

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PAKISTANTV

AUGUST 8, 2026

THE G D E L T P R O J E C T

TRILATERAL DEFENSE PACT & STRATEGIC AUTONOMY:

A New Middle East Security Architecture Amidst Global Conflict

PAKISTAN, SAUDI ARABIA, TURKEY FORGE 'MAKKA JOINT DEFENSE AGREEMENT' – A TECTONIC SHIFT



MAKKA PACT (NATO-STYLE ALLIANCE):

Attack on One is an Attack on All. Mutual Defense, Joint Production, Technology Transfer. Regional Strategic Autonomy

RESPONSE TO US-IRAN CONFLICT (6th Month of High-Intensity Operations)
& PERCEIVED WESTERN SECURITY LIMITATIONS

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS & KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- 1. Makka Pact Signed:** Collective Deterrence, Defense Synergy. Turkey (Tech Pillar), Saudi (Finance Pillar), Pakistan (Military/Nuclear Pillar)
- 2. Pakistan-Led Mediation:** Islamabad hosts direct US-Iran Talks. 'Bridge Between East & West'. Geopolitical Leverage. Global Recognition.
- 3. Strait of Hormuz Navigation Accord (Iran-Oman):** Potential 'Service Fees' for Transit, Challenging Maritime Norms. Weaponization of Waterways.
- 4. US Senate Russia Sanctions:** 500% Tariffs, Bifurcated Energy Market, Pressure on Non-Aligned Buyers (China, India)
- 5. Counter-Terrorism & Asymmetric Threats:** Ongoing Operations in Pakistan (Hangu IBO, Operation Raddul Fitna 3) against Foreign-Sponsored Groups.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS, THEMES & INTERNAL DYNAMICS

RISE OF STRATEGIC AUTONOMY:

- Division of Roles (Tech, Finance, Minilateral Arrangements (UN Chapter VIII).
- Moving Away from US-as-Sole-Guarantor.

MEDIATION AS RELEVANCE:

- Pakistan's Proactive Foreign Policy.
- Converting Geographic Proximity Into Leverage.
- Rebutting Isolation Attempts.

WEAPONIZATION OF WATERWAYS:

- Sovereign Monetization of Global Transit.
- Potential Precedent for Red Sea/South China Sea.
- Legal Battles Ahead.

DOMESTIC INSTABILITY:

- Pakistan** (Civil-Military Harmony, Economic Exports)
- US** (Institutional Friction, Political Polarization, Shutdown Threat)
- Bangladesh** (Political Purge, Leadership Exclusion).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS, ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT & FUTURE OUTLOOK



GLOBAL POSTURE & MULTIPOLAR LENS

- Regional Blocs (Makka Pact) Forming.
- US Influence as 'Transactional' or 'Mercurial'.
- Diversification of Partnerships.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT & RISKS



Energy Volatility:

- Oil Price Sensitivity (9% Decline on Mediation Hopes), Russian Sanctions.
- Bifurcated Market.



Bilateral Trade Targets:

- Pakistan-Turkey (\$5bn), Saudi-Turkey (\$30bn potential).
- Agricultural Trade (US Soybeans, Potato Exports).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Short Term:** Formalized US-Iran Islamabad Talks Framework. Spain-Italy Border Tensions.
- Medium Term:** 'Burden Shifting' in Middle East. Trump Route for Caucasus Peace.
- Long Term:** Structural Energy Market Change (Makka Bloc Pricing?), Potential Denuclearization Negotiations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formalize Mediation Office.
- Establish Trilateral Legal Council.
- UNSC to Codify Transit Rights.
- Investors Monitor Defense Exports & Energy Markets.

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PAKISTAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND
TURKEY FORGE A TRILATERAL
DEFENSE PACT, SIGNALING A
TECTONIC SHIFT TOWARD
REGIONAL STRATEGIC AUTONOMY
AMIDST THE ONGOING US-IRAN
CONFLICT.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The signing of the **Makka Joint Defense Agreement** at Alsafa Palace represents a historic realignment of military power in the Islamic world, establishing a mutual defense framework between [Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey](#). This "NATO-style" pact, centered on the principle that an attack on one signatory is an attack on all, seeks to provide a credible deterrence against external aggression while signaling a move toward **strategic autonomy** for regional powers. The agreement emerges as a direct response to the perceived limitations of Western security guarantees during the ongoing **US-Iran war**, which has now entered its sixth month of high-intensity kinetic operations. By integrating Turkish technological prowess, Saudi financial resources, and Pakistani military experience, the bloc aims to fill the

security vacuum left by a pivoting United States.

Simultaneously, Pakistan is aggressively projecting itself as the **indispensable mediator** in the US-Iran conflict, reportedly facilitating direct talks between senior officials in Islamabad. This diplomatic maneuvering occurs against a backdrop of severe domestic polarization in the United States, where the **Trump administration** faces mounting criticism over energy-driven inflation and the lack of a clear exit strategy. The regional landscape is further complicated by the imminent **Oman-Iran agreement** regarding the Strait of Hormuz, which could introduce "service fees" for navigation, challenging international maritime norms. Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to manage persistent asymmetric threats, reporting the neutralization of seven terrorists in Hangu while countering what it describes as an Indian-led disinformation campaign regarding its nuclear program.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Signing of the Makka Joint Defense Agreement:** A trilateral pact establishing collective deterrence, joint defense production, and technology transfer between [three major Muslim powers](#).
- **Pakistan-Led Mediation in US-Iran War:** Global media outlets acknowledge Pakistan's "unique position" in bringing [Washington and Tehran](#) to the negotiating table in Islamabad.
- **Strait of Hormuz Navigation Accord:** Iran and Oman are nearing a deal to regulate shipping through the strategic waterway, potentially involving [voluntary fees](#) and new shipping routes.

- **US Senate Passes Sweeping Russia Sanctions:** New legislation authorizes **500% tariffs** on Russian imports and sanctions on countries, including [China and India](#), that continue purchasing Russian energy.
- **Hangu Counter-Terrorism Operation:** Security forces neutralized seven terrorists belonging to the "fitnatul khawarij" group; [Captain Hamza Akram](#) was martyred during the engagement.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- Pakistan successfully navigated a trilateral summit in Makkah, reinforcing its status as a "net security provider" [in the region](#).
- Azerbaijan and Armenia marked the first anniversary of the **Washington Peace Summit**, crediting President Trump for advancing [regional connectivity](#).
- The fifth round of Pakistan-New Zealand political consultations focused on [de-escalating Middle East tensions](#) and trade cooperation.

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The Makka Pact includes provisions for **joint defense industry projects**, specifically leveraging Turkish drone technology and [Pakistani military manpower](#).
- Russian strikes continue to target **Ukrainian infrastructure**, with Kiev reporting the destruction of nearly all thermal power plants [due to missile attacks](#).

- Violence flared in Yemen as Houthi forces launched drone and missile strikes against government positions in [three provinces](#), killing 30 soldiers.

Terrorism & Asymmetric Threats

- Operation **Raddul Fitna 3** remains active in Balochistan, with security forces eliminating three terrorists and [clearing 68 square kilometers](#).
- The ISPR reaffirmed its resolve to eliminate **foreign-sponsored terrorism** following the mosque siege in Hangu [by terrorists](#).

Information Warfare & Disinformation

- Pakistan's Foreign Office formally debunked Indian claims linking President Trump's comments on **nuclear testing** to Pakistan's [atomic program](#).
- Indian media outlets such as *India Today* have begun acknowledging Pakistan's strategic gains from the [trilateral defense pact](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Rise of Regional Strategic Autonomy

The Makka Joint Defense Agreement marks a departure from the post-Cold War reliance on the United States as the sole guarantor of Middle Eastern security. Analysts suggest the "40-day war" (US-Iran) demonstrated that US bases could not [effectively defend themselves](#), prompting regional capitals to seek "strategic synergy." This trend involves a **division of roles**: Turkey as the technological/industrial pillar, Saudi Arabia as the financial engine, and Pakistan as the conventional and [nuclear deterrent pillar](#).

Mediation as a Tool of Relevance

Pakistan has successfully converted its geographic and diplomatic proximity to both Tehran and Washington into **geopolitical leverage**. By hosting direct negotiations and maintaining back-channel communication, Islamabad has insulated itself from the worst effects of the conflict while securing [increased diplomatic relevance](#). This "proactive foreign policy" is framed as a rebuttal to Indian attempts to isolate Pakistan [internationally](#).

Weaponization of International Waterways

The proposed agreement between Iran and Oman regarding the Strait of Hormuz suggests a shift toward the **sovereign monetization** of global transit points. The discussion of "voluntary fees" challenges the long-standing status of the strait as an [international waterway](#), potentially setting a precedent that could be exploited by other littoral states in the Red Sea or the South China Sea.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

- **Pakistan:** The state is projecting a high level of **civil-military harmony**, with the Prime Minister explicitly praising Field Marshal Asim Munir for his role in the Makka Pact [negotiations](#). Domestically, the government is highlighting successes in agricultural exports (potatoes) and counter-narcotics to demonstrate [stability amid regional turmoil](#).

- **United States:** The Trump administration is facing **institutional friction**. A US appeals court recently halted the construction of a White House ballroom, an event the President termed a ["national disgrace."](#) Furthermore, the narrow 50-49 confirmation of AG Todd Blanche highlights deep [partisan polarization](#) in the Senate.
- **Bangladesh:** The exclusion of star cricketer Shakib Al Hasan from the national team due to his ties with the ousted **Hasina regime** indicates an ongoing "purge" of individuals associated with the former [ruling party](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The world is increasingly viewed through a **multipolar lens**, where regional blocs are forming to manage local security without direct Western intervention. The Makka Pact is described as a **minilateral arrangement** that fits within UN Charter Chapter VIII, allowing for regional security [frameworks](#). While the US remains a global power, its influence is being described as "transactional" or "mercurial," leading even close allies like **Saudi Arabia** to diversify their military [procurement and partnerships](#).

Pakistan is actively influencing this environment by positioning itself as the **bridge between East and West**. It maintains "good relations with China" while simultaneously acting as the mediator for the US [and Iran](#). This dual-track strategy aims to maximize Islamabad's maneuverability in an anarchic system where traditional [alliances are fracturing](#).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Global energy markets remain highly sensitive to the US-Iran conflict, though oil prices saw a **9% decline** this week due to optimism surrounding the **Islamabad talks**. However, the threat of new US sanctions on buyers of Russian oil creates a bifurcated market where [supply chains are under stress](#). Pakistan is seeking to translate its new defense ties into **trilateral economic value chains**, targeting a \$5 billion trade goal with [Turkey](#).

- **Energy Benchmarks:** Brent Crude traded at **\$81.81/barrel**; WTI Crude at **\$76.71/barrel** [this week](#).
- **Bilateral Trade Targets:** Pakistan and Turkey aim for **\$5 billion**; Saudi-Turkish potential trade estimated at **\$30 billion per annum**.
- **Agricultural Trade:** Pakistan has become a leading destination for US soybeans, with imports exceeding **1 million metric tons annually**.
- **Russian Tariffs:** The US Senate's new package authorizes tariffs up to **500%** on Russian [oil and gas](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Strategic appointments and the removal of political figures across multiple regions indicate a shift in governance styles and the consolidation of power.

- **Todd Blanche:** Confirmed as US **Attorney General** with 50 votes, despite Democrat accusations of turning the DOJ into a [political weapon](#).
- **Shakib Al Hasan:** Effectively banned from returning to Bangladesh due to his participation in a media event with the **ousted Prime Minister** [Sheikh Hasina](#).

- **Field Marshal Asim Munir:** Repeatedly lauded in transcripts for his "tireless efforts" in securing the [Makka Joint Defense Agreement](#).
- **President Masoud Pazeshkian:** Defended his administration's decision to pursue talks, insisting the IRGC and leadership were [in full coordination](#).

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The **lead story** throughout the day was the **Makka Joint Defense Agreement**, presented with high-nationalist fervor, commemorative songs, and digital displays in major cities [across Pakistan](#). The tone is celebratory and reassuring, emphasizing that Pakistan is no longer "standing alone" in its [security concerns](#). The **secondary focus** was the martyrdom of Captain Hamza, used to reinforce national resolve against **Indian-sponsored** proxy groups [Fitnal Khawarij](#).

Buried stories include the severe economic challenges within Pakistan (debt/inflation), which were minimized in favor of strategic successes. **Conspicuous omissions** include the specific terms of the Iran-Oman Strait of Hormuz deal and the potential for the Makka Pact to conflict with Turkey's [NATO obligations](#).

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext reveals a world where traditional Western-led orders are being challenged by "competent" regional leaders who prioritize

sovereignty and "brotherhood" over **liberal internationalist** norms.

- **Pakistan:** Framed as a **principled mediator** and a "net security provider" [in the region](#).
- **Turkey:** Portrayed as a **technological powerhouse** and an "active militarist" capable of [protecting the Ummah](#).
- **United States/Trump:** Framed as **chaotic and transactional**. Trump is described as having a "mercurial personality" whose energy policies are driven by [domestic political survival](#).
- **India:** Consistently characterized as a **hostile foe** and a "spoiler" using [disinformation campaigns](#).
- **Iran:** Portrayed as **determined but rational**, seeking to avoid "unnecessary conflict" while retaining its [defensive capabilities](#).
- **Israel/Netanyahu:** Framed as a **destabilizing force** that has "miscalculated" and become [politically isolated](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The term "NATO of the East" or "Muslim NATO" is being seeded, though signatories publicly [deny the comparison](#).
- **Disinformation Counter-Measures:** Pakistan is using its Foreign Office to **pre-emptively debunk** Indian narratives regarding President Trump's [nuclear comments](#).

- **Propaganda:** The release of commemorative songs by Turkish and Pakistani artists [Mustafa Akif](#) serves to manufacture public consent and enthusiasm for the [trilateral alliance](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Expansion of the Makka Pact:** Qatar, Egypt, and Kuwait may join the alliance within six months as **economic and security guarantees** [are formalized](#).
- **Iran-Oman Shipping Levies:** The introduction of fees for the Strait of Hormuz will trigger a **legal battle at the UN**, potentially leading to a permanent [shipping corridor accord](#).
- **Turkish-NATO Tension:** As the Makka Pact matures, Turkey may face pressure from **NATO allies** to choose between its regional Article 5 obligations and its [Atlantic ones](#).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks):

- Formalization of the US-Iran **Islamabad talks** framework, likely resulting in a temporary [reduction in kinetic strikes](#).
- Increased border tensions between **Spain and Italy** as migration-related [restrictions persist](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months):

- The shift from "burden sharing" to "**burden shifting**" in the Middle East as the US draws down [conventional assets](#).

- Implementation of the **Trump Route** for peace in the Caucasus, integrating [Azerbaijan and Armenia](#) into a new trade corridor.

Long Term (1-5 Years):

- Structural change in the global energy market if the **Makka Bloc** begins using its collective leverage to price [hydrocarbons independently](#).
- The possible **denuclearization negotiations** for the Middle East, with Pakistan potentially acting as the [guarantor](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current geopolitical environment is characterized by high-stakes brinkmanship and the fragility of international maritime and diplomatic norms.

- **Regional War Expansion:** Despite mediation, a "miscalculation" by Israel or the IRGC could trigger a broader conflict. **Triggers:** Strike on high-value leadership or nuclear sites. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Catastrophic (global energy spike). **Mitigations:** Pakistani back-channel [diplomacy](#).
- **Strait of Hormuz Closure:** The failure of the Iran-Oman deal could lead to a total blockade. **Triggers:** US refusal to pay "fees." **Likelihood:** Low-Moderate. **Impact:** High (market collapse). **Mitigations:** UN-led [negotiations](#).

- **Indian-Pakistani Nuclear Tensions:** Escalating disinformation campaigns could lead to conventional skirmishes. **Triggers:** Misinterpreted nuclear posture. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** High. **Mitigations:** Clarification of command and [control systems](#).
- **Houthi Maritime Insurgency:** Renewed Houthi attacks in the Red Sea could undermine the Yemen truce. **Triggers:** Perceived Yemeni government offensive. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Moderate (supply chain delay). **Mitigations:** UN special [envoy engagement](#).
- **US Domestic Shutdown:** The failure to pass a funding bill by December 11th could paralyze US foreign policy. **Triggers:** Failure of Senate-House [reconciliation](#). **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Moderate-High. **Mitigations:** Bipartisan [funding extensions](#).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The broadcasts failed to explain how Turkey's **NATO commitments** would interact if the Makka Pact is triggered by an attack on [Saudi Arabia](#).
- There is a lack of technical detail regarding the "voluntary fees" mentioned in the [Hormuz deal](#).
- The specific group responsible for the **broad peak avalanche** rescue remains unclear, despite multiple mentions of [Alpine Club efforts](#).
- No mention was made of the **Chinese reaction** to a formal defense bloc emerging among its key strategic [partners](#).

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The Makka Pact as a Stalling Tactic

Rather than a new security architecture, the trilateral pact may be a **short-term leverage play** to pressure the US into restoring its security guarantees. By flirting with strategic autonomy, Riyadh and Islamabad may be forcing Washington's hand to provide more [advanced weaponry](#).

Black Swan: The "Article 5" Trap

A minor border skirmish between Iran and Saudi Arabia could **involuntarily draw Turkey and Pakistan** into a major regional war they are economically unprepared for, leading to internal regime instability in [Islamabad or Ankara](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Pakistan should formalize its **mediation office** to ensure continuity regardless of changes in the [US administration](#).
- Signatories of the Makka Pact must establish a **trilateral legal council** to ensure compatibility with [international treaties](#).
- UNSC should move to codify **transit rights** in the Strait of Hormuz before [fee structures](#) become entrenched.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Investors should monitor **Turkish defense exports**, which are likely to see a surge in orders from the [Gulf region](#).

- Supply chain managers should prepare for **bifurcated energy markets** due to the new [US tariffs on Russian oil](#).
- The Pakistani **agricultural sector** offers opportunities in potato and livestock exports as regional [barriers ease](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Significant legislative action in the US Senate and trilateral treaty developments in the Middle East dominated the policy landscape.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Russian Sanctions & Tariff Act:** Authorizes **500% tariffs** and sanctions on third-party purchasers of [Russian energy](#).
- **US Government Funding Bill:** A measure to extend funding to **December 11th** to avert a [government shutdown](#).

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Makkah Summit for Joint Defense:** The signing of a mutual defense treaty between [three powers](#).
- **Todd Blanche AG Confirmation:** A hearing focused on the alleged **politicization** of the [Justice Department](#).

KEY STORIES

- **Makka Joint Defense Agreement:** Signing of a trilateral pact by Sharif, Salman, and Erdogan at Alsafa Palace, featuring an "attack on one is an attack on all" [clause](#).
- **US-Iran Mediation in Islamabad:** Reports that Pakistan hosted senior officials from both nations for [direct talks](#).

- **Hangu IBO:** Counter-terrorism operation killing 7 terrorists; Captain Hamza Akram [martyred](#).
- **Russian Infrastructure Strikes:** Attacks on Kiev northeast and Odessa ports, targeting [fuel facilities](#).
- **US-Pakistan Nuclear Row:** Pakistan Foreign Office debunking Indian claims regarding Trump's **nuclear testing** [comments](#).
- **Hormuz Shipping Accord:** Iran and Oman nearing a deal on a [temporary shipping route](#).
- **Todd Blanche Confirmation:** Senate narrowly confirms Blanche as [Attorney General](#).
- **Spain-Italy Border Spat:** Spain introduces checks on Italian travelers in a [retaliatory move](#).
- **Yemen Violence:** Houthi strikes in Marib and Hadramout kill **30 soldiers and 2 civilians**.
- **Azerbaijan-Armenia Anniversary:** Celebrating the 2025 Washington [Peace Summit](#).
- **Sudan Education Crisis:** Pakistan calls for protection of **17 million children** at the [UNSC](#).
- **Thai School Shooting:** 8 dead in Nonthaburi province; PM stresses [gun law reform](#).
- **Broad Peak Rescue:** Recovery of bodies of 5 climbers, including **4 Nepalese and 1 Chinese**.
- **Jakarta Revenue Agency Fire:** Blaze engulfs floors 11-16 of a [16-story building](#).
- **Rotterdam Recycling Plant Fire:** 100 tons of waste burned; foul smoke [blankets the city](#).

- **Pakistan-New Zealand Consultation:** 5th round of talks in Wellington on trade [and education](#).
- **Major Tufail Mohammad Anniversary:** 68th martyrdom anniversary of **Nishan-e-Haider** [recipient](#).
- **Potato Export Success:** Punjab government resolves issues impacting [Pakistani exports](#).
- **Hockey Series:** Pakistan clinches series 3-1 despite [loss to South Korea](#).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover

connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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