action, and Pakistan

seeks stronger regional partnerships. Their cooperation can therefore be viewed as an effort to increase strategic choices.

These three approaches are complementary. Regional security theory explains the regional setting. Balance-of-power theory explains the formation of strategic partnerships. Strategic autonomy explains why the three states may prefer a wider network of security relationships rather than dependence on a single external power.

VI. Strategic Drivers Behind the Mecca Defence Pact

The Mecca Defence Pact reflects the changing security needs of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan. The three countries have different interests, but they share a growing interest in stronger regional defence cooperation. For Saudi Arabia, the pact supports a wider effort to strengthen national security and reduce excessive dependence on any single external power. Regional conflicts, attacks on critical infrastructure, and uncertainty about external security commitments have encouraged Riyadh to diversify its defence partnerships. The pact also fits Saudi efforts to protect the stability needed for Vision 2030.

Türkiye brings strong military capacity and an expanding defence industry. Its foreign policy has increasingly stressed strategic autonomy and a larger regional role. Türkiye remains a NATO member, but it has also developed defence ties with states outside the Western alliance system. Cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan gives Ankara greater strategic reach. Pakistan has longstanding defence relations with Saudi Arabia. Its military has provided training and security support to Saudi Arabia for decades. Pakistan also maintains close political and defence ties with Türkiye. The pact therefore builds on existing relations rather than creating an entirely new partnership.

The agreement also reflects the wider move toward networked regional security. Regional states are increasingly seeking flexible partnerships instead of depending only on major-power protection. Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan can combine financial resources, military capability, defence technology, and strategic geography. The pact should therefore be understood as a product of strategic convergence rather than a single shared threat. Its members do not have identical views on Iran, Israel, the United States, or other regional powers. Their cooperation is based mainly on the need to improve defence capacity and strategic choice. The central driver is the search for greater security autonomy. The pact gives its members another instrument for responding to regional uncertainty while preserving their separate foreign-policy choices.

VII. The Mecca Defence Pact and Iran: Changing the Gulf Balance

The pact could affect Iran's security calculations, but its impact should not be overstated. Iran is not formally identified as a common enemy in the agreement. Türkiye has also stated that the pact is not directed against Iran. The agreement should therefore not automatically be treated as an anti-Iran alliance. Nevertheless, the pact creates a new military relationship around Iran's wider neighbourhood. Saudi Arabia provides geographic access to the Gulf, Türkiye adds substantial military capacity, and Pakistan contributes important defence experience. Greater coordination among these states could increase Iran's strategic concerns.

The development is particularly important because Saudi-Iran relations have moved between rivalry and diplomatic engagement. Their 2023 reconciliation reduced some tensions, but major differences remain. These include competing regional interests, security concerns, and different positions on regional conflicts. Iran may respond by strengthening its own defence partnerships. It could deepen relations with China,

Russia, Iraq, Oman, and other regional actors. It may also seek to maintain dialogue with Saudi Arabia to prevent the new defence arrangement from becoming an anti-Iran coalition.

The military balance is also affected by geography. Saudi Arabia and Iran face each other across the Persian Gulf, while Türkiye borders Iran. Pakistan's location adds another strategic dimension because it connects the Gulf region with South Asia. The Strait of Hormuz is central to this calculation. It remains a vital route for global energy flows, particularly for Asian importers. Any serious Gulf crisis could therefore affect India and other major energy-consuming states. Research on maritime chokepoints also shows that strategic waterways combine security, trade, energy, and geopolitical risks rather than operating as isolated military spaces.

The Mecca Pact may therefore increase Iran's strategic pressure without ending regional diplomacy. Iran's likely challenge will be to prevent the pact from developing into a broader containment structure. Its long-term effect will depend on military cooperation, Saudi-Iran relations, and the extent to which Türkiye and Pakistan support collective action during a Gulf crisis.

VIII. The Mecca Defence Pact and Israel: Changing Regional Security

The Mecca Defence Pact creates a new regional setting for Israel, but it should not be described as an anti-Israel alliance. The agreement does not publicly identify Israel as a common military threat. Its importance for Israel comes from the different positions of the three members. Saudi Arabia has maintained a cautious approach toward normalisation with Israel. Türkiye has experienced serious political tensions with Israel, especially over Gaza. Pakistan does not recognise Israel and has traditionally supported Palestinian statehood.

These positions create a political environment that may limit Israel's ability to expand regional security cooperation. At the same time, the pact does not automatically end existing Arab-Israeli diplomatic channels. Saudi Arabia continues to have important strategic relations with the United States, while the wider Gulf region remains linked to the security networks created after the Abraham Accords. The pact could also affect Israel indirectly through the Iran question. Israel considers Iran a major security challenge. If the Mecca framework develops stronger military capabilities, Israel may welcome any reduction in Iranian freedom of action. However, if the pact becomes a wider political bloc against Israel, the strategic effect would be different.

Türkiye's position is especially important. Ankara has sought a larger role in regional politics while maintaining its own interests in relations with Gulf states. Pakistan also gives the pact a wider Muslim-world dimension. The Gaza conflict has increased political pressure on regional governments. Public opinion, Palestinian diplomacy, and questions about regional normalisation can influence future cooperation between Israel and Arab states.

The pact may therefore create a more complex regional security environment rather than a simple new division between Israel and its neighbours. Israel will need to assess the agreement according to its actual military development rather than its political symbolism. The most important question is whether the pact remains a defence network or develops a shared regional threat perception. Its effect on Israel will depend greatly on that distinction.

IX. The Mecca Defence Pact and India: Strategic Implications for West Asia and the Arabian Sea

India has important interests in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, and the wider Gulf. The Mecca Defence Pact therefore has direct strategic relevance for New Delhi. India's relationship with Saudi Arabia has expanded through trade, investment, energy, technology, and security cooperation. India also maintains important relations with Iran, including its interest in Chabahar Port. At the same time, Israel remains an important defence and technology partner. India must therefore maintain working relations with all three sides of the regional system.

Pakistan's membership adds a security concern. Stronger Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation could give Pakistan greater strategic support. However, India should avoid viewing the pact only through the India-Pakistan lens. Saudi Arabia's wider interests include economic development, regional stability, and diversified partnerships. Energy security remains India's major concern. India depends heavily on West Asian energy supplies. The Strait of Hormuz is therefore important for India's economic and strategic interests. A major regional conflict could increase energy prices, insurance costs, and shipping risks.

The Arabian Sea also connects Gulf security with India's maritime security. The security of sea lines of communication affects India's trade, energy imports, and links with Europe and Africa. Your earlier study on maritime chokepoints provides a useful basis for this argument because it links geography, energy security, trade, governance, and maritime security. The pact may also affect India's connectivity plans. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor depends on stable relations among its participating regions. Regional instability could slow investment and transport links, while greater security cooperation could support connectivity.

India's most suitable response is strategic balancing. New Delhi should strengthen relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states while preserving its links with Iran and Israel. It should also increase maritime surveillance and cooperation across the Arabian Sea. India should not seek membership in every regional security arrangement. Instead, it should protect its strategic autonomy and maintain multiple partnerships. The Mecca Pact therefore creates challenges for India, but it also creates opportunities for deeper diplomatic, economic, and maritime engagement.

X. From Defence Pact to Regional Security Framework: Prospects and Challenges

The future of the Mecca Defence Pact depends on whether political commitments become practical cooperation. The agreement provides a basis for mutual defence, but a durable framework requires regular institutions, clear procedures, military exercises, intelligence sharing, and political trust. The creation of a permanent secretariat can support this process. It can coordinate meetings, defence planning, joint activities, and communication among the members. However, institutional structures alone cannot guarantee effective collective defence.

The three members also have different security priorities. Saudi Arabia focuses strongly on Gulf security and critical infrastructure. Türkiye has wider regional interests. Pakistan remains strongly concerned with South Asian security. These differences may limit common action during future crises. Military interoperability will be another challenge. The members use different defence systems and maintain different relationships with major powers. Joint exercises and defence technology cooperation could gradually improve their ability to operate together.

Defence production may become an important area of cooperation. Türkiye's defence industry, Pakistan's military experience, and Saudi financial resources provide complementary strengths. Such cooperation

could also reduce dependence on foreign suppliers. Membership expansion could increase the pact's political importance. However, rapid expansion could bring new disagreements about threats and military commitments. Gradual growth would therefore be more practical.

The pact should not yet be called an “Islamic NATO.” NATO has integrated command structures and decades of institutional experience. The Mecca Pact is still developing. Three future paths are possible. First, it may remain a limited trilateral defence arrangement. Second, it may develop into a wider security network based on defence technology, intelligence, and maritime cooperation. Third, it could become a larger political-military bloc if shared threat perceptions increase.

The second path appears the most plausible. The pact has enough strategic value to expand cooperation, but major differences make a fully integrated alliance difficult. Its long-term importance will therefore depend on institutional performance, military interoperability, defence cooperation, and the ability of its members to manage differences without creating new regional divisions. Recent developments also show that operationalisation remains limited. Following attacks on Saudi Arabia in September 2026, Pakistan stated that no immediate military response had been discussed under the pact, indicating that collective defence procedures remain under development (Reuters, 2026).

XI. Findings

The study produces five main findings. First, the Mecca Defence Pact reflects the growing search for regional security cooperation. Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan are using their existing bilateral ties to build a wider defence framework.

Second, the pact may increase Iran's security concerns. The combined military capabilities of the three members could influence the Gulf balance. However, the pact does not formally identify Iran as an enemy.

Third, the pact creates a more complex security environment for Israel. Its members hold different positions on Israel and the Palestinian issue. The pact may therefore affect Israel's regional diplomacy without becoming an anti-Israel alliance.

Fourth, India faces both challenges and opportunities. Pakistan's participation creates a security concern. At the same time, India's strong relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel provide important diplomatic options.

Fifth, the pact's future depends on institutional development. Defence exercises, intelligence sharing, military interoperability, and joint defence production will determine whether the agreement becomes an effective security framework.

The study also finds that the pact is better understood as an emerging regional security network. Calling it an “Islamic NATO” at this stage would be premature.

XII. Discussion

The findings show that West Asian security is becoming more networked and less dependent on one external power. Regional states are increasingly developing overlapping partnerships to manage uncertainty. The Saudi, Turkish, and Pakistani partnership demonstrates this trend. Their cooperation does not arise from identical threat perceptions. Instead, each member expects different strategic benefits from the arrangement.

The Iranian dimension is particularly important. Saudi-Iran relations have improved through diplomatic engagement, but strategic competition has not disappeared. The Mecca Pact could therefore produce a dual effect. It may increase Iranian security concerns while also encouraging Tehran to maintain dialogue with

Riyadh. The Israeli dimension is more political than military at present. The pact does not declare Israel a threat. However, Saudi, Turkish, and Pakistani positions on Gaza and Palestinian statehood may influence the wider regional balance. Its future impact will depend on whether the pact remains defence-focused or develops a broader political agenda.

For India, the findings support a policy of strategic balancing. India cannot afford to align with one regional bloc because its interests extend across Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, and the wider Gulf. Energy security and maritime trade make regional stability especially important. The findings also support the use of regional security complex theory. Security developments in the Gulf can affect Israel, Iran, South Asia, and the Arabian Sea. Balance-of-power theory explains the formation of new partnerships, while strategic autonomy explains the members' desire for greater freedom in defence policy. The pact represents an important regional experiment. Its long-term value will depend less on its political symbolism and more on its ability to create practical and sustained defence cooperation.

XIII. Policy Implications for India

India should maintain balanced relations with all major actors linked to the emerging security framework. Stronger engagement with Saudi Arabia should continue without weakening India's relations with Iran and Israel.

India should closely monitor Pakistan's expanding defence cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. However, India's response should remain wider than a narrow India-Pakistan security approach.

Maritime security should receive greater attention. The Arabian Sea connects India's trade and energy interests with the Gulf, Africa, and Europe. India should strengthen maritime surveillance, information sharing, and cooperation with regional partners.

Energy security also requires continued diversification. Any serious crisis around the Gulf or Strait of Hormuz could affect India's energy supplies and economic stability.

India should protect its connectivity interests in both the Gulf and wider West Asia. Chabahar Port and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor serve different purposes, but both require regional stability.

India should also use diplomatic engagement rather than bloc politics. Maintaining relations with competing regional powers gives New Delhi greater policy flexibility.

XIV. Limitations of the Study

The Mecca Defence Pact is a recent development. Several important details about its military command, operational procedures, intelligence mechanisms, and future membership remain unclear. The study mainly uses publicly available sources. Some future developments cannot therefore be assessed with certainty. The analysis focuses on Iran, Israel, and India. Other regional actors are discussed only where they directly affect the central argument. Future research can examine how the pact develops after several years of operation. Comparative studies can also assess it against other regional security arrangements.

XV. Conclusion

The Mecca Defence Pact marks an important development in the changing security order of West Asia. It brings Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan into a formal framework for mutual defence cooperation. The pact may increase Iran's strategic concerns, but it cannot yet be treated as an anti-Iran alliance. Its effect on Israel will depend on whether defence cooperation develops into wider political

coordination. For India, the pact creates both challenges and opportunities. Pakistan's participation requires close attention, while India's relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel provide useful diplomatic space. The pact's long-term importance will depend on practical cooperation. Joint exercises, intelligence sharing, defence production, and institutional development will determine its effectiveness. The Mecca Defence Pact is therefore best viewed as an emerging regional security framework. Its long-term importance will depend on whether its legal commitment develops into effective institutions and operational military cooperation.

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