



By: TA | AP Insight

Defense agreement between Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan strengthens collective deterrence



Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan signed a defense agreement on Friday that would treat an attack on one as an attack on all three, officials said, solidifying cooperation between the three regional powers at a time of growing security concerns.

The agreement was signed in the Saudi holy city of Mecca by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to statements from all three countries.

The agreement between the three Sunni Muslim-majority states brings together oil-rich Saudi Arabia and nuclear power Pakistan as well as Turkey, which has **NATO's second-largest army** and a rapidly growing defense industry.

It would increase cooperation and deterrence at a time of increased regional uncertainty and threats from the war in Iran.

Commitment to joint deterrence

"The agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all," the statements read.

"It further provides for the enhancement of all aspects of defense cooperation among the three States," the statements said, adding that the agreement was called the "Mecca Joint Defense Agreement."

Saudi Arabia, whose critical infrastructure and oil facilities have come under attack as part of the war in Iran, has been looking to diversify its defense partnerships.

The agreement comes amid rising tensions between Turkey and Israel over Gaza and other regional conflicts

In September, **Pakistan and Saudi Arabia** signed a mutual defense pact that also defines any attack on either nation as an attack on both.

The agreement also comes amid rising tensions between **Turkey and Israel** over Gaza and other regional conflicts, including the war in Iran and Lebanon.

The deal highlights how far relations between Saudi Arabia and Turkey have shifted toward alignment and partnership, after being highly strained just a few years ago, including over the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul by Saudi operatives.

Iran criticizes the deal

In Iran, Ebrahim Rezaei, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, criticized the deal on X, saying it would not bring security to Saudi Arabia.

"The Saudis should know that a paper agreement with Turkey and Pakistan will not bring them security, just as years of one-sided 'milking' by the Americans did not bring them security. Change your policies so that you do not have to #BegForSecurity from others," he wrote.

Saudi Arabia says deal is not a military axis or religious bloc

A statement from Saudi Arabia insisted that the agreement does not amount to a military pact and would not affect the kingdom's existing partnerships.

"The agreement does not represent any orientation toward building a military axis or sectarian/religious bloc, and it is not linked to nuclear endeavors or an arms race, but rather to building sustainable self-reliant capabilities," the statement read. "The agreement does not come at the expense of the Kingdom's strategic and strong relations at

the Gulf, Arab, and international levels."

The agreement targets no country and is open to the participation of all brotherly countries that aim for the peace, prosperity, and stability of our region - Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Erdogan said the agreement was based on "collective deterrence" and would deepen cooperation in defense, support joint defense industry projects and bolster efforts to combat terrorism.

"The agreement, which also reaffirms the right of defense as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, targets no country and is open to the participation of all brotherly countries that aim for the peace, prosperity, and stability of our region," the Turkish president said on X.

A Turkish government official described the agreement as "purely defensive in nature," and "not against any specific actor."

The deal does not annul or replace any bilateral or multilateral agreements between these states or with other states and organizations, the official said. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Long-standing security ties

In Islamabad, defense analyst Abdullah Khan described the agreement as a natural evolution and formalization of decades of strategic ties among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, saying a changing regional security environment and the evolving nature of warfare had increased the need for closer cooperation.

Khan said the pact was "purely defensive" and not directed against any country, with collective deterrence intended to raise the cost of aggression and prevent conflict.

The three countries bring complementary strengths to the arrangement - Abdullah Khan

The analyst said the three countries bring complementary strengths to the arrangement: Pakistan's military experience and expertise in managing escalation, Saudi Arabia's economic strength and regional influence, and Turkey's advanced defense technology and industrial capabilities.

Abdolreza Davari, an Iranian analyst and former politician, downplayed the risks the new defense pact poses to Tehran as it seeks to assert control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has already shown it can stand up to two of the world's leading military powers – the U.S. and its ally Israel, he said.

"What difference does it make? Will it be more difficult than the pressure the U.S. and Israel have created on Iran? Is the power of the U.S. and Israel greater or these three countries?" he said in a phone call from Tehran.

Turkey and Pakistan unlikely to engage in large troop deployment

Hamish Kinnear, a Middle East analyst for the risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, said Turkey and Pakistan were unlikely to send large numbers of troops to assist Saudi Arabia.



The deal was expected to allow deeper coordination in diplomacy, defense production, and technology transfer

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“Token deployments are possible, but it is doubtful that Ankara and Islamabad want to become heavily involved in an anti-Houthi military operation. Pakistan, which already held a bilateral collective defense pact with Saudi Arabia, has not been a significant partner in anti-Houthi operations so far,” Kinnear said in an emailed note.

“More likely is increased Ankara-Islamabad-Riyadh coordination on diplomacy, weapons development and technological transfer, with Saudi capital boosting the defense sectors of Turkey and Pakistan,” he added.

Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, director of the Ankara office for The German Marshall Fund think tank, said the agreement was the culmination of the countries’ shared concerns over regional fragmentation, civil conflict, and armed non-state groups.

“This is a reflection of their growing desire for greater regional stability,” Unluhisarcikli said.