



Ambiguities in Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement: A Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines discursive ambiguity within the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement and how the linguistic constructions, omissions and strategic vagueness are used in defining and enforcing the bilateral security agreements. Based on the agreement as a primary source of data, the analysis utilized Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its three-dimensional model created by Fairclough to analyze the textual aspects of the agreement, the practices of interpretation, and the power relations that may have led to the formulation of the pact. The study has three main aims which include establishment of the main ambiguities of the agreement discourse, exploration of their consequences to bilateral military cooperation and regional security, and establishment of policy-based suggestions that would promote clarity, transparency, and legitimacy in its operations. The results indicate the creation of ambiguity by non-specific terminology, general security clauses, and the lack of explicit implementation and accountability mechanisms- all the trends that are typical of strategic ambiguity that is prevalent in the field of defense diplomacy. These discursive characteristics introduce a flexibility of interpretations but can also bring about a lack of convergence of expectations, a decreased security coordination within the institution and a possible misperception of the wider Middle Eastern and South Asian security setting. The paper suggests better articulation of the role of defense, documents available publicly to explain the process, and enhanced internal means of decision-making.

Keywords: Pak-Saudi defense cooperation; strategic ambiguity; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); security discourse; bilateral military relations; regional security; policy transparency; defense pact analysis

INTRODUCTION

In September 2025, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan entered into an agreement of Strategic Mutual Opening of Defense Agreement (SMDA) which promised the two nations to come to their aid in case of an eventuality foreign attack. The international has been drawn to this historic agreement community as a novel phenomenon, which unites the Middle East and south Asia security. In the past, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have enjoyed a close tie. Pakistan received numerous financial aid (soft loans, oil subsidies, and) provided by Saudi Arabia remittances) and diplomatic support, and Pakistan afforded the Kingdom with security support and military training (Ali, 2025).

Thus, the long-established cooperation gets embedded in the new defense contract. This era is representative of the dynamic forces of the world. With the reduction of the US military in the Middle East, the gulf states are increasingly taking the responsibility of defending themselves as well. It notes that the Gulf governments suggest that they have had a freedom never experienced before but the U.S soldiers are slowly retreating (Robert, 2025). This diversification in the selection of Saudi Arabia could be observed in terms of alliance with Pakistan. By luring Riyadh is hedging its security reliable partners that are not in its conventional reliance on Washington. There are so many benefits of the alliance to Pakistan. Pakistan have long been feeling like them are being surrounded by their allies (the United States, China and the Middle) in a strategic manner East) and the official inclusion of Saudi Arabia on their side gives Islamabad an ultimate counter-balance. The Pakistani leaders are selling the deal politically as an offering the position or assistance of Pakistan in terms of defense expenditure. With economic aspects, a better relationship with Saudi Arabians would raise funds and support to Pakistan.

According to researchers, SMDA should be interpreted in terms of deterring theory, international legal restraints, and geopolitical balancing. The small capacity of Pakistan and the internal political limitations in this country make the practical application of the agreement more difficult, whereas the legal vagueness of the nuclear sharing issue questions the nonproliferation standards within the international community. Moreover, the symbolic, loose commitments of the pact provide both nations with a diplomatic instrument that can be used to indicate alliances and assure of stability in an environment of fluctuating regional circumstances, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabian strategic realignments in the Gulf and the search of greater geopolitical relevance by Pakistan (APLN Network, 2025; Middle East Institute, 2025). This research background preconditions the critical analysis of the discourse of the pact, the disclosure of the underlying ambiguities, and their evaluation in terms of the regional security structures.

One such development in the bilateral relations is the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on 17 September 2025, and which indicates a closer security relationship. The agreement binds both countries to consider aggression of one state as aggression of both states, which is the collective security paradigm. Nevertheless, even with the universal

acclaim within society and government, the deal has been infused with a lot of gray areas in regard to its strategic scope, operational leadership, and practical action. In an effort to question these ambiguities, this article deploys the tool of discourse analysis to situate and contextualize these ambiguities in bilateral, regional, and global geopolitical processes to reveal the underlying tensions and plural construal in official discourses, representations in the media, and policy narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Saudi-Pakistan Defense Cooperation: The History

The relationship between the two states has been that of close defense cooperation since the 1960s, based on the commonality of strategic interests, and cultural inclinations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Such collaboration was initiated by giving training and advisory help to the Royal Saudi Air Force, which resulted in the signing of the initial official defense cooperation agreement in 1967. The 1970s and 1980s saw the expansion of this alliance as the region became more and more unstable. It was also during this time that the military exchange of personnel between the countries and technical skills were enhanced with thousands of Saudi officers being trained in Pakistan and large numbers of Pakistani troops being deployed in Saudi Arabia. These deployments were at the highest point in 1980s as Pakistan posted over 20,000 troops in strategic territories such as Tabuk in support of Saudi Arabia border security measures during regional conflicts such as Iran-Iraq War and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Pakistan Saudi defense cooperation has taken a new face in the modern era involving military drills, collaboration in the defense sector and even in counterterrorism activities. The fact that the former Pakistan army chief, General Raheel Sharif, was appointed as the leader of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition led by Saudi Arabia in 2017 underscores the strengthening of the strategic relationship. This alliance is further consolidated in the 2025 Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement which reflects decades of trust and working together as the two nations counterbalance threats in the region and improve their security relationship. The two countries have institutionalized a kind of defence relationship that goes far beyond the traditional military co-operation and includes counter-terrorist, regional security and strategic deterrence. The major achievements in Pak Saudi defence relations are:

- a) 1967 - Defence Cooperation Agreement Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed their first formal military cooperation agreement which formed the basis of Pakistani troops deployment in the Kingdom.
- b) 1970s – Pakistani Military Presence: On the request of Riyadh, thousands of Pakistani soldiers had been deployed in Saudi Arabia to boost its defence framework. Saudi fighter jets were also piloted by Pakistani pilots and this played a great role in the modernization of the Royal Saudi Air Force.
- c) 1982 -Defence Protocol: A broad-based defence cooperation protocol was signed which institutionalized the role of Pakistan in the training of Saudi military staff and enhancing the operational preparedness of the two.

d) 1990-91 -Gulf war: Pakistan had over 11,000 soldiers, both air and land based in defense of Saudi land and to protect the holy Makkah and Madinah territories in the first Gulf war.

e) 2004 and beyond: Al-Samsam Exercises: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia began to have counter-terrorism exercises on a biannual basis, indicating their common concern with the threats of modern security.

f) 2016, North Thunder Military Exercise- This was the biggest multinational exercise in the region by that time with Pakistan contributing to the frontline with the Saudi forces.

g) 2018 – Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC): This is a coalition based in Riyadh, with Gen. (R) Raheel Sharif of Pakistan as its first Commander-in-Chief, demonstrating Saudi confidence in the Pakistani military leadership.

h) Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement: Signed on 17 September 2025 in Riyadh by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the agreement stated that any act of aggression against one of the nations would be viewed as aggression towards both, following the principle of NATO Article 5.

Collective Defense and Alliance Theory

How states make commitments of security through treaties, and the relation of these commitments to credible deterrence have long been the subject of analysis by alliance theory. Realist and neorealist approaches indicate that alliances can be used to equalize the threats, share capabilities and deal with uncertainty (Mearsheimer, 2001; Walt, 1987). Yet, according to other researchers, alliance strength is not only determined by its formal provisions but credibility by the actors that the treaty is going to be respected (Snyder, 1984). Furthermore, unclear treaties can be flexible, but this will lead to a loss of deterrent effectiveness when the opposing side does not believe in the promise (Lebow and Stein, 1995).

Extended deterrence is the key concept that explains the phenomenon of nuclear alliances. By a nuclear power giving a commitment to protect a non-nuclear or weaker ally, it is actually expanding their nuclear umbrella which is an assurance that they will retaliate in case of aggression. Existing literature, including that which investigates the act of NATO deterring the Soviet Union, demonstrates that the credible extended deterrence would not only involve the declaration of commitment but also capabilities that are forward-placed, communications, and political determination (Quester, 1986; Snyder, 1984). With regards to the SMDA, speculation on whether the Saudi Arabia nuclear resources could be implicitly or explicitly covered by Pakistan has been made by the analysts and commentary. Others have interpreted the agreement as a nuclear deterrent to Riyadh people; others believe that the ambiguity could perhaps be on purpose, creating maximum deterrence with minimum risk of proliferation (Chatham House, 2025).

Discourse Analysis of Security Studies

Various approaches and techniques of discourse analysis have progressively gained relevance in International Relations (IR) to comprehend the impact of language, narratives, and framing in security structures (Campbell, 1998; Fierke,

2007). One can learn more about the construction, contestation, and mobilization of meanings by concentrating on how the actors discuss alliances. To illustrate this, the discourse-analytic research of NATO enlargement or US-Japan security relationships, the legitimacy and credibility of the alliances are formed by the official statements and the public debates (Doty, 1993; Bleiker, 2000).

A discourse analysis, in the context of the PakSaudi SMDA, assists in tracing the discursive divergences how the pact is framed by government officials, media outlets, think tanks, and other regional actors and how they highlight or underline specific provisions and how their narratives contribute to strategic ambiguity.

Previous Researches

The Saudi-Pakistan relations and the regional security are significant to study background information. According to the analysts, Pakistan has never been out of a delicate strike ironic between Iran and Saudi Arabia. It indicates that Pakistan is strategically positioned geographically, as Anwar, Saqib, and Mustafa (2025) put it, it is situated geographically amidst the two regional Power plays, which is Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has ha good religious and economic relations with Sunni dominated Saudi Arabia despite the fact that the country is a long-bordered country and was originally allied to Iran.

Anwar et al. (2025) described that it was neutral and mediated between the two enemies, Pakistan benefited on each side as it offered military skills to both sides and got financial aid in form of Saudi Arabia and Iranian intelligence assistance. Current literature is based on transformative situations. It analyzes the example of the relations between Pakistan and Saudi as the mutually dependent one. Their conclusion is that the tie is to a larger extent a transactional tie with Saudi Arabia getting access to Pakistan labor, training and diplomatic support and

Saudi authorities deposit and take low-interest loans regularly, which is regularly paid to Pakistan through oil payment. The presentation of a problem fails to foster a feeling of responsibility within a team (Satti & Rid, 2025; Muzaffar, et. al., 2017; Khan, et. al., 2019). This research states that The alliance is not driven by ideological solidarity but by the common strategic goals. Besides, other powers learn the Saudi Arabian approach of strategic in a multipolar world. hedging: Riyadh is gambling with different giant powers (the United States, China, India, etc.) to avoid not being at a disadvantage in one partner (Mansour, 2024). The Pakistan SMDA has now become a fit in Saudi Arabia portfolio because Islamabad is a constituent of the security portfolio. On the same note, the states in the in-group discover that in order to become more independent, they seek to know more about the world around them (Al-Khatib, 2022) the Middle East are expanding the range of their alliances. Affiliations to also exist the Asia-Pacific region.

Ali (2025) notes that the country is concurrently cultivating its relations with the nations in the Asian-Pacific area, such as Bangladesh and India. This is according to Ali (2025) the implication of the policy of Riyadh towards Pakistan is to be considered as a part of greater adjustment of Saudi foreign policy. The South Asian has concentrated on the India-Pakistan rivalry, taking the outside factors into consideration. It is claimed that India tends to retaliate against the actions taken by

Pakistan in reference to security. Singh reveals the way that the alliances of Pakistan are undermined, partially, by the constriction of its relations with the Gulf countries (sales of weapons, oil contracts) (Yaseen, et. al., 2016; Singh, 2024). According to it, India would enhance its domestic defense by the eventuality that the deterrence position of Pakistan is strengthened. Both of them suggest the new friendship between Islamabad and Saudi. The approach of India will put Arabia into consideration (Raeesa and Akhtar, 2025). A number of studies deal with economic foundations of security relations.

According to Patel (2021), security agreements are regularly driven by joint energy-related and trade-related agendas. As an example, the Gulf governments desire to have stable markets, whilst Pakistan desires to have reliable markets in oil and investment. In this way, it can be assumed that the SMDA is a subset of an overall strategic computation, Saudi investments in the energy industry of Pakistan and Belt and Road projects of China in the region (Patel, 2021; Youns and Muzaffar, 2025). On the whole, the literature defines the relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as complicated and rooted. It points to the fact that the ideological affinity is an element but The former are practical security and economic problems. Nevertheless, the 2025 SMDA is not yet a subject of research.

Historically, strategic alliances and mutual defense agreements are complicated mechanisms that are determined by geopolitical reasons and national interests (Smith, 2018). The Pakistan-Saudi relationship has gone through decades of military collaboration, economic relations, and affinity on the basis of the religious-cultural fronts, but is characterized by differing foreign policy orientations (Ahmed, 2025). The current body of literature on security alliances in South Asia and Middle East identifies three key thematic issues, including strategic ambiguity, leadership asymmetry, and policy differences (Khan, 2023; Bremmer, 2025).

Strategic ambiguity can easily enhance the flexibility of alliances but can be misconstrued by the home people and foreign influences (Jones, 2022). The leadership imbalance, especially when it comes to heterogeneous alliances with varying military capability, necessitates negotiated operational command (Greenfield, 2021). Rifts on regional matters like Yemen and Israel-Palestine highlight challenges in the harmonization of national interests in collective defense systems (Ahmed, 2025; Bremmer, 2025).

The methodological approach of discourse analysis exposes the influence of power relations, institutional politics as well as geopolitical settings on the textual construction of such agreements (Fairclough, 2013). The most recent works on the SMDA discourse highlight its symbolic signaling role, strategic obscurity in nuclear sharing, and the disputed legitimacy of the discourse in the confines of the Pakistani democratic institutions (Akhtar, 2025; Fahim, 2025).

Research Gap

There is a distinct research gap concerning the linguistic and discursive process of creating the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement because the vast majority of the available body of knowledge in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations revolves around geopolitical, economic, or military aspects instead of the use of

language to derive and implement the meaning of defense commitments. Although the literature on the Middle Eastern and South Asian security alliances emphasizes that the use of strategic ambiguity in diplomacy is a phenomenon, they do not focus on how the ambiguity is integrated into the textual, structure of bilateral defense agreements and its impact on the policy outcomes. Furthermore, it has been noted that the academic analysis of the pact text through systematic discourse-analytic tools like the Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough is not engaged extensively, and the changes through vague wording, lack of articulation of implementation processes and open-ended security provisions are yet to be investigated and their impacts on expectations and power dynamics between the two states remains unaddressed. The research thus fills a critical gap because it presents a comprehensive textual and discursive analysis of the agreement where ambiguity highlights the main implications of the transparency, clarity of operations and security of the region.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify the principal ambiguities within the discourse surrounding the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement.
2. Analyze the implications of these ambiguities for bilateral military cooperation and regional security.
3. Provide policy-relevant recommendations addressing transparency, legitimacy, and operational clarity.

Research Questions

This study answers the following questions

1. What are the principal ambiguities present in the discourse surrounding the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement?
2. How do these identified ambiguities influence bilateral military cooperation and broader regional security dynamics?
3. What policy measures can effectively address issues of transparency, legitimacy, and operational clarity within the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement

Significance of the Study

This work is of great importance because it helps to fill an important gap in the knowledge about the linguistic and strategic ambiguities inherent in the Pak Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement that is a pact that defines the regional security dynamics in South Asia and the Middle East. Using discourse analysis, the research throws light on the role of vague, undefined or politically charged terminologies on state behavior, expectations of diplomacy as well as the decoding of defense commitments a phenomenon that has been well recognized in both studies of security and critical discourse analysis. The need to analyze these ambiguities is because defense agreements often are based on the use of strategic words, which may

either facilitate flexibility or prove to be misaligned between the states which have signed it, which influence the trust, cooperation and crisis handling. The results add to the general discussion of transparency, legitimacy, and policy making in bilateral security agreements and can provide information that can be beneficial to policy makers, regional security analysts, and scholars of Middle Eastern- South Asian relations. Besides, the research has methodological implications since it reveals how discourse analysis may reveal latent meanings, power dynamics, and interpretive issues in diplomatic writings. Finally, the study provides more rational policymaking by suggesting strategies to minimize grey areas and increase the level of mutual understanding in defense cooperation models.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Sources

The study employs qualitative discourse analysis, drawing from official statements and press releases from Pakistan and Saudi governments.

Data Analysis

The thematic discourse analysis framework is used to categorize and interpret narrative constructions ambiguities with regards to the SMDA. Themes including strategic vagueness, role of leadership, and divergence of conflict, nuclear ambiguity, legitimacy and perception of the public are coded. Intertextual connections of government rhetoric, media framing and commentary of experts are analyzed to find the pattern of agreement and disagreement. The discourse is also placed in the geopolitical situations, such as regionalism and power alliances of the world.

Results and Discussion

The critique is based on the three-dimensional model of Fairclough, socio-cognitive approach of van Dijk, and Foucauldian views of the relationships between power and knowledge.

The text formulates the Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement using very ceremonial, symbolic and deferential language, which clouds the operation details. The terms of historic and strategic relations, bonds of brotherhood, Islamic solidarity, and shared commitment to improve security are phrases that produce the sense of unity, yet they are not very specific in terms of the obligations, mechanisms, and boundaries. In terms of CDA, these lexical options serve as ideologically charged signifiers, which prefigure unanimity and repress clarity (Fairclough, 2013).

At one point, there arises a central ambiguity in the general statement: any aggression to one of the countries will count to an aggression on both. This is similar to a collective-defense clause, but not specifications are given of:

- i. what is considered to be aggressive,
- ii. who determines aggression,
- iii. what are the anticipated types of response,
- iv. whether the promise is obligatory or not.

This vagueness makes such strategies flexible but introduces interpretive ambiguity which typifies what van Dijk (2015) terms semantic macro-ambiguity

where broad categories conceal unequal interests and power dynamics.

Also, the text fails to specify defense areas (e.g., cyber, intelligence, logistics), the policy of decision making, or commitments of resources. In its place, discourse focuses much on the gratitude, goodwill and ceremonial exchange- an instance of discursive politeness that substitutes technical clarity with the symbolic capital of diplomacy.

The over-flattery (warm welcome, generous hospitality, prolonged prosperity, etc.) in terms of Foucauldian view acts as power ceremony in which the hierarchal relationship is preserved, and the priority to substantive governance or defense duty is shifted (Foucault, 1980).

The ambiguities in the wording of the pact may cause the two nations, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to have different interpretations of the defense promises. The agreement is described in the text as bolstering the so-called joint deterrence and fostering the so-called security and peace, but all of these high-level formulations allow unequal expectations. Strategic ambiguity can encourage flexibility in security studies, and can also make a crisis situation more likely to be miscalculated (Buzan and Waever, 2003).

To work bilaterally, absence of operational detail can lead to:

- The two states have uneven perceptions of threats.
- Possible military commitments, particularly when one of the parties is in conflict in the region.
- Difficulties in the process of negotiation during the implementation because of vague terms.
- Reliance on political leadership as opposed to institutions.

The expansive mutual-defense provision may have geopolitical effects on a regional scale, especially signaling to Iran and Gulf competitors but with no explicit undertakings, it might either lead to a rise in tensions, or be interpreted as rhetoric. As long as diplomatic leverage is enhanced, ambiguity might also deter the credibility of a pact when it is not operationalized (Sandler, 2017).

In addition, the excessive application of such themes as brotherhood and Islamic solidarity can also distort actual security calculations, creating expectations among the domestic audiences that are not aligned with the strategic facts, also known as discursive populism with the help of foreign policy narratives (van Dijk, 2015) described by CDA.

1. As a way of improving transparency, legitimacy and clarity of operations, a few measures arise as a result of the discourse analysis;
2. The agreement is to be defined on what qualifies as aggression, types of threats, and mechanisms to be used in decision-making on joint response.
3. Formal committees, joint command or communication channels would stop depending on symbolic diplomatic language and instead make the shift to institutional obligations.
4. An annex outlining areas of cooperation, such as cybersecurity, intelligence sharing, training, logistics, etc., would minimize the interpretation gaps.

5. Clearly defining the scope of the pact would avoid unrealistic expectations and increase the strategic predictability.
6. It is possible to be less dependent on rhetorical devices (e.g., brotherhood, solidarity) in official documents, thereby creating clarity without losing diplomatic respect.
7. The policy legitimacy ought to be upheld by way of messaging realistic promises as opposed to the ceremonial wording.

The ambiguity of the agreement is its main core since the strategic threats addressed are not described. There is no clarification in the official accounts that the SMDA seeks to prevent aggression by Israel, Iran, or other forces or whether it is involved in operations in the wars such as Yemen (Ahmed, 2025). This ambiguity brings about disjointed popular cognizance and political splendor. There is no published text of the treaty, and this adds to the ambiguity. Considering that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have significant financial and diplomatic resources and the Pakistani army is armed and its military experience of combating in the region, the vagueness of the hierarchy will be seen in the discourse (Fahim, 2025). The military of Pakistan is recognized as the operational front-line, but the processes of the amalgamation of Saudi political assistance and the military actions taken by Pakistan are not confirmed, which promotes the possibility of inefficiency.

Great variations of the discourse arise in the case of the conflict in Yemen, as the country had long resisted the direct military action in the area despite Saudi requests because of its relations with other nations in the region and national interests (Ahmed, 2025). The skewed positions on the question of Israel-Palestine also come out-Pakistan has been in vocal support of Palestinian sovereignty, whereas Saudi Arabia has been quietly conducting diplomatic ties with Israel (Ahmed, 2025).

The most controversial debate is on the speculation of the possibility of Pakistan nuclear weapons to spread protective umbrella to protect Saudi Arabia. The words used in official statements are always unclear, leaving room to speculate but not pledging (Wikipedia, 2025; Akhtar, 2025). It is such ambiguity that is causing regional anxiety and strategic uncertainty. The SMDA has not been formally ratified by the Pakistani parliament, which is raising controversy on the issue of democratic legitimacy and transparency (Ahmed, 2025). In Pakistan, the sentiment of skepticism in the people is driven by the fear of being drawn into the conflicts with outside forces, unlike in Saudi Arabia where the alliance is described as a formalized, historic one. The discourse analysis reveals that the Pak-Saudi SMDA is more of a political message to solidarise bilateral unity and collective deterrence symbolism, instead of being a clear operational commitment. This ambiguity of strategy is beneficial to both of these states in that it provides the greatest degree of flexibility; it enables Saudi Arabia to be flexible in its regional US partnerships and it enables Pakistan to be flexible in its domestic security and geopolitical limitations.

Nonetheless, ambiguity creates risks: mismatched expectations, confusion of operations, and destabilization perceptions in the region. The absence of clarity regarding the definitions of threat and leadership position can be a barrier to rapid

military response in the situation of emergencies. The disagreements on Yemen and Israel-Palestine require long-term diplomatic control to avoid corrosion of the alliance integrity. Although nuclear ambiguity is a politically convenient tool, it can increase insecurities in the region and create countermeasures that will result in hostility, thus making it difficult to stabilize the situation over time. This lack of parliamentary checks and balances in Pakistan compromises the issue of democratic accountability, which may give rise to popular dissatisfaction and political turmoil. To overcome these ambiguities, a greater transparency, institutional clarity, participation of parliament, and communication to the public are necessary in order to gain trust and operational feasibility. The effectiveness of the alliance in future will be based on its ability to align the competing national interests and geopolitical orientation within the unstable regional security environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement illustrates a multifaceted strategic alliance with numerous ambiguities in the discourse that reflect the geopolitical tensions and the differences in the priorities of the national interests. Although the agreement strengthens bilateral relations and indicates a strong purpose of collective defense, the vagueness of its work and strategic aspects make the agreement a challenge to its implementation and stability in the region. The success of the agreement depends on the ability to clarify the objectives of the strategies, define military command, unify the differences in the policies, consider the nuclear issues, and increase the democratic legitimacy in Pakistan. The SMDA is likely to remain a mere political tool unless such attempts are undertaken to make it a workable security organ.

It is evident that the current discourse-analytic study of the 2025 Pak-Saudi Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement demonstrates that the ambiguity is deeply entrenched in its popular and professional framing. There are some remaining issues--operationalization of the mutual defense clause, the place of the nuclear arsenal of Pakistan, the viability of extended deterrence--that remain consistent throughout the state declarations, news reports, and studies. Instead, these ambiguities seem to be a strategic choice, as they are in order to maximize flexibility, as well as the signals of power and prestige of alliances, and not to overcommit themselves. Yet they are also very dangerous: the possibility of misunderstanding, differences in credibility and possible uninformed engagements may cripple the very logic of deterrence that the agreement aims to convey. Theoretically, the SMDA demonstrates the way contemporary alliance-building can be based not only on tangible military or commitment to arms and legs but on a narrative leverage and symbolic signaling, especially in the context of the multipolar world where non-traditional security partnerships are increasingly becoming prominent.

Future Recommendations

1. Both nations ought to release the entire content of SMDA and explain its strategic purpose of controlling the domestic and foreign perceptions.

2. The parliament of Pakistan must also ratify the agreement in order to increase the democratic legitimacy and political sustainability.
3. Masculinize the leadership of its operations in Pakistan by Saudi Arabia as a complementary player to prevent coordination gray areas.
4. Consistent bilateral conferences to solve policy differences on Yemen and Israel-Palestine matters.
5. Direct message to regional actors about nuclear issues to minimize risks of escalation.
6. The governments must involve the public constituencies to create trust in the defensive and stabilizing functions of the agreement.

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