

► Move 'a response to regional tensions, partnership'

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan sign mutual defense pact

By Fan Anqi

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan on Wednesday signed a formal mutual defense pact pledging that any attack on either nation would be considered an attack on both, in a move that significantly strengthens a decades-long security partnership amid heightened regional tensions.

The enhanced defense ties come as Gulf Arab states grow increasingly wary about the reliability of the US as their longstanding security guarantor. Israel's attack on Qatar last week heightened those concerns, Reuters reported.

The weighty agreement states that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," according to a statement issued by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad, per AP.

Pakistani state television showed

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, hugging each other with a smile after signing the agreement. In attendance was Pakistan's army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, regarded as the country's most powerful person, media reported.

Reuters said the pact "could shift the strategic calculus in a complex region," as Gulf states have sought to stabilize ties with both Iran and Israel to resolve longstanding security concerns but the attempts were upended with the Gaza war, with Gulf state Qatar subjected to direct hits twice in a year, once by Iran, which attacked the US' Al Udeid airbase in Qatar in retaliation against US strikes on Iran, and another by Israel.

The agreement between the two nations comes two days after an extraordinary joint session between the

Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was called, in the wake of Israel's attack on the Qatari capital Doha on September 9.

However, the two sides stressed that the defense pact is "a culmination of years of discussions," not "a response to specific countries or specific events," a senior Saudi official said when asked about its timing, according to the Reuters report.

The agreement's core clause – treating an attack on one as an attack on both – resembles a security guarantee found in formal alliance treaties – For Saudi Arabia, it signals a move to bolster its own security; for Pakistan, it also serves as a counterbalance to India, Liu Zhongmin, a professor from the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times on Thursday.

Taiwan's new missile jointly made with US 'won't impact cross-Straits military balance'

By Liu Xuanzun and Zhao Jingru

The island of Taiwan reportedly showed off its first missile to be jointly manufactured with a US arms maker on Wednesday, Reuters reported. A Chinese mainland expert on Thursday slammed the move as a solicitation of US support for "Taiwan independence" and an attempt to resist reunification by force, while emphasizing that the missile cannot play any significant role when facing their mainland counterparts.

Ahead of the Taipei Aerospace and Defense Technology Exhibition, Taiwan's military-owned "National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology" (NCSIST) put on display Barracuda-500, an autonomous, low-cost cruise missile designed by US defense technology startup Anduril Industries, according to the Reuters report.

The NCSIST claimed that through technology transfer, it plans to mass produce in Taiwan the missile, designed for group attacks on warships and similar to exploding drones. The NCSIST declined to offer details such as a timeline for production, or expected volume, Reuters reported.

Reuters claimed that the move marks a major step in the fast-growing defense cooperation between Taipei and Washington to "counter the Chinese mainland's military threat."

The so-called jointly manufactured missile is just Taiwan regional leader Lai Ching-te and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities' attempt to rely on the US to bolster their courage. Neither the weapons sold by the US to Taiwan nor the military equipment jointly produced by these two can have any impact on the military balance of power across the Taiwan Straits, Chinese mainland military affairs expert Zhang Junshe told the Global Times on Thursday.

"The US is only using the island of Taiwan as a pawn, and this attempt cannot stop China from achieving national reunification," Zhang noted.

The so-called jointly developed missile is of little use, Zhang said, citing the lack of details such as a timeline for production, or expected volume.

Zhang said, "Since the mainland's missile technology is more advanced and their numbers are greater, the island of Taiwan's missiles cannot play a significant role."

In response to a question on US-Taiwan military cooperation, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang said at a regular press conference in June that Lai and his kind are trying to find all kinds of ways to pay "protection fees" to their US masters, which squandered hard-earned money of the people in Taiwan. This is exactly "selling off the farmland of one's family without being conscience-stricken."



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (left) embraces Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after signing a joint defense pact in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on September 17, 2025. Photo: VCG

China is concerned about Netanyahu's China-related remarks, and firmly opposes them: Embassy

In response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks that some countries, including China and Qatar, were investing in artificial intelligence technologies and using social media to carry out an "information blockade" against Israel, a spokesperson from Chinese Embassy in Israel said on Thursday that such claims are completely baseless, harmful to China-Israel relations, and China is seriously concerned and firmly opposes them.

Netanyahu made such remarks on September 15 during a meeting with a delegation of US state legislators.

China is shocked by the remarks made by the Israeli leader. Such claims are completely baseless, harmful to China-Israel relations, and China is seriously concerned and firmly opposes them, said a spokesperson from Chinese Embassy in Israel, according to a notice published by the embassy on its WeChat account.

Blaming critical voices on

a few social media platforms and then pointing the finger at China is nothing but a case of "seeking the wrong cure for the illness." It targets the wrong party and prescribes the wrong remedy, said the spokesperson.

For some time now, the international community has been closely following the situation in Gaza, with a broad consensus calling for an early ceasefire and end to the fighting. The Palestinian issue lies at the heart of the Middle East question. The security of all

countries in the region, including Israel and Palestine, is interdependent. Israel's legitimate security concerns should be respected, and Palestine's rights to survival, statehood and development must also be realized, said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson urge Israel to heed the strong call of the international community, immediately halt its military operations in Gaza, and achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as soon as possible to prevent an even greater hu-

manitarian catastrophe. China sincerely hopes to see the countries of the region coexist peacefully at an early date, achieving stability and common prosperity, and stands ready to work with the international community to play a constructive role in easing the regional situation, the spokesperson noted.

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