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Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan Defense Agreement: A New Search for Regional Security?

On August 7, 2026, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed a joint defense agreement during the Tripartite Summit in Mecca. The agreement is an important development that could bring the security cooperation between the three countries to a more institutional level. The agreement is based on the principle that an armed attack against one of the parties will be considered an attack against all three. This could turn their existing defense cooperation into a stronger mutual security commitment. The agreement also includes areas such as defense industry, military training, joint exercises, and intelligence sharing. This raises the question of whether the agreement could develop into a more regular security mechanism over time rather than remaining only a political declaration. One of the most important aspects of the agreement is that three countries with

different capabilities have come together under the same security framework. Türkiye is a NATO member with a strong military and defense industry capacity, while Pakistan is a South Asian country with nuclear deterrence capabilities. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, is one of the leading economic and financial powers in the Gulf. These differences suggest that the strength of the agreement may come not only from military capabilities but also from the different resources and capacities of the three countries. However, turning these capabilities into real joint deterrence will require stronger political coordination, military cooperation, and the ability to act together during a crisis. Therefore, the real test of the agreement will not be its signing, but how the three countries cooperate through joint exercises, defense projects, and possible regional crises in the coming period. This development should also be considered in the context of the security debates that have taken place in the Gulf and the Middle East in recent years. Regional countries have increasingly tried to strengthen their own defense capabilities and reduce their dependence on external security guarantees, especially following recent conflicts in the region. The agreement between Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan can be seen as another example of this trend. However, the three countries have emphasized that the agreement is not directed against any third country and is defensive in nature. This suggests that they want to avoid creating the



image of a new regional bloc. For this reason, the agreement is more likely to develop at first as a complementary security mechanism between the three countries rather than as an alternative to NATO or another existing alliance. The defense industry dimension of the agreement is also important for Türkiye. Considering Ankara's growing defense industry relations with Gulf countries in recent years, the agreement could create new opportunities for joint production, technology sharing, and the development of military platforms. Türkiye's experience in unmanned aerial vehicles, naval platforms, and other defense systems, together with Saudi Arabia's efforts to develop its own defense industry, could support new projects under the agreement. Pakistan's defense industry experience and its long-standing military cooperation with Türkiye could also strengthen this process. However, the extent of progress in joint production and technology transfer will become clearer through future bilateral and trilateral agreements. Another important question for the future of the agreement is whether it will remain limited to the three countries. The participation of all Gulf countries in this mechanism should not be considered highly likely in the short term because the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council have different threat perceptions and foreign policy priorities. However, Saudi Arabia's participation may give other Gulf countries an opportunity to observe how this type of security cooperation develops. If joint military exercises and defense industry projects produce successful results, other countries may become more

interested in similar forms of security cooperation. Türkiye's improving relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in recent years are also important for understanding the background of the agreement. The normalization of political and economic relations between Ankara and Riyadh has created more opportunities for cooperation in defense and security. Türkiye's long-standing defense cooperation with Pakistan is another important factor. Therefore, the Mecca agreement can be understood not as the beginning of a completely new relationship, but as an attempt to bring existing relations between the three countries into a more common security framework. In this sense, the long-term success of the agreement will depend on how effectively the countries can turn their existing cooperation into a regular and institutional structure. In the coming period, the three countries may increase their joint military exercises, develop new defense industry projects, and make intelligence sharing more regular. If this process develops, the Mecca agreement could strengthen not only defense relations among the three countries but also security links between the Gulf and South Asia. However, for the agreement to develop into a wider regional security pact, it will be important to see whether the three countries can maintain a common understanding of regional threats and how closely they can cooperate during different regional crises. In conclusion, the joint defense agreement signed in Mecca can be seen as an



attempt by Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan to place their existing security relations within a clearer common framework. Although the agreement is not expected to change the existing alliance structure in the Middle East in the short term, its regional importance could increase if defense industry cooperation, joint military exercises, and mutual security commitments become more concrete. Therefore, the real impact of the agreement will be measured not by the signing ceremony itself, but by how much of this political agreement can be turned into institutional and military cooperation in the coming period.



The Role of Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) in the Middle East in the Context of Intelligence Diplomacy

The Head of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), Ibrahim Kalin, held a series of meetings with various actors during the first week of August. The first of these meetings took place on August 3 with Khalil al-Hayya, the Head of Hamas's Political Bureau. The meeting addressed issues including the roadmap prepared

for the transition to the second phase of the Gaza Peace Plan, efforts to achieve peace in Gaza, the situation in the West Bank, and Israel's illegal settlement activities in the region. The importance of cooperation among Egypt, Qatar, and Türkiye in achieving peace in Gaza was also emphasized. Another meeting was held on August 4 with Libyan officials. The discussions focused on Türkiye-Libya relations, issues concerning the maintenance of security and stability in Libya, and additional steps to be taken in this regard. Finally, on August 6, Kalin met with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani. The meeting addressed issues including the integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Türkiye-Syria relations, and developments concerning Syria-Lebanon relations. Considering the content and scope of these meetings, it is evident that Türkiye has established itself as an important and active actor in some of the Middle East's most significant issues and crises, while maintaining the ability to communicate with a diverse range of actors. However, these meetings demonstrate not only Türkiye's role as an important regional actor, but also the role played by MIT in shaping and implementing Türkiye's Middle East policy. Intelligence diplomacy is not a new concept. It has evolved considerably and attracted increasing attention, particularly throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From Türkiye's perspective, MIT has long played an active and



significant role in foreign policy. This role became more pronounced following a number of institutional and legal changes after 2014. The meetings conducted by Ibrahim Kalin can therefore be regarded as a continuation of this broader path. At the same time, it is important to note that MIT's diplomatic visibility has increased while its intelligence functions have remained central to its institutional role. Considering the substance of the meetings discussed above, MIT appears to have played an active role in various aspects of the Gaza crisis, the Syrian transition, and relations with Libya. This development has contributed to the organization assuming more active diplomatic functions. However, this does not mean that MIT is replacing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or acting as an independent foreign-policy actor. Rather, it indicates that MIT is operating in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, intelligence channels appear to serve as a complementary mechanism for diplomatic communication.



Spain imposes border controls against Italy as row over Ceuta migrant influx intensifies

The escalating row between Madrid and Rome over the sudden migrant influx into Ceuta, culminating in reciprocal border controls, goes far beyond a temporary diplomatic friction between two Mediterranean neighbors. Looking past the official press releases, this dispute reveals a fundamental breakdown in the Schengen system the most tangible symbol of European integration and exposes the fragility of inter-state solidarity within the European Union. Understanding the roots of this standoff requires examining the political realities of the leadership in both capitals. In Spain, Pedro Sánchez's socialist administration continues to navigate migration through the lens of human rights norms, international law, and European procedural mechanisms. In contrast, Giorgia Meloni's conservative government in Rome operates on a security-first agenda rooted in national sovereignty and strict border enforcement. Citing security concerns following the arrival of tens of thousands of migrants in Ceuta, Rome unilaterally suspended Schengen provisions for third country nationals arriving from Spain. Italy justified the move by claiming that vulnerabilities at Spain's external borders presented potential security and terrorism risks domestically. Madrid's sharp response labeling Italy's rationale "spurious" and immediately imposing counter-measures that include identity and visa checks on Italian citizens signals that this issue quickly transcended technical risk



management to become a direct political confrontation. By opting for strict reciprocity, Spain made it clear that it would not yield to unilateral pressure from Rome. The immediate catalyst in the Spanish exclave of Ceuta highlights the difficult balance between judicial mandates and operational border enforcement. The Spanish Supreme Court's ruling against the summary return of migrants intercepted at sea effectively neutralized the immediate deterrent capacity of border authorities. This legal shift was rapidly exploited by criminal human-smuggling networks leveraging social media platforms to organize mass crossings. Furthermore, the reaction from Moroccan channels viewing the judicial decision as the collapse of the primary barrier underscores how border management in North Africa remains deeply intertwined with broader geopolitical dynamics. The domestic legal bottleneck in Spain not only created immediate pressure on the ground but also provided political leverage for external actors and neighboring states like Italy to justify hardline stances. While the Schengen Borders Code permits the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls under exceptional security threats, the reciprocal use of this mechanism between two major Southern European powers sets a troubling precedent. The domino effect triggered by Italy's decision has intensified existing fault lines across the bloc. The fact that nations such as Denmark, Finland, and

the Czech Republic backed Italy's stance with Prague even suggesting a temporary suspension of Spain's Schengen status points to a deepening ideological divide within the EU. On one side stands a coalition advocating for a fortified European exterior and absolute border control; on the other are front-line states attempting to reconcile geographical vulnerability with human rights obligations. When the two largest powers along the Mediterranean route choose mutual border restrictions over strategic cooperation, it highlights the systemic inability of the EU to present a unified front on migration.



Missiles on the Korean Peninsula, Rhetoric in Europe: A Symmetrical Securitization Spiral

The ballistic missile launched by North Korea toward the Sea of Japan on August 6 once again highlighted the precarious balance upon which the regional security architecture rests. While this move by Pyongyang might appear to be merely a recurring provocation when viewed in isolation, it takes on greater significance when considered alongside the concurrent resurgence of Russian rhetoric claiming that "NATO is preparing for a



major war," as it demonstrates a simultaneous hardening of global security perceptions across two distinct geographic regions. Developments on the Korean Peninsula are following a classic security dilemma pattern. While joint military exercises conducted by South Korea and the US are perceived by Pyongyang as a threat, North Korea's missile responses to these drills reinforce the impulse for deterrence within the Seoul-Tokyo-Washington triangle. With each such move, this cycle of reciprocal reactions further entrenches the military bloc formation in the region. Indeed, observers note that Seoul's practice of issuing joint statements with Washington and Tokyo following each development is effectively institutionalizing this trilateral security mechanism. Meanwhile, North Korea's deepening military and political alignment with Russia transforms the situation from a mere bilateral crisis into an extension of great-power rivalry within the Asia-Pacific region. On the European front, however, the situation is being reversed. This time, NATO is cast as the actor preparing for war, while Russia is positioned as the victim in the narrative. A statement by Naryshkin, the head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service—claiming that the alliance is effectively preparing for a major conflict in the east by ramping up infrastructure and military exercises along Russia's borders—was reinforced by similar allegations reiterated by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zakharova following the Ankara Summit. This narrative

employs a classic securitization strategy by reframing NATO's restructuring process—embodied by the "NATO 3.0" vision and the pledge to raise defense spending to 5% of GDP—as preparations for aggression. What both cases have in common is that security rhetoric has transformed into a tool of legitimation, independent of actual military capabilities. While North Korea regards its missile activity as an act of legitimate defense, Russia portrays NATO's routine deterrence operations as preparations for war. NATO, for its part, justifies its expanding military posture as a response to the long-term threat posed by Russia. This race of mutual framing exemplifies a classic cycle: as each side interprets the other's moves as threats and boosts its own capabilities, the arms buildup and hardening rhetoric evolve into a self-reinforcing cycle on both regional and global scales. Although direct conflict is not anticipated in the short term, the potential for this two-way tension to constrict diplomatic channels should not be overlooked.



Zelenskyy's Visit to Serbia Might Mean More Than Bilateral Relations



Ukraine's EU accession negotiations have gained momentum, particularly following the Hungarian elections that replaced Viktor Orbán with Péter Magyar and removed Hungary's veto over Ukraine's accession process. However some concerns have emerged among some bureaucratic circles in the EU that they should avoid displaying extreme favouritism towards Ukraine to prevent discouraging the Western Balkan countries to question the objectivity of the union therefore reducing their determination for the EU integration altogether. The main concerns revolving around such discussion generally target Serbia, which is deemed to be problematic in their EU Accession Negotiations owing to their strategical partnership to Russia in political matters such as the Kosovo issue and the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War.

In this context, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's planned visit to Serbia on 8 August 2026 is quite significant. The outcome of the visit will surely demonstrate the course Serbia will take in the future, whether if they continue following a balance strategy between Russia and the EU. Some may argue that if the bilateral relations between Serbia and Ukraine gets on the right track the implications would might mean that Serbia might be ready to pursue a more pro-EU stance in the future readjusting their balance strategy. Such a signalling is most likely to attract the attention of the EU, as they deem Serbia's accession to the union very critical to establishing a regional political and economic stability in the Balkans.

The fact that Serbia has the largest economy in the Western Balkans and the largest population as well in the region among the non-EU countries, the integration of Serbia would present both challenges and advantages. Considering Serbia's significant economic and political influence over the non-EU Western Balkan states, particularly North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, Serbia's accession to the European Union could also facilitate the accession and integration processes of these countries. If Serbia were to join the EU before the beforementioned states, Serbia's existing regional influence could be potentially beneficial for the EU's broader integration framework. In this scenario, the European Union would not need to counterbalance Serbia's established political and economic influence in the region instead the existing networks would facilitate the gradual integration of the other Western Balkan countries. A few years where migration became one of the central points of discussion among the EU countries. Geopolitically speaking, Serbia's accession to the European Union is necessary to create a broader European front against the Russian political aggression towards Europe and the Balkans for the European Union. Via Serbia's accession to the union one of the closest allies of Russia in the Balkans would be gradually reoriented towards a pro-Western political and economic stance over time, reducing the Russian influence over the region altogether. Not to mention that Serbia provides a great



gateway for Russia to influence some other Balkan countries in the region through using Serbian political and economic influence as a proxy. In this respect, Serbian accession would not only constitute another step in the EU enlargement process but could also strengthen the Union's geopolitical position in the Western Balkans.



The Ceasefire Between Israel and Lebanon Remains Fragile

The talks between Israel and Lebanon, held in Rome with the mediation of the United States, aim to reduce tensions between the two countries. However, the fighting on the ground has once again shown how fragile the diplomatic process remains. The main topics of the talks include the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, the Lebanese army taking control of the border area, and steps toward the disarmament of Hezbollah. The United States continues to support dialogue between the two sides in an effort to prevent a new conflict. Despite the ongoing diplomatic talks, violence has continued. According to Reuters and AP

News, two Israeli soldiers were killed in an explosion in southern Lebanon. After the incident, the Israeli military carried out air strikes in the area. Lebanese health officials also reported that civilians were injured in the attacks. These developments show that the ceasefire remains very fragile and could break down at any time. According to The Guardian, Israel says it carried out the attacks because Hezbollah had violated the ceasefire. Hezbollah, however, says that it is not directly involved in the negotiations and will not accept demands to disarm. This shows that the different positions of the Lebanese government and Hezbollah make it more difficult to reach a lasting agreement. According to Al Jazeera, the talks in Rome still offer an important opportunity because they are the most comprehensive diplomatic efforts after a long period of tension. However, progress at the negotiating table will only be possible if the fighting on the ground also stops. The United States continues to stress the importance of keeping the diplomatic process alive and wants both sides to remain at the negotiating table. Washington's goal is to create a system in which Israel gradually withdraws and security is provided by the Lebanese army. However, every new attack on the ground shows that the progress made in the negotiations can easily be disrupted. Overall, the talks between Israel and Lebanon are seen as an important step toward achieving a lasting ceasefire in the region. However, every



new attack along the border damages trust between the two sides and makes the diplomatic process more difficult. For this reason, both the situation on the ground and the results of the ongoing talks will play an important role in shaping the future security balance in the Middle East.



Albanian Government Approved a \$302M Loan from the United States to Finance Modernization of the Albanian Military

Albanian parliament approved a **\$302M** loan agreement with the United States for the purpose of financing a grand-scale military modernization effort. Albanian Ministry of Defence stated that the loan will be used for the modernization of land, air and naval forces of Albania. However, it is said that the modernization efforts are not limited to the physical capacity of the Albanian military since some critical improvements over the cyber security and command systems are also planned to be done for the purposes of strengthening their military infrastructure.

Some opposition members raised their concerns over the fact that the government representatives rushed in to reach an agreement regarding the

loan from the United States. Some representatives from the opposition believe that the discussions regarding the loan was not sufficient and they were given little to no time to think about the long-term effects of the loan on the Albanian economy and military capacity. Though the members of the opposition parties are not entirely uncomfortable about the loan as they believe that such a financial support was needed to undertake a grand-scale military modernization process, they accused the government of acting hasty without transparency. It is known that Donald Trump kept accusing NATO allies over the low military efforts and the lack of commitment to the annual military expenditure quotas set by NATO ever since 2016. Besides Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and Poland, all of which expanded their levels of military expenditures because of the security concerns over Russo-Ukrainian War and the regional proximity the active battleground, many other NATO allies in Europe have been accused of displaying low commitment to the NATO standards and quotas by the United States officials. Albania, alongside many other NATO allies, failed to reach the annual military expenditure quotas despite performing a remarkable increase by spending about 58.9 billion “Albanian Lek” (\$717 million) in 2026 equalling %2.2 of their GDP. Although their military spending exceeds the “%2 of the annual GDP quota” set by NATO it falls short to achieve fulfilling the new quota demanding the annual military spending to be increased to %5 of the annual GDP.

Despite having been criticized by the Albanian opposition over possible long-term effects and the burden it will put on the Albanian economy, the loan from the United States seems like a pragmatically beneficial strategy for the government. The loan reinforces Albania's position as one of the reliable partners in the Western Balkans, deepening bilateral security cooperation and strengthening Albania's role within NATO. Even though Albania cannot be expected to undertake a critical role in NATO military operations as well as the fact that it would be illogical to expect Albania to burden itself high levels of military expenditures just like the United States or Turkey it is quite clear that the Albanian government views this loan as a bridge to strengthen their relations with the United States. In other words, the purposes of taking this loan go beyond the military reasons. However, it can be discussed that the loan's economic burden will surely affect the European Union Accession Negotiations of Albania by forcing the government to overlook financial sustainably, economic reforms to fulfil EU criteria for the accession. Even if a stronger Albania with strategically well-aligned military structure might help the EU in the long term in the matters of security and regional stability, the EU is most likely to prioritize democratic and economic integration of Albania rather than a military one.

. That is to say we can confidently argue that Albanian government has to set up their priorities in accordance with their long-term strategic goals which may mean that they might have to declare, even if it might not be an official statement, which one of the organization's partnerships they value the most, or they need it the most. Although Albania values the strategic support of the United States for Kosovo and for the Albanian national security as well, they aspire to become a member of the EU soon which complicates their situation.



The Rise in Administrative Detention of Palestinian Children: Security Policy and International Legal Concerns

Recent reports indicate that the number of Palestinian children held in Israeli prisons under administrative detention without formal charges has doubled over the past year, bringing renewed international attention to Israel's detention policies in the occupied West Bank. The increase has reignited debate over the compatibility of these practices with international legal standards, particularly those governing the protection of children during armed conflict and military occupation.



Administrative detention allows Israeli authorities to hold individuals for renewable periods without filing charges or conducting a criminal trial, often on the basis of confidential intelligence that is not disclosed to detainees or their legal representatives. Rooted in emergency regulations dating back to the British Mandate and incorporated into Israel's military legal framework in the occupied territories, the measure has long been defended by Israeli authorities as a preventive security tool. Critics, however, argue that its extensive use undermines due process and weakens the right to a fair trial.

The issue becomes particularly contentious when applied to children. Unlike Israeli settlers living in the same territory, Palestinian minors in the occupied West Bank are prosecuted under Israel's military court system. Human rights organizations contend that this dual legal framework subjects Palestinian children to prolonged detention, interrogation and trial under military procedures that fall short of international juvenile justice standards.

Data compiled by Palestinian organizations illustrate that the latest rise is part of a broader pattern. Since 2000, more than 2,100 Palestinian children have reportedly been killed in incidents involving Israeli forces and settlers. Since 2008, around 3,000 children have been arrested and prosecuted, while approximately 700 Palestinian minors continue to be detained each year. Rights groups also report that around 170 Palestinian children are currently being held in Israeli prisons,

with an increasing proportion placed under administrative detention rather than facing formal criminal charges. International legal standards, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, stipulate that the detention of children should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. Human rights organizations argue that holding minors without charge or trial is inconsistent with these principles and raises concerns over due process and the protection of children's rights. Israel, on the other hand, maintains that administrative detention is an essential security measure designed to prevent imminent attacks while protecting sensitive intelligence sources.

As security operations in the occupied West Bank have intensified since the outbreak of the Gaza war, the growing use of administrative detention against Palestinian children has become an increasingly prominent point of contention. The trend highlights the broader challenge of balancing security considerations with the legal obligations to safeguard children's rights under international humanitarian and human rights law.