



The Mecca Agreement: A New “Islamic NATO” and What It Means for American Retrenchment

On August 7, in Islam’s holiest city, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed the Mecca (or Makkah) Joint Defence Agreement, declaring that an armed attack on any one of the three nations “shall be regarded as an attack against them all” — language deliberately echoing NATO’s Article 5. Analysts and outlets quickly nicknamed it the “Islamic NATO,” though none of the three governments has officially embraced that label. The pact builds on a bilateral Saudi-Pakistani mutual-defense agreement signed in 2025, with Turkey’s addition transforming it into a trilateral security framework.



AlpamayoPhoto/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The combination is formidable on paper: Turkey brings NATO’s second-largest standing army and a fast-growing defense-export industry; Saudi Arabia contributes vast financial and energy leverage; and Pakistan supplies a large military and the only nuclear arsenal in the Muslim world. Yet as one legal analysis noted, the signed text sets out no specific military commitments, and neither of the prior bilateral defense arrangements it builds on has ever actually been invoked — grounds for skepticism about how operationally binding the “Article 5” language really is.

Effect of America’s Middle East Influence

Geopolitical analyst George Friedman, in a recent interview, offered a striking read on what the pact signals about America’s regional posture. In his view, the alliance emerges directly from a deliberate American retrenchment in the Middle East — a strategic choice by Washington to shift burdens onto regional partners rather than continue underwriting their security indefinitely. Friedman argued that the U.S.-Israel relationship, “essential” during the Cold War when it helped block Soviet-aligned Egypt and Syria, has become something closer to what he called an “elective affinity” now that the Cold War rationale no longer applies — meaning Washington may increasingly value ties with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan on their own terms rather than automatically subordinating them to Israel’s preferences.

While the new bloc is telling Washington that one of its interests is dismantling Iranian-backed non-state actors such as Hezbollah, journalist Pepe Escobar suggests a somewhat cozier relationship, writing, “Significantly, Turkiye informed Iran before signing the Mecca deal. Extra layers of spin even promote Iran joining the deal in a later stage, as Riyadh in theory rejects military strikes on Tehran, and Iran might be covered by Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella.”

Whatever the truth of the matter, it’s a reminder that American disengagement doesn’t leave a vacuum



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on September 2, 2026

so much as invite new blocs to fill it, on terms Washington won't be able to fully control.

This article is part of The New American's weekly online newsletter Insider Report, which is emailed to TNA subscribers each week. Click [here](#) to subscribe to The New American to receive the Insider Report and access exclusive content.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.