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## Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Pact Signals New Defense Alignment



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DUBAI/ISLAMABAD — Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed a historic mutual defense pact on

Wednesday, significantly deepening their long-standing security partnership at a time of

heightened regional instability. The agreement comes as Gulf Arab states grow increasingly

uncertain about the reliability of U.S. security guarantees, particularly after Israel's recent military strike on Qatar.

The pact, signed in Riyadh by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, stipulates that any aggression against either nation will be treated as aggression against both. According to a statement from the Pakistani prime minister's office, the accord is designed to expand defense cooperation, strengthen deterrence, and contribute to regional and global security.

A senior Saudi official described the pact as the culmination of years of talks rather than a reaction to specific events, stressing that it institutionalizes the close military and political ties already in place. When asked about the nuclear dimension, the official emphasized that the deal is a comprehensive defensive arrangement encompassing all military means, without explicitly referencing a nuclear umbrella.

The agreement follows Israel's attempted airstrike in Doha against Hamas leaders during ceasefire discussions mediated by Qatar, an incident that angered Arab states and intensified concerns about security vulnerabilities in the Gulf. Qatar has faced two direct strikes within the past year, once from Iran and most recently from Israel, underscoring regional volatility.

The pact also carries implications for India, Pakistan's regional rival. Saudi officials

acknowledged the importance of balancing ties, affirming that relations with New Delhi are stronger than ever and will continue to grow despite the deepening alignment with Islamabad. Images broadcast on Pakistani state television showed Prime Minister Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman embracing after the signing, joined by Pakistan's powerful army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, underlining the agreement's historic significance.