

*SVI International Seminar: Report - February 22, 2018*

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Contemporary Relations between Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia: Present  
Challenges

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ISLAMABAD**

Considering the significance of triangular relationship between Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia and the growing challenges that Pakistan is currently facing in maintaining a balance between the two due to their ongoing rivalry, the Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) organized a one day international seminar titled “Contemporary Relations between Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia: Present Challenges” at Islamabad Serena hotel on February 22, 2018. The seminar was attended by distinguished diplomats, members of strategic fraternity, prominent academicians, students and members of civil society.



Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President/Executive Director SVI welcomed the Chief Guest, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Defence, the distinguished speakers and participants. Setting the tone for discussions on the subject, Dr. Cheema observed that Pakistan’s traditional policy of maintaining an equilibrium and balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia is currently under stress due to the ongoing rivalry between the two. Notwithstanding the complexity, he said, Pakistan has tried its best to maintain the policy of balance. While explaining the rationale of the policy, he said both Iran and Saudi Arabia are significant for Pakistan and it cannot afford to side with one at the cost of the other as it would undermine its interests and relations with either of the two friends. With respect to Iran, he noted that Pakistan not only shares 917 km of border with it but the two countries have a long history of shared values, religion, culture, and civilization. Pakistan is home to 20 percent Shiite population, the second largest in the world after Iran, which further underscores the significance of the relations. Dr. Cheema emphasized an established international relations truism that a state can change its friends but not its neighbor. In addition to this, Iran’s membership of various important international platforms like ECO further necessitates Pakistan’s good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Simultaneously, Dr. Cheema highlighted Pakistan’s very important and strong strategic, political and brotherly ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). He stated that the people of Pakistan have a deep commitment and veneration for Saudi Arabia as the custodian of the holy mosques. Also the fact that there are around 1.9 million or so Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia who send home billions of dollars in foreign remittances which further augments its importance for Pakistan. However, he expressed concern that at present Pakistan is walking on a tight rope due to the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Dr. Cheema opined that it would have been more appropriate if the decision to send troops to Saudi Arabia was announced by the





Mr. Ross Masood Husain, Chairperson SVI, thanked the minister for his kind acceptance of the invitation and presenting a balanced account of the trilateral relations. Expressing his own views, Mr. Husain said that the matter of sending troops to Saudi Arabia by Pakistan should not be blown out of proportion and need not raise eye brows given the fact that Pakistan has since long time been sending troops to the Kingdom to perform a set of duties i.e. training and advisory role. However, he noted that notwithstanding the fact that the decision is in line with existing bilateral agreement, the timing and method of the recent decision regarding sending of the troops to Saudi Arabia has made the situation a little tricky.

## Session II

Chair of the session II, Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmed, Former Foreign Secretary of



Pakistan, welcomed the distinguished speakers of the session and the audience. He noted his disagreement with Dr. Cheema on the modality of the announcement of decision to sending troops to KSA and contended that military is part of the government and therefore, its decision regarding sending the troops should be taken as such. Dr. Cheema responded that in the light of the

decision of the Parliament and controversy generated by the political and journalistic circles that it was a decision of the military to send troops, it would have better if the PM office had announced the decision.

Amb. Shamshad Ahmed observed that the Article 40 of the constitution of Pakistan obliges it to strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries. Thus, dividing the Muslim world or taking side in intra-Muslim disputes is a breach of Pakistan's constitution. Thus, he argued that in the given situation the only role that he sees for Pakistan to play is that of peace maker. He expressed hope that the Islamic Military Alliance (IMA) commanded by Pakistan's ex. Army Chief would prove to be a cohesive and unifying force for Muslim states in the region.

First speaker of the session, Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum, Director Pakistan Studies at Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C. USA presented his views on "Saudi Arabia-Iran Conundrums: Geopolitical Realities". He said that the rivalry between Iran and KSA is geopolitically and ideologically driven. Pakistan is caught in the triangular relationship with Iran

and Saudi Arabia for much of its history and has strived rather successfully to maintain neutrality in order to avoid being drawn into the proxy fights between its Middle Eastern partners. He claimed that an important difference exists between Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. With KSA, he said, the relationship has been essentially a transactional one; each possesses assets that the other lacks, indicating to KSA's economic prowess and Pakistan's strong military. On the contrary, with Iran there exists mutuality, one largely of forbearance. Probably referring to the restraint exercised by both countries in times of crisis in relations that occur due to border related issues, he said the relationship is characterized by what one country would refrain from doing what it could do to the other.



Navigating through the history of Pakistan's cooperation with KSA, he said that over all, Pakistan's assistance has been devoted to protecting the territorial integrity of the Kingdom and most importantly the royal family from within and without. In reciprocity, the Saudis have been forthcoming in bailing out various Pakistan governments in times of financial duress. However, he also underscored the role played by Saudi Arabia in exporting its own radical brand of Wahabi/Salafi Islam to Pakistan.

Highlighting the mutuality in Pakistan-Iran relations, he said despite serious differences at times, the two countries have managed to maintain normal ties. In this regard Iran has largely refrained from sowing sectarian problems in Pakistan and both share common interest in denying exploitation of the border by Baluch insurgents, in particular the Jundullah and other miscreants. He expressed the conviction that Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia triad is also affected by its neighbors. It gets complicated by the Indian and American policies in the region. The changing regional dynamics and domestic situations of the countries in the triad further influence the trilateral relationship. Drawing several scenarios having potential of affecting the triad, he posed some critical questions to ponder:

1. How would the triad be affected if the domestic political upheavals were to occur in Saudi Arabia or Iran or demise of democratic government in Pakistan
2. How dynamics of the triad would impact, were any radical Islamic force to emerge victorious in Afghanistan: would that bring them together or draw them apart?

3. Would Saudi Arabia and Iran once more remain absent in the event of a major crisis between Pakistan and India?
4. What would happen if the struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia intensifies given that the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) has undertaken a more assertive foreign policy?
5. What would happen if the Iran nuclear deal falls apart and Israel and possibly the US undertook military action?
6. What would happen if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, how would this affect the balance within the triad, could it remain as it was?

Concluding his comprehensive analysis of the situation he suggested that nothing would so test Pakistan's ability to retain some balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia than a Saudi request to commit fully to the kingdom's defence against a nuclear capable Iran. He proposed that the strategic calculus necessitates Pakistan not to side with the either.

Unfortunately Professor Weinbaum neither had the time nor an inclination to venture into answers to the loaded questions on the future of the trilateral relations between Pakistan, Iran and KSA. This may be an important subject of a closed door in-house seminar/discussion by the SVI.



Second speaker of the session, Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Advisor COMSATS Secretariat, provided an overview of "Pakistan's Relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia" and stated that the matrix of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Iran relations is characterized by inherent complexities exhibited in intra-state and inter-state conflictual nature of their interactions. It is further complicated by the overarching global environment where the competition for influence has intensified among the major global players in recent times. While expressing her views on the changing dynamics of the relations in the aftermath of the 1979 Iran revolution, she maintained that the dramatic transformation of Iran's internal situation with a visible religious orientation touched the historical sensitive chords within the societies and states of the region including Pakistan and KSA. This key factor, by and large, determined the matrix of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Iran. However, she said, it would be erroneous to base one's assumptions purely in the light of

religious phenomenon as Iran's internal and external compulsions would have also dictated Iran to widen its strategic depth and support its allies in the immediate and extended neighborhood.

Considering the ongoing rivalry and mutual distrust between Iran and Saudi Arabia, she said Pakistan finds itself in a situation where it is walking a tight rope in balancing relations between the two. Due to the porous Pak-Iran border and a triangular connection of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, the security risks for Pakistan have multiplied. Border management has been a troubling area for Pakistan which requires engagement and cooperation not only with Iran but with Afghanistan as well. Pakistan is acutely conscious that it's long adhered principled policy of maintaining neutrality in the conflicts and regional rivalries in the Middle East serves its best interests. At the same time it is also conscious of its international obligations as a responsible state that has been part of the international efforts to eradicate the menace of terrorism. She said while challenges for Pakistan's policy of neutrality have heightened yet Pakistan has based its policy on the following considerations:

- Steadfast support for the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia;
- Protection of the Holy places i.e. Khana-e Ka'aba and the Holy Mosque;
- Fulfillment of obligations under the 1982 bilateral military agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia of which training and advisory missions are essential components;
- Confining Pakistan's engagement to the geographical limits of Saudi Arabia;
- Assurance not to be part of any action or attack against any third country (Iran-Saudi Arabia; Qatar-Saudi Arabia);
- Strict neutrality in conflict between Iran and its allies and Saudi Arabia and its allies;
- To the extent possible work to be initiated towards confidence building measures in inter-state rivalries in the Middle East;
- Ensuring internal sectarian harmony within Pakistan while targeting disruptive elements through Rad-ul-Fasad.



Next speaker of the session, Dr. Zulfqar Khan, Head of Department, Strategic Studies, NDU, Islamabad, deliberated on "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and its Implications for the Southwest Asian Region". He said the regional geopolitical dynamics are in a state of flux despite signing of P5+1 Iran nuclear deal called - JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) in July 2015. Briefly providing an overview of Iran's nuclear program, and the US and western support for it during Shah's period, he said, Iran launched an ambitious plan to develop a full nuclear energy program.

He noted that the Iran-US nuclear cooperation existed before signing of the NPT dating back to the US “Atoms for Peace” program. He highlighted that under 1957 civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the US, Iran received US technical assistance and inaugurated its first 5 megawatts Tehran Nuclear Research Centre (TNRC) in 1967 for which fuel was also provided by the US.

He noted the change in US policy towards Iran in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, whereby it ceased cooperation with Iran and questioned Iranian rationale for advancing nuclear program for nuclear energy generation on the pretext that Iran possessed ample oil resources to meet its energy demands. He also highlighted the ensuing US sanctions on individuals and organizations, which were allegedly providing equipment to Iran relevant for development of WMD, or ballistic missiles technology during Clinton administration and onwards. In addition, he opined that under the NPT, Iran was required to open up its nuclear installations to IAEA inspection, but initially Iran showed reluctance in disclosing some of its nuclear installations to IAEA. Thus the declaration about Iran’s covert nuclear installations and the levels of progress in nuclear fuel-cycle, created a negative impact about Iran’s credibility and adherence to the NPT.

Expressing his views on the JCPOA, he said the aim of the agreement was to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons by imposing crippling limitations on Iran nuclear program in exchange for lifting the US-led international sanctions. He noted that despite the IAEA’s endorsement of Iran’s compliance with the deal on several occasions, the US under Donald Trump administration has taken a tough stance against Iran citing the ‘sunset clause’ of the deal and Iran’s growing missile build up and its regional behavior that the US perceives to be detrimental to its interests.

Afterwards, the session was opened for questions and answers.

Lieutenant General (R) Asad Durrani, former chief of the ISI, expressing his disagreement with Dr. Weinbaum, said that there is no difference between Iran and Pakistan as far as their policies on Afghanistan are concerned. He further posed a question to Dr. Weinbaum regarding any link between Pakistan’s recent decision to send troops to Saudi Arabia, as to what extent has it been influenced if at all by Pakistan’s bid to release the pressure that it has been facing due to Afghanistan from the US. In



response, Dr. Weinbaum opined that the decision to send troops is an outcome of direct Saudi request though Pakistan has been taking actions which have intended to deflect some of the pressure. But the decision does not change the equation in a major way as the sending of troops is symbolic because those troops are not being deployed to take action.

Mr. Mustansir Kalasra, a student from Quaid-i-Azam University asked Dr. Zulfqar Khan as to why the US and Western countries are so concerned about Iran's nuclear program? Is it just because of the fact that Iran is a Muslim country or there are some other reasons as well? In response, Dr. Zulfqar Khan opined that essentially the concerns of the Western countries are related to Iran's growing military and strategic capabilities. However, he also expressed wonder as to what extent the US is justified in proceeding ahead with a potential unilateral abrogation of the agreement.



Col. (R) Said Rasool, questioned as to what would be the reaction of some of the major powers including the US, if rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia spirals out of control, thereby threatening the safety of key oil industries of the OPEC countries, given that most of the major powers rely heavily on these oil rich countries. In response to this question, Dr. Weinbaum emphatically ruled out a direct conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, he maintained that in such an eventuality there would be some positioning of forces perhaps for the protection of important oil industrial facilities by the concerned powers.



### Session III

Lt. General (R) Syed Muhammad Owais, Former Secretary Defence Productions, as a Chair of this session welcomed all the participants and lauded the timely initiatives that SVI has been taking to organize such seminars on topics of critical significance. Expressing his brief yet pertinent views on the “Regional Security Complex: Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia Relations”, General Owais underscored the significance of geography when it comes to determining the security matrix of any region or place. Thus, the fact that Pakistan and Iran share a long border makes it crucial for both the countries to enhance their cooperation in areas of mutual interest.



Moreover, while highlighting religion as yet another important factor shaping the triangular relationship, he expressed regret that the sense of Muslim brotherhood instilled by the religion has now given way to sectarianism. He urged all the Muslim states to recognize the evil designs of the enemies within and across the borders and to unite under the banner of Muslim brotherhood.

He said that this security matrix is also affected by the global and regional security environment as Indo-US nexus has been creating trouble for regional countries. He considered CPEC and Chinese BRI to be a golden opportunity for regional countries particularly Iran, Afghanistan and even Saudi Arabia to push forward in the quest for regional peace and stability.



Expressing his views on the topic “Pakistan-Iran Relations: Political and Strategic Dimensions”, the first speaker of the session, Ambassador (R) Arif Kamal said that Pakistan’s relations with Iran present a good case study of how mutuality of interests between two nations in a common habitat is overshadowed by environment on a broader canvass. He said in essence, the relationship can be described as warm or cool, though non antagonist and brotherly ambience with or without tangible outcomes. He was of the view that in recent decades, there is a greater emphasis on the shared expectations from each other and despite discernable consciousness of a commonality of interest and awareness of the potential for economic cooperation, the actual moves in the direction can best be described as a ‘lurch’. He said that despite the shared perception on rights of Palestinians, Iranian support for Kashmiris’ self-determination and how an endgame in Afghanistan should unfold, how institutions such as ECO, be upgraded to enhance interdependence. Pakistan’s relations with the Arab flank and Iran’s relations with India are viewed as gray areas. Indicating some positive trends in the bilateral relations, he noted that the data on trade represents a good level of improvement since the fall in early 2005-2009. Currently the two way trade stands at \$1132 million (\$634M imports from Iran, \$498M export to Iran). Furthermore, he said an upturn in the higher consultative process over the past few years is a good sign.

Analyzing Pakistan’s perception of Iran’s rise, he identified two streams of opinion. One school views Iran from a narrow prism: a sectarian outfit and an expanding power whose

convergence of interest with India could pose existentialist threat to Pakistan. This automatically leads to a tilt towards an axis around Riyadh (and ironically so, calls for an opening with Israel too). The other stream looks at Iranian posture as the product of ‘informed self-interest’ and logical to Iran’s quest for playing a role commensurate with its regional ranking. Iran’s outreach with India in the economic domain is therefore perceptibly rooted in this posture. To follow this logic, there is no inherent clash between Chabahar and Gwadar and also in Pakistan’s relation with Riyadh and Tehran. The relationship with Iran should therefore rest upon Pakistan’s own self-interest. Considering options for Pakistan in relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, he maintained that the undeclared detente between Saudis and Israelis has added up challenges for Pakistan on how to steer the pathway without causing annoyance to either side or its own public. However, any disproportionate tilt can, in fact, impede the process of an upturn in sustainable and mutually rewarding economic relation with Iran. Given the global transformations, as indicated by growing Russian role, besides that of China, and the potential of ‘greater Eurasia’ and CPEC, he urged Pakistan and Iran to benefit from the opportunity.

Concluding his remarks he said, the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran is a mix bag of untapped or half tapped potential, blended with hopes and expectations for a tangible advance in the days to come. The answer, in major part lies, in employing political will in commensurate with our national interests.



The second speaker of the session Mr. Ruslan Mamedov, a Russian scholar from Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), Moscow, presented his views on “Russian Perspective on CPEC”. He stated that CPEC does not represent any problems for Russia. Rather, it can try to take advantage of the expected development of Pakistan's economy and strengthen bilateral economic relations, which are currently not commensurate with the potential that exists. He underscored the disadvantages of the monopolization of Chinese capital in the Pakistani market and recommended diversification of its politico-economic relations. He argued that economic competition in the Pakistani market would be a positive element in maintaining its stability and providing the Pakistani government with additional tools for its own foreign policy.

Talking about the potential connectivity between Russia and Pakistan, he highlighted the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) project which is aimed at connecting the Azerbaijan-Iran border. This means the promotion of ties between Russia and Pakistan is possible through the Iranian and Azerbaijani territories. But also there are opportunities for using Central Asian routes and markets as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have Free Trade Zone with Russia within the EEU, he said. He further stated that unlike the US, Moscow has long insisted on multilateral formats of cooperation. In this context, Russia considers the presence of India and Pakistan among the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states to be an important progress.

He also noted that the increasing influence and role of regional actors in different parts of the world necessitates the strengthening of regional formats of interaction and regional security architectures. Considering the rich experience of Russia in terms of establishing energy projects and Chinese experience of working in Pakistan, he suggested some joint energy projects can be initiated in the backdrop of CPEC.



Talking on “CPEC: Prospects and Dividends for Iran and Saudi Arabia”, the third speaker of the session, Ambassador (R) Syed Hasan Javed, Director Chinese Studies Centre, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, NUST, Islamabad, said that Chinese-Islamic civilization bonhomie has existed for centuries, marked by shared goodwill, peace and prosperity, unlike the Western civilization and India’s history of conflicts with Pakistan. He said China’s New Middle East Policy is that of respecting diversity and building a shared future. In this regard, he referred to a report of the 19th CPC National Congress which urged replacement of “estrangement with exchange, clashes with mutual learning, and superiority with coexistence” in handling relations among civilizations. Moreover, he pointed out that 43 out of 66 states under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are Muslim countries. He opined that given China’s critical energy interests in the Middle Eastern region, it will take larger interest in regional security, with the passage of time. China will continue its strategy to broaden its relationship with all the Middle Eastern countries to ‘Comprehensive Strategic Partnership’.

Underscoring the relevance of Iran in the BRI, he stated that China wants Iran to prioritize its cooperation in energy, infrastructure, industrial capacity, and finance – all areas that fall under the larger subheading of cooperation on the “Belt and Road Initiative”. He added that under the BRI, China and Iran have set a goal of expanding their bilateral trade to US \$600 billion in the next ten years – well more than 10 times the level of the US-China trade in 2014. He was of the view that Gwadar and Chabahar Ports are not strategic rivals or competitors just as Dammam and Dubai. All the four ports can complement each other to meet the energy needs of BRI. Highlighting the significance of Gwadar port and CPEC for the region, he said while Gwadar would provide the shortest route to China, Russia, Central Asian States, the Gulf, and Africa, CPEC will help stabilize Afghanistan and South Asia by connecting half of the world population. CPEC is the overland ‘Suez Canal’ of the 21st Century, he said. He pointed out the fact that China, Iran and the Arab world stand on the same side on human rights: Palestine issue, UNSC reforms, disarmament, peace and development, which further enhances the prospects of these countries’ cooperation under the BRI and its flagship CPEC project.

At the end of the session Lieutenant General (R) Asad Durrani, made a brief comment in the context of Iran-Pakistan relations stating that the mere good wishes and gratitude do not take relations any further. We should look at states’ decisions more rationally and try to understand problems so as to be able to resolve issues. Expressing concerns and referring to Iranian reassurances regarding India’s growing presence in Iran, he said it would be nice of India if it did not try to exploit Iranian soil against CPEC. But he argued that this is not how the international politics works.



The Keynote speaker for the session was H.E. Mehdi Honardoost, Iran’s Ambassador to Pakistan. He provided a broad overview of the relations between Iran and Pakistan. He stated that the two countries have many common grounds to build their relation upon. Yet he noted with regret that trade relations between the two neighboring countries is not as good as the political or cultural ties between Tehran and Islamabad. The increasing high level of visits between Iran and Pakistan show that the leadership of the two nations is keen to meet each other to seek further enhancement of ties. H. E. Honardoost said that the convergence and cooperation is the only

solution to bridge gaps or remove misunderstandings between the two friendly neighbors and to stop other powers from interfering in our region.

Referring to Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project, he maintained that it can bring change to the country's economy. IP can help Pakistan to overcome its energy needs, he said, adding that despite an investment of two billion dollars by Iran, the project has not still been completed. The ambassador said that Iran and Pakistan share common concerns regarding the issue of terrorism and extremism. Illiteracy and poverty are the reasons behind extremism while drug smuggling is also a grave threat which Iran and Pakistan share. The ambassador lauded Pakistan's historic efforts in playing the role of a mediator to diffuse tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

He was of the view that if it were not for the lack of banking channels between Iran and Pakistan, the bilateral trade volume would have been much higher than US \$1.5 billion witnessed last year. After the US attacked Afghanistan, the drug traffickers became more active and posed a direct threat against the youth of Iran and Pakistan.



In response to a question asked by Engineer Wasim Abbasi, PAEC, regarding the apprehensions and strategic implications of India's direct involvement in Chabahar port, H. E. Mehdi Honardsoot assured that Indian involvement in Chabahar Port would not be allowed to be used against a brother country Pakistan. The Ambassador's response however, failed to convince the audience.

In his own assessment of the issue Gen. Owais, the Chair, raised the concern that Chabahar lease to India would compromise CPEC given that India along with the US have been staunch opponents of CPEC. At this juncture Ambassador (R) Javed Hasan opined that India owing to its strategic partnership with Israel and the US is a potential threat for Iran.



Considering the impact that youth as agents of change can make in the relationship between Iran and Pakistan, Mr. Ahsen Hamid, Member of Sports, Tourism, Archaeology, Culture & Youth Affairs, KPK, inquired if any cultural and educational exchange programs are in the offing. In response to the question, H. E. Honardoost said that currently there are few such programs in the cultural and

educational domain and expressed hope that in the future the scope of such programs would be enhanced given the potential and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Iran.

At the end of the session Mr. Ross Masood Husain, Chairperson SVI, once again thanked all the worthy Speakers, Chairs and the audience and briefly reiterated that Pakistan is in the most unenviable position given its equally significant ties with Iran as well as with Saudi Arabia. He stressed that Pakistan is deeply obligated to both the countries and cannot afford to side with one at the cost of the other. He urged the leadership of Iran and Saudi Arabia to soften their tough rhetoric against each another and called on Pakistan, Turkey and other important Muslim states to initiate a process of grand reconciliation for the greater unity of Ummah and for the greater glory of Islam.

Mr. Ross Masood Husain also distributed the SVI Souvenirs and publications among the respected Speakers and Chairs.

## **Media Coverage:**

Media covered the proceedings of the international seminar as is evident from the hyperlinks given below:

### **DAWN**

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1391133>

### **Pakistan Tribune**

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1642360/1-pakistan-maintaining-delicate-balance-ties-defence-minister/>

### **The NEWS**

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/284654-pakistan-maintains-balance-in-ties-with-iran-s-arabia>

### **Pakistan Today**

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/22/pakistan-expects-iran-to-understand-troops-deployment-in-saudi-arabia>

### **Daily Times**

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/206249/pakistan-maintaining-balance-ties-saudia-iran/>

### **Pakistan Observer**

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-island-stability-amidst-unstable-region-khurram/>

### **Islamic Republic News Agency**

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82840638>

### **Global Village Space**

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/irans-ambassador-says-us-sanction-delaying-ip-project/>

### **IBLAGH NEWS**

<http://iblagh.com/en/iran-criticizes-pakistan-banking-ties-ip-project/>

### **Associated Press of Pakistan**

<http://www.app.com.pk/pakistan-island-stability-amidst-unstable-region-khurram/>