

THE MECCA JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT - 2026
(GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES)

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Abstract

In October 2021, I2U2 Group (an abbreviated form of Israel-India-United States-United Arab Emirates), often called the “West Asian Quad” or “Middle East Quad” came into being as a strategic partnership and economic cooperation forum; the gravest geo-strategic aspect impacting the contemporary Muslim World especially the Middle East. The atrocious I2U2 Group’s unified genocidal aggression against Palestinians in Gaza, probably furnishes one of the leading causes to create a counterweight to check and subsequently halt I2U2 adventurism. Amidst this scenario, the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement (popularised as The Mecca Agreement), initially comprising of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan has been formed on 7th August 2026 which possesses a lucrative possibility to invite Egypt and Iran into the fold. The Agreement is a broadened arrangement of Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement concluded between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan on 17th September 2025, which now has Türkiye among its ranks. This arrangement heralds singularly the most defining change in the contemporary politics of Middle East where the United States’ unchallenged military prowess has convincingly been challenged by Iran thereby depleting its influence worldwide. Depleted inventories, severe global posture gaps, constrained deterrence, strategic stalemate, the loss of control over the Strait of Hormuz, inability to defend regional allies, exaggerated priority to Israel over other regional states which paid hundreds of billions of Dollars for their security and economic strains amply prove the receding stature of the United States, even among its long-time partners who ultimately felt the compulsion to look inward thereby relegating the United States. This is the exclusive research question of this article to highlight global perspectives pertaining to the Mecca Agreement and its future prospects.

INTRODUCTION

On 7th August 2026, in the Al-Safa Palace in Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Türkiye adjoined Prince Mohammed bin Salman of KSA and Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan to sign an accord pledging that these three nations would consider an assault on one of

them as an aggression against all (Cook, The U.S.-Led Middle East Order Is Over. The Mecca Agreement Proves It., 2026). It distinguishes the collective defensive mechanism at the epicentre of relationship established by means of trilateral cooperation especially focusing on military cooperation supported by political coordination (Azhar, Shahid, & Gumrukcu, 2026). For

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, this agreement extends their multifaceted affinity which was concluded on 17th September 2025 (Ashtakala, Horschig, & Schiff, 2025). However, on other side, Türkiye is not exploring any defender rather it seems to discover a role in the future Middle Eastern order (Aydıntaşbaş, 2026). Türkiye while commanding the second most powerful military of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), owns a sophisticated defense industry and, is geographically situated in the region which connects East Europe (precisely the Balkans), the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean and the Middle East (Dundar, 2026). In fact, Türkiye has an ambition to be one of the architect nations seeking durable regional influence (Novruz, 2026) (Kalmoy, 2026) (Kajjo, 2026) (Kondori, An Intruder Between Abraham and Cyrus, 2026) (Abrami, 2026). The Mecca Agreement accords a highly lucrative prospects by inter-linking Turkish military-industrial complex with Saudi Arabia's economic power and "Pakistan's strategic depth" (Altuwaijri, 2026). Türkiye's strategic endeavour is to increase its influence in the Middle East ensuring that the west led by the United States along with Israel do not claim the leverage that they possessed in the past (Vohra, 2026).

Aim

The exclusive aim of this research article is to familiarise university students irrespective of their academic tracks with the past, present and future aspects related to the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement under the most defining moment of the global politics taking place in the Middle East since the advent of the 21st century.

Sequence

The study unfolds in the following sequence:

1. Türkiye's Strategic Ambitions in the Middle East
2. Saudi Arabia's National Interests
3. Türkiye Israel's Colliding Concerns
4. Türkiye – Iran Counterbalancing in the Middle East
5. The end of exclusive reliance on Washington

6. Israel and the return of regional deterrence
7. A New Fault Line that has triggered A New Cold War
8. Russian and Chinese Cautious Approach towards the Mecca Agreement
9. The Middle Eastern (Islamic) NATO Minus the United States
10. Gist of the Study
11. Conclusion

Literature Review

The Middle East has always been in a tumultuous state of fragile security since centuries rendering the region highly unpredictable and volatile amidst religio-political violence, territorial disputes, geographical and demographic differences and, most importantly, the great powers' interventions to control energy reservoirs. Like all its predecessors, the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement does not present its causes of inception drastically different but there are two distinct rather the most prominent developments which have almost altered the balance of power, not in the Middle East but the worldwide. The first is the creation of I2U2 Group (The Middle Eastern Quad or The Western Quad) comprising Israel, India, United Arab Emirates and United States on 14 July 2022. Despite outlining their objectives for collaboration in collective investments and exploring latest initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security, Group's gigantic military operations in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen and Somaliland have exposed its real intentions in the Middle East. The second development which has literally jolted the whole world, especially the Middle East, is the US-Israel-GCC War against Iran with the most devastating military might employed by the US led alliance in the geopolitical history. But Iran prevailed even after thirty-nine days initial US led onslaught reciprocated by destroying the US bases in the entire stretch of GCC, an effective retaliation which paralysed the air defence systems installed to protect assets. Arguably, the outcome of the US led war against Iran has created the environment to bring Mecca Joint Defence Agreement into

existence. It is still in the embryonic stage and, will take time to mature. It's course of progression has been elaborated in succeeding contents based on perspectives by a number of credible experts of the Middle East politics.

Research Methodology

Predominantly, a qualitative descriptive approach has been applied in this study with the sole objective of exploring the past, present and future of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, a venture in which a qualitative design is best suited due to its efficacy to gain detailed subjective opinions and analyses proffered by well-acquainted and unbiased experts on the Middle Eastern politics rather than assessing the research problem quantitatively. Through direct observations gleaned from multiple media sources, a number of statements on various occasions by the leaders of the Mecca Agreement have adequately facilitated in comprehending the nature of environment under which the Agreement became imminent. The study has overwhelmingly focused on relevant think tanks, study groups and news agencies' analytical teams comprising credible geopolitical analysts and journalists to seek their professional assessments on the Agreement and its far-reaching impact on the global politics, especially the Middle East. Undoubtedly, this type of dynamic interactive sessions with aforementioned bodies yields highly enriched insights. There are scant references from some case especially I2U2, NATO, GCC and EU involving in-depth analyses directly linked to the Mecca Agreement. It delves deeply to explore nuances, contexts, and unique circumstances leading to establish the Agreement. During the process of forming the Mecca Agreement, specific events have been analysed aimed at uncovering detailed insights contributing to a broader comprehension about the Agreement. Employing the content analysis as one of the most effective qualitative research methods, almost every text, audio, video or visual content has been systematically analysed in order to explore future prospects of the Agreement. The study incorporates the narrative research technique, another method of qualitative research

concentrating on political policies, concepts and perspectives proffered by individuals; political leaders, rulers, geopolitical analysts and journals with the objective of gaining a deeper perceptiveness. The action research technique has been applied in the study aimed at engaging every source to explore the real-world problems confronted by the member states of the Mecca Agreement and its regional competitors.

Theoretical Framework

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement has been concluded as an exclusively regional military structure for defensive purposes. There exists a strong reason to debate on its operational credibility due to starkly distinctive and diverse foreign policies, societal structures, cultural traditions, social norms, highly complex relations among themselves, bitter historical past between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, dichotomous Turkish and Saudi relations with Iran, and considerably divergent organisational architecture coupled with institutional visions are obstacles which need extraordinary courage and farsightedness. For instance, Türkiye is pursuing for a NATO-style mechanism which Saudi Arabia views cautiously. The Agreement currently operates as a deterrence instead of an operational nuclear umbrella. Notably, the Agreement has been structured on three core pillars:

1. Collective security means that a military operation against any of the members of the Pact would be considered an operation against all three.
2. A joint defence venture to deepen integration across military cooperation, coordination, collaboration, real-time intelligence sharing, and defence-industrial projects.
3. Military-based deterrence is the foremost objective for strengthening collective deterrence against regional or external aggressors.

Türkiye's Strategic Ambitions in the Middle East

Republic of Türkiye pursues an independent, multi-pronged foreign policy which focuses on strategic autonomy, regional security and balancing relationship worldwide especially

between European and Eurasian countries (Mankoff & Bergmann, 2025). However, the most pronounced change that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has introduced in his foreign policy is the transformation from traditional western centric diplomacy to an energetically pragmatic demeanour amalgamating military power potential, mediation and pragmatic partnership. Erdogan's foreign policy has aimed at securing strategic autonomy (Robinson, 2023). But, at the same time, Türkiye neither intends abandoning its alliances, nor does it pursue those alliances to determine her limits of action. While remaining an important member of NATO, she has maintained congenial diplomatic relations with Russia (Bölme, 2022). Türkiye has close relations with the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) while pursuing its geostrategic interests in Syria and Libya (Kardaş & Sinkaya, 2024). The Turkish Government fully cooperates with western institutions without accepting that every regional dispute may be understood through Western priorities (Özdamar & Artıkoğlu, 2025). However, at times, Türkiye displays inconsistency while preserving space for manoeuvre in the prevalent international system which has become more transactional than hierarchical (Mammadov, 2025). In this particular context, the Mecca agreement befits intrinsically into the existing worldview because it accords Türkiye a formidable layer of strategic freedom without costing advantages of NATO (Akın, 2026). The rationale is accumulation of strategic advantage instead of substitution. Considering the geographical, strategic and geo-political proximities, NATO would grade itself to be imminent in Türkiye's multifaceted relations within the domain of broad Euro-Atlantic security mechanism (Colibasani, 2024). From this perspective, the tri-framework of Mecca Pact proffers an advantage that NATO is incapable of. It creates an opportunity where regional security may be negotiated by regional powers where Türkiye does not require to reconcile its threat perceptions with the west (Al-Aloosy & Asthenidis, 2026). The past experience has made that leverage progressively valuable as contentions with the United States (US) over

Syria, particularly the American cooperation with Kurdish segments linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party displays that even formal allies can view the same battlefield in inherently divergent courses (Wahab & Doering, 2017).

One of the most important aspects of Mecca Pact is the US-Israel on Iran prompting latter's stiff retaliatory response against the GCC (Kabalan, 2026). This particular scenario exposed serious weaknesses in the US security umbrella costing Gulf allies' hundreds of billions of US Dollars. This situation has reflected that the US security mechanism was a redundant entity which has miserably failed to protect GCC as committed or planned rather US diverted GCC allocated resources to defend Israel (Belhaj, 2026). In this regard, Türkiye is of the opinion that handing over the national security to an outside power is an unwise strategy especially to a state whose national interests and priorities do not coincide with a state which has allocated its top priority responsibility; the national security to others (Lesser, 2025). The prevalent scenario has amply proved that the US presence in the Middle East was / is motivated by its own (exclusive) global / national interests among which the defence of Israel is the foremost objective of the American foreign policy (O'Dell, 2024) (Bennis, 1996) (Katulis, 2025) (Shlaim, 1988).

Saudi Arabia's National Interests

Saudi Arabia has also arrived at similar conclusions expressing serious concerns about Americans' total failure to protect the GCC for which Gulf states are paying hundreds of billions of US Dollars since decades (Krane, 2026) (Holliday, Said, & Gramer, 2026). Amidst this precarious security dilemma Türkiye has emerged as one of the most viable option for GCC especially Saudi Arabia which seems to have planned multilayered security mechanism after the collapse of US security system (Azhari, Shahid, & Gumrukcu, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan pledge mutual defence as Middle East turmoil escalates, 2026). In the meantime, Pakistan has been collaborating with both centers of power; Türkiye and Saudi Arabia. This troika has met at a

moment when each member state, for different reasons, is pursuing greater freedom of manoeuvrability from stringent geopolitical dependency (Khurram, 2026) (Ersanel, 2026).

According to the Middle East experts, Türkiye has attained the status of most developed indigenous military industrial in the entire Muslim world, leading in highly technological domains especially drone warfare, electronic warfare, and naval platforms (Bakir, 2023). The Turks have entered the Mecca Pact with an objective of enhancing their geopolitical influence which did not exist earlier, especially in the presence of US physical presence in the Middle East (Gurjar, 2026). Its military hardware industry has become one of the most pivotal components in the Middle East through which Turkish foreign influence has escalated manifold.

In this context, Saudi Arabia is the most lucrative destination and a source of capital for Turkish defense expansion. The major Baykar agreement signed with Saudi Arabia in 2023 encompassed technology transfer and localization, reflecting the complementary ambitions of both nations (Jivraj, 2023). Saudi Arabia wants to reduce its dependence on Western suppliers and develop its own defense-industrial base (Gower, 2025), while Türkiye needs investment, scale and wealthy export markets if it is to evolve from a successful emerging producer into one of the permanent centers of the global arms industry (Stein A. , 2026) (Egeli, Güvenç, Kurç, & Mevlütoğlu, 2024). The potential distribution of workload along with allocation of responsibilities is distinctly visible. Saudi Arabia's financial support will enhance Türkiye's military industrial development, while Pakistan may contribute the military experience, manpower and the industrial expertise (RC, 2026). But it does not mean that a collective military-industrial set up will instantaneously emerge, nor does Pakistan's nuclear arsenal become a shared deterrent (Kausar & Samija, 2026). Rationally, alliances crystallise themselves through coherence in order to become consequential with the passage of time, when relevant logistic systems, military training, intelligence exchanges, and defense industries

commence to intertwine. In this particular case, Türkiye has secured the most promising opportunity to generate colossal amount of revenue coupled with unprecedented political leverage (Helou, 2026).

Türkiye Israel's Colliding Concerns

The Mecca Pact has not identified any adversary in a scenario while Türkiye's relations with Israel have deteriorated to a degree where both countries' leadership is voicing threats of armed conflict. The recent development between both nations with, at some time, strong diplomatic relations since March 1949, increasingly concerns the regional security order, significantly Syria, where Türkiye and Israel are practically at war with each other (Hussain, 2026). Recently, Israeli air strike on the Abu Al-Duhur airbase in northwestern province of Idlib of Syria has immensely disturbed Türkiye-Israel relations into the most sensitive arena that escalates prospects that Syrian territory runs the risk of becoming not only a flashpoint of competitive tussle between the two regional military powers, but also the region where both nations' security red lines over-spread each other (Pipis, 2026) (Valente , 2026). Israel has expressed its caution against Türkiye's military footprint in Syria that is considered a threat to Israel's national security thus altering the balance of power in the Middle East (Valente, Israel and Turkey face a dangerous clash over Syria's future - analysis, 2026). On 8th December 2024, (then) President Bashar al-Assad's departure marked the swift eclipse of the five-decade old Assad family regime that ceased his 24-year rulership over Syria. Since then, the Syrian state is situated at the heart of Türkiye's regional security aspirations according to which Syrians should possess the capacity to exercise their authority within their territorial boundaries with the objective of curtailing the Kurdish military power and in the meantime, protecting the Turkish borders and integrating themselves with the northern neighbour (Loft & Mills, 2025). A strong, cohesive and stable Syria depending heavily on Türkiye's geo-political, military and economic support would accord them strategic reach across the Levant (the eastern

coastal lands and countries of the Mediterranean Sea) (Al Shaher, 2026). Nevertheless, Israeli leadership visualizes the same scheme from the opposite direction. There is no doubt that a strengthened Syrian state integrating itself with a substantial military engagement with Türkiye would surely restrict Israel's operational freedom in the north thereby creating a "strategic continuum" prolonging from the Turkish borders toward the southern Syria, neighbouring Israel (Doyle, 2026). Amidst these disturbing worries, Israel has been launching air strikes against the military infrastructure in Syria, specifically the military facilities reconnoitred by Turkish military for probable deployment in the future (Fabian, 2026). The Turkish Government has criticised Israel of compromising Syria's territorial integrity and thwarting the reconstruction process of state institutions (Dalatey & Gumrukcu, 2026). The United States' intervention between Türkiye and Israeli followed by establishing military and diplomatic channels to avert unintended military exchange, indicates the dawn of a new geopolitical environment. This mechanism definitely becomes imminent when two regional powers are at the verge of military confrontation due to their overlapping domains of geopolitical ambitions (Fuller, 2026).

Amidst the Türkiye Israel disturbing spell, former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett equated Türkiye with Iran and cautioned that a hostile Sunni axis incorporating nuclear-armed Pakistan must not be ignored by Israeli leadership (Al-Azzawi, The next Iran? Why Israel's Turkey anxiety is becoming doctrine, 2026). With regard to the Mecca Accord, this expression is deliberately provocative, yet there exists an anxiety about Türkiye's progressing capacity to organise regional security structure to enhance its power. A regional security environment in which Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan coordinate their collective security is intrinsically distinctive from one in which each one of them deals with Israel independently (Al-Jaber, 2026). This is the most important aspect related to Mecca Accord while dealing with Israel. Geopolitically, Türkiye rather Saudi Arabia and Pakistan do not intend the

Mecca Agreement to become an anti-Israeli bloc in order to secure benefits from it, especially Türkiye's strategic interests lie in establishing a balance of power in the region which it perceives has been corroded by Israel's crescively expansion through the aggressive employment of military in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran (Guzansky & Lindenstrauss, 2026); the campaigns that fortify a perceptiveness among states in the Middle East that Israeli military superiority, beefed up by the United States, has accorded Israelis unprecedented freedom of manoeuvrability without a compatible regional counterweight (Cook, 2026). There is none from the Mecca Accord which seeks a direct confrontation with Israel while having the United States by its side, as it would be an enormously costly and unpredictable adventure (Shai, 2026). But, each member of Mecca Accord particularly Türkiye definitely wishes to enhance the political and strategic cost of unilateral Israeli action (Rahman, 2026). It is a fact that Türkiye operating alone as a military power is an arduous rather an intimidating regional military power whose belligerence with Israel can be challenging to manage by the latter (Yemini, 2026). Moreover, it is also a reality that Mecca Accord provides a framework that enhances the probability that future Israeli escalation may provoke a highly coordinated military action from Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan whose collective financial, military and technological resources far exceed those available to Israel which is an undeclared nuclear power but geographically, it is devastatingly handicapped (Kondori, 2026). However, some geopolitical experts argue that the Agreement does not guarantee automatic or highly coordinated military action against Israel (Political Studies, Diversification Without Substitution: What the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement Offers Saudi Arabia, 2026).

Türkiye – Iran Counterbalancing in the Middle East

Visualising divergent national interests of Türkiye and Iran, none of them is likely to unite against Israel (Tür, 2025). Moreover, Iran dominating the

Middle East is sternly against the national interests of Türkiye as both have overspread rather conflicted ambitions stretched over centuries (Matar, 2025). However, their contemporary relations are based on mutual economic pragmatism with well exposed rivalry in the Middle East (Iraq and Syria) and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan). Contemporarily, the United States – Israel – Gulf Cooperation Council War on Iran has amply demonstrated Iran's military capability to impose exceptionally far-reaching damages on the Gulf states and Israel, giving Saudi Arabia every plausible reason to acquire a formidable counterweight (Ashrof, 2026). However, it is a geostrategic necessity for Türkiye to resist Iran's isolation. For Ankara, it is more preferable to negotiate with Tehran which guarantees Türkiye's stable eastern neighborhood (Akkoyunlu, 2026).

There emerges a serious concern after the US-Israel-GCC War on Iran that the Iranian military power possesses potentials for regional domination (Bakir, 2026). But the Mecca Pact is expected to serve as an effective instrument to strike balance among members (Valente, 2026). Iran has repeatedly reiterated the diplomatic stance that it has no ambitions of prevailing over the Middle East states as perceived by the US and its regional allies especially Israel (Reuters, Diplomacy or defence? Iran vows to use both against US sanctions and 'conspiracies', 2026). In the meantime, there exists a very strong possibility that after imminent de-escalation in the war, Iran may become a part of the regional security architecture comprising Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and possibly Egypt (Svetlova, 2026). This particular arrangement befits Türkiye's Middle East strategy because it has no ambitions to become the frontline state of a new Sunni-Shia Cold War. Strategically, its objective seems to be a leading player who strikes balance between the competing power instead of assuming the role a subordinate member (Aksu, 2026). This ambition elaborates the broader rationale behind its participation. Concurrently, it is striving to place itself even closer to the West to remain anchored in NATO, diplomatically connected to Russia and Iran in order to negotiate with them. Its foreign

policy advocates enhanced interaction with GCC while at the same time, acquire the capacity of stretching its access toward South Asia through Pakistan. It may appear complex but, it accords Türkiye an opportunity to increase its influence at the global level especially in the Middle East and Asia (Tekin, 2026).

Türkiye genuinely considers the Mecca Accord as the framework of a breakthrough to claim the status of one of the predominant centers of power through collaboration, cooperation, alignment instead of projecting itself as a dominant among other members of the Pact (Stein A., 2026). The leadership of Türkiye has repeatedly reiterated that it has no pretensions of rejuvenating the past glory by creating an Ottoman hierarchy, nor does it pursue another military alliance established around supremacy of a single state rather it seeks a conglomerate of mutually inter-dependent colleagues whose military, financial and political potentials reinforce each other (Makkarateng, Darna, Samad, & Yusuf, 2026). For a state whose strategic aspirations often exceed the strength of its national economy, closer alignment with the Gulf states facilitates access to capital, investment and markets that would flourish Türkiye's defense-industrial expansion and broader economic development (Yadav, 2026). In the meantime, stronger security relations with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan furnishes Türkiye a formidable support as tensions with Israel continue to heighten. Under the prevalent circumstances, in case of escalation with Israel, Türkiye would not be isolated than it could have been with the Mecca Accord (Reuters, 2026).

Amidst this particular scenario, the Mecca Accord offers a broad Turkish pursuit to regain the regional sovereignty, not by superseding the western influence with Turkish hegemony, but by manufacturing an order in which the regional powers are capable of negotiating, deterring and prospering collectively. This mechanism would inherently grow uneasiness, especially when a predominantly autonomous regional security architecture starts challenging the US' longstanding military domination in the Middle East (a move away from traditional zero-sum

hegemony toward collective regional autonomy) (Ahmad, 2026). Nevertheless, there is unlikelihood of a sudden collapse of American or the Western presence and influence in the region (Al-Azzawi, 2026). Nevertheless, the change will take place gradually, most likely, undulatory and full of dichotomy. However, it is fact that the existing international order has started ceasing to exist with the passage of time, and countries which once depended extensively on foreign powers especially the United States for their security are focusing on possibilities to reorganize themselves through their own indigenous, alliances and institutions (Dworkin, Loss, & Puglierin, 2026). Türkiye's stake is that amidst the existing international order, leverages and influence would not belong to the global power exclusively, but to regional entities which possess the capability of establishing a formidable structure to secure their boundaries (Cucchi, 2026). Within this context, the conclusion of the Mecca Pact would eventually be remembered as a consequential geopolitical development to emerge from the current Middle Eastern crisis (Batool, 2026).

As reiterated the member states officials, the Mecca Pact is neither an arrangement with aggressive military designs nor it was directed against any specified country, rather it is purely defensive. In this regard, Türkiye emphasised that the Pact did not sideline any existing obligations to other allies especially North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Pact members decline the apprehension that Mecca represented either a sectarian military axis or the commencement of a nuclear arms race. These observations are surfacing particularly at a moment when the Middle East is struggling hard with a war engaging Iran, GCC, Israel, and the United States, yet the predominance of the Pact lies less in what its signatories express. It heralds a profound transformation of the security environment that made such a treaty necessary (Shoukat, Rethinking GCC Security Architecture After the U.S.-Israel-Iran War, 2026).

The end of exclusive reliance on Washington

According to experts, the conclusion of the Mecca Accord became imminent after an unexpected outcome of the US-Israel- GCC war against Iran. This military confrontation convincingly changed the balance of military power in the Middle East coupled with the perceptiveness of national security among the traditional allies of the United States (Cheema & Ali, 2026). In fact, Iran's strategic war potential which engaged Israel, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates with its indigenously manufactured weaponry, attacked all GCC states especially Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait by unstoppable missiles, attacked regional infrastructure, and blocked oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz exposed the fundamental shortfall in the US guaranteed regional security commitment on which the entire Gulf had relied for decades (Gordon, 2026). Gigantic purchases of American arsenal through the US military-industrial complex, an unprecedented presence of US military bases in the Middle East exclusively at the cost of host nations, and long-standing geopolitical adjustment with the United States had served as an assurance against squarely this sort of strategic vulnerability (Çelik & Şafak, 2016) (Wojciechowska, 2026). Ironically, when the region confronted the outbreak of wider military hostilities, the American led security mechanism did not function. It miserably crumbled to prevent the Gulf from being direct targets or defend their economies from the consequences (Alexander, 2026).

At this particular juncture, the signing of Mecca Accord never means that Saudi Arabia would abandon the US (Al-Sharif, 2026). In the meantime, Türkiye's formal participation in the agreement does not imply an attempt to replace NATO (New Delhi , 2026). There is renewed perspective that external security guarantor like the US is more committed to its own national interests instead of preferring the security of its allies (Blackwill, 2026). Amidst this particular scenario, the US focused predominantly on Israel's national security while remaining sufficiently in a highly unpredictable international system (Quero & Dessib, 2019). The Mecca

Accord affords the rationalisation with regard to an outright dependence on the foreign powers. It, rather, offers an opportunity to distance from the US than a hedge against excessive reliance upon it. Therefore, in that case it constitutes a comprehensive and far-reaching mechanism of geostrategic 'sovereignisation' in which the Middle East nations would pursue the diversification of their national security arrangement augmented by reinforcing their indigenous military industrial complexes and devising systems that efficiently operate without the US support. This fact must never be ignored that the US' interests at times, never coincided with its allies in the Middle East barring one state; Israel which possesses heavily ingrained footprints in the national and international affairs of the US (Mustafa, 2026). Although, for monarchies, it is incomprehensible to survive without the US power which they genuinely consider indispensable (McCarthy, 2026) (Ernst, 2024). But this reality has exhibited another disturbing fold with regard to the US inclination towards Israel while dealing with the Middle East as a whole. Despite American indispensability perceived by the Gulf, the US-Israel-GCC war against Iran has solidly proved that American guarantees of protecting the Gulf dynasties cannot be regarded as unconditional or absolute (Shoukat, 2026).

In this context, the foundation has already been laid by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which have concluded Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) on 17th September 2025, in Riyadh signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Both militaries' relations have attained a tangible character through deployment of Pakistan's military in the kingdom. Concurrently, Saudi-Türkiye military defense relationship has broadened, Saudi Arabia has emerged as a major purchaser of Türkiye military-industrial complex. On the other hand, Türkiye and Pakistan expended a number of years developing military cooperation through training, naval exchanges, and military-industrial ventures. So, there exists a strong reason to believe that what all took place in Mecca is nothing but the geo-political

amalgamation of relations among three states which were already taking shape.

In 2025, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan, and Egypt coordinated their positions on regional security in which the reconciliation between Egypt and Türkiye has brushed aside the major geo-political hurdle in favour of expansive adjustment among the major regional powers. Egypt's incorporation into the Mecca Accord is not inevitable, but considering strategically it makes considerable sense, since Egypt would augment the largest Arab population, the most powerful armed forces, and administrative and operational domination over the Suez Canal, in addition to a formidable combination of Saudi capital, Turkish military technology, and Pakistani strategic capabilities. If Egypt joins the Mecca Accord, the impression 'Middle Eastern NATO', often employed in previous decades, would commence to describe more in a concrete form. However, Saudi Arabia has been reported to be against Egypt's inclusion in the Accord (Edroos, 2026). Moreover, Egypt is also reluctant to join the Agreement (Eshetu, 2026).

Israel and the return of regional deterrence

The most relevant question concerns the country against which this emerging system of deterrence would definitely matter the most. The split-second context is apparently the confrontation with Iran, nevertheless responding to the Mecca Accord primarily as an anti-Iranian coalition would skip a deeper transformation taking place across the region. Israel's war manoeuvres since October 2023 stretching from Gaza and expanding into Lebanon, Syria and Iran, have escalated apprehensions among monarchies that the previous system of restraints has almost collapsed. However, it must be realised that the core issue from any member's perspective is exclusively related to Israeli rather the peculiar geo-strategic environment in which one regional power imperceptibly capable of striking across multiple neighboring states without facing a counterweight (Assa & Inbar, 2026).

The Mecca framework may be more significant for Israel than for Iran. As RUSI researcher Burcu

Ozcelik noted in comments cited by Reuters, the agreement can be understood as an attempt to create deterrence against Israel while simultaneously counterbalancing Iranian influence, rather than as preparation for a military confrontation with Tehran (Ozcelik, 2026). There is no official statement on the Accord by Israeli government, but restraint should not be baffled with indifference. There does not exist even the slightest reason to believe that policy makers of Israel are oblivious to the emerging development with regard to the collective defence architecture comprising Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan (Al-Azzawi, 2026). Historically, Israel has always advantaged enormously from gravely fragmented strategic environment prevalent among the Arab world which possessed substantial military potential but remained disintegrated by rivalries, incompatible alliances, and competing relationships. A systematic elimination of these fragmentations would definitely alter the strategic equation which is bound to worry Israel and its allies especially the US (Ali, Mustafa, & Ahmad, 2022). Although, at this stage, the Mecca Accord is in the embryonic phase but with the passage of time, a common military headquarters, joint operational and logistical planning mechanism, and organisational development of a combine military system would be a natural course of action against the national interests of Israel and the United States (Nasri, Beyond Strategic Hedging: Can the Makkah Pact Reshape Regional Security?, 2026) (Wenping, 2026).

Within the context of Mecca Accord, Iran seems to have occupied somewhat an ambiguous position which the US and its allies especially Israel, UAE and Bahrain would endeavour to exploit rendering Iran ultimately as one of objects of deterrence (Anbari, 2026). But the fact remains that Iran's exceptionally demonstrated capacity to inflict devastating costs on the US military along with its partners has substantially strengthened its military's stature. But it may be rightly anticipated that Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan would not be inclined to alienate themselves from the US excessive dependence for acquiescence to Iran's dominating status in the Middle East (Shalaby,

2026). There is a state of suspicion among experts on the Middle East that Iran's confidence, after the war, may evolve into an endeavour to demonstrate an explicit hegemonic posture in the Middle East. In that particular scenario, the Mecca Accord would surely become an inherent balancing mechanism. Nevertheless, the antithesis scenario may also come into existence. A progressively inclusive security structure in the Middle East possesses every possible eventuality to present a position to Iran within a comprehensively expansive system of collective assurances, thereby metamorphosing the Accord from a bloc architecture to constrain particular antagonist competitors into the foundation of a balance of power in the Middle East in which no single power would dominate the entire structure, exactly the way it is happening in NATO (News.AZ, 2026).

A New Fault Line that has triggered A New Cold War

Within the context of Mecca Accord, there has emerged another unignorable dimension in the Middle East especially the GCC. Prior to the Mecca agreement, a geo-strategic partnership predominantly on economic cooperation encompassing four states: India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States, popularly known as 'I'2, 'U'2 (alternately called the "West Asian Quad" or "Middle Eastern Quad") was founded on 14th July 2022 (Khaund, 2022) (Tasinato, 2026). Although it is not a military coalition, yet it exists alongside dense strategic and defense relationships connecting four states. During the Gaza campaign US, UAE and India extended unparalleled military and allied operational and logistical support to Israel that brutally killed over eighty thousand innocent civilians while the whole world opted to be a silent spectator especially the entire Muslim world. Despite clarifications for non-aggression, there exists a very strong reason to believe that the Mecca Accord could be an alliance to compete (or in reality, confront militarily) the I2U2 (Hazaimah, 2026). This could be the advent of a Cold War in the Middle East. Amidst the

prevalence of I2U2 in the region whose members unleashed a reign of unprecedented aggression against Iran, would ultimately incline Iran towards the Mecca Accord. The future Middle Eastern order runs a great risk of becoming more fragmented.

Although, a clear picture has emerged about the future of Middle Eastern Gulf region having two 'confronting' arrangements; the Mecca Accord and I2U2 alliance, but geopolitical experts suggest that it is premature to distinguish between the Accord and the Forum. Every member in both arrangements illustrates as to why the emerging order is unlikely to resemble the rigid bloc politics of the twentieth century (Al-Sheikh, 2026). For instance, UAE maintains exceptionally close relations with Israel and India while concurrently coordinates with Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Egypt, and Pakistan on a range of regional matters while expressing its stance critical of Israeli policies. India is another glaring example which maintains strategic relations with Israel while coexisting with economic, energy, and political ties with the entire GCC predominantly with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Under the prevalent geopolitical scenario, these two military alliances would complicate the geo-strategic environment by means of overlapping alignments in which one country cooperates in one realm, but competes in another domain, while deliberately avoiding to place all its strategic dependency on one single ally of the alliance.

Experts' logic proffers that an ambiguity of this nature is one of the defining components of the emerging multipolar order around the world. Within the domain of the Middle east, it is plausible to concede that Saudi Arabia would always opt to continue maintaining extensive security collaboration with the US while, at the same time acquiring military technology from Türkiye and strengthening close defense collaboration with Pakistan. Likewise, Türkiye would remain an integral member of NATO while developing sovereign defence mechanisms with non-NATO states. Similarly, India would continue deepening its strategic relations with Israel without branding Saudi Arabia as an adversary. The UAE can maintain deep

collaboration with Israel while at the same time, preserve stable relations with Iran. The consequential gravity of the Mecca Accord does not intend evolving a US-USSR-like 'binary confrontation' rather it is expected to accelerate the depletion of an age-old mechanism in which small handicapped nations were manoeuvred and manipulated to organize themselves purely around preferences of outside powers.

Russian and Chinese Cautious Approach towards the Mecca Agreement

Amidst this transformation, Russia, China and other developed nations would explore a broad range of opportunities when the Middle Eastern states are expected to pursue strategic autonomy aimed at diversifying military purchases, technological cooperation, investment flows, and diplomatic relations (News Desk, 2026). In this regard, China and Russia retain competitive potentials in present day warfare fields especially air defense, aviation, missile technologies, and electronic warfare. In addition, China possesses economic resources and political influence to beef-up regional structures that substantially reduce the dependence of Middle Eastern nations on the west (The Economist, 2026). Russia and China do not need manoeuvring to change sides of these states. The most essential component of the new geopolitical order is precisely that powerful states no longer believe they have to choose only one (Heiduk, et al., 2026).

The Middle Eastern (Islamic) NATO Minus the United States

Since the advent of Cold War (1945), successive US Governments organised a number of NATO-like alliances in the 'Middle Eastern, visualising an alliance of US allies capable of organising military resources, containing Iran, protecting strategic assets, and ultimately aimed at reinforcing the US dominated regional order. Nevertheless, the concept crumbled almost all the time due to disagreements over threats perceptions coupled with distrust among themselves. These states heavily relied on the US as their ultimate

guarantor, an arrangement which also crumbled during the US-Israel-GCC war against Iran.

This scenario has led to the emergence of completely divergent geo-political environment. The Mecca Accord has not taken its roots because of the US blessings as a new American-led structure. In fact, it is the fragility of regional security environment which has persuaded states to realise that external powers' involvement in the regional matters as the sole foundation of their security is futile. They conclude that an alliance must be an indigenous collective effort without a foreign power. The present Middle East, without the Mecca Accord, is not based on American strategic dominance but adversely affected by its declining exclusivity (Akfirat, 2026). Its future expansion in the region could produce a system in which the US is likely to remain important without retaining the ability to ascertain who would be friends or foes of the region. This geopolitical development would arguably lead to stabilization provided it unfolds toward an inclusive balance rather than another hostile structure. The Middle East has wasted a number of decades embroiled between foreign interventions, unsettled interstate disputes, deep ideological confrontations, and security arrangements designed largely outside it, while genuine stability can only emerge when the principal regional powers develop mechanisms that make escalation costly for everyone and compromise preferable to permanent confrontation. A system strong enough to contain Israel's unilateralism without pursuing its destruction, curtailing Iranian ambitiousness without endeavouring its isolation, and reducing the Arab and Turkish dependence on foreign military sponsors would herald a new era in the Middle East as a rarely possessed security order established primarily by the regional states (Tanvir & Abbas, 2024).

The Mecca Accord never meant to abolish the American umbrella from the Middle East, but an assumption that every purposeful regional defence infrastructure must ultimately be based upon the US power has disappeared. The 'Middle Eastern NATO' that American strategists once imagined

may indeed be taking shape, only now it is being designed by regional powers themselves, according to their own perception of threats and potentially with the capacity to restrain not only Iran but also America's closest regional ally, Israel (Rasid, 2026).

Gist of the Study

1. The creation of the I2U2 Group comprising India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United State can indeed be considered a notable structural catalyst for the signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement on August 7, 2026 (Atlantic Council, 2026).

2. The leading cause of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement is heightened regional instability and growing distrust in traditional external security guarantors like the United States, member of I2U2 (Azhari, Shahid, & Gumrukcu, 2026).

3. The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement amply proves that U.S. influence in the Middle East has eroded which prompted the regional powers to shape their own security order (Cook, 2026).

4. The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement can be characterised as a strategic "double-edged sword" designed to simultaneously manage threat vectors from both Israel and Iran. Geopoliticians highlight specific eventualities; notably Israel's expansionist ventures and Iran's hegemonism where the Agreement could operate against either state (Situation Assessment, 2026).

5. The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement is widely described as a "marriage of short-term convenience" amidst varying foreign policies, societal structures, cultural traditions, social norms, highly complex relations among themselves (Bakir, 2026).

6. GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and UAE) less Saudi Arabia view the Mecca Agreement as merely strategic hedging rather than a total split from the US thereby meaning that American influence up to some extent will remain in the Middle East (Nasri, 2026).

7. Türkiye joined the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement with the objective of expanding its

strategic, diplomatic, and military-industrial footprint in the Middle East and South Asia (Aslan, 2022).

8. Saudi Arabia is indeed a primary driver behind the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, which it co-founded to directly bolster its national security amidst escalating regional conflicts (Riaz, 2026).

9. Pakistan signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement which substantially enhances its diplomatic and military standing in the Middle East (Political Studies, 2026).

10. Pakistan's feeble economy poses a significant challenge to its long-term effectiveness in the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, though the pact is primarily built on combining the distinct strategic strengths of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan (Yusuf, 2026).

11. In case (though premature to ascertain at this stage), the Mecca Agreement expands to include Iran in order to confront Israel with a mutual security pact which is suitably armed with nuclear weaponry, Israel's agenda of Greater Israel would run the risk of being unmaterialized. However, it could be an illusion (Roberts, 2026).

12. According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Iran could eventually become a member of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement which supports a collective regional security umbrella, Russia's long-standing vision for Gulf security, too (Agency, 2026).

Conclusion

An arduous and absolutely independent academic endeavour has been made to consult the most professional and experienced minds in the world of international affairs who formulate, guide and direct to implement policies of governments, states, nations, institutions, and countless multifaceted entities. Interpreting their collated opinions, analyses, and assessments, one feels confident in concluding that the Middle East is expected to remain chaotic as its nations continue to pursue deeply dichotomous policies. This study amply ascertains that modern Middle Eastern landscape would remain driven by three core fissiparous forces: competing personal domestic

agendas, outside foreign interventions, and deep-rooted religious, political and historical grievances. These dynamics would prevent the process of stabilization and continuously redraw the region's political, social, security and defence alliances. Amidst this particular scenario, the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement may not be considered as an exception by any standards. Nevertheless, geopolitics is a figurative field of competitive activity where unpredictability dominates the concert particularly politics.

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