

From Dialogue to Diplomacy: Saudi Arabia's Pursuit of Regional Stability Through Multilateral Diplomacy

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Introduction

Saudi Arabia is in the midst of a notable transformation in its foreign policy, marked by a move toward pragmatic dialogue and multilateral engagement. This involves shifting from a period often defined by assertive, unilateral postures to an era characterized by strategic dialogue, multilateral diplomacy, and global convening. The transition does not signal retreat but rather a deliberate recalibration driven by the domestic and international imperatives of Vision 2030. The Kingdom's pursuit of stability through diplomacy thus represents an evolution of statecraft, aligning national transformation goals with a dynamic and multipolar international environment.

The policy of diplomacy over discord is now understood as the sine qua non for realizing the ambitions of Vision 2030. There exists a clear conviction among the Saudi policy elite that the development of Saudi Arabia's domestic transformation depends on a stable, predictable, and interconnected regional order that attracts foreign investment, supports sustainable growth, and enhances the Kingdom's role as a global bridge-builder. This policy brief examines the underlying logic, drivers, and implications of this diplomatic pivot, arguing that institutionalized, multi-aligned engagement has become the defining feature of the contemporary Saudi foreign policy doctrine.

The Strategic Imperative: Vision 2030 as the Foreign Policy Compass

At the core of Saudi Arabia's new diplomatic orientation lies the recognition that domestic prosperity and external stability are linked. The launch of Vision 2030 by His Royal Highness

Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016 signaled a decisive commitment to economic diversification, technological advancement, and social modernization. Yet, as it would become clear over time, these goals require a secure geopolitical environment that minimizes risk and maximizes investor confidence.

For example, mega-projects such as NEOM, Qiddiya, and Red Sea Global depend on sustained flows of international capital and technology partnerships. Foreign investors, inherently risk-averse, weigh political stability and regional security as primary factors in their decision-making. Continued conflict or geopolitical uncertainty therefore translates directly into higher risk premiums on Saudi assets. Consequently, de-escalation and diplomacy are not only strategic preferences but economic imperatives for ensuring the success of Vision 2030.



Source: [Wealth Consulting](#) (2024)

As a result, the Kingdom's current foreign policy architecture is guided by five interlocking pillars: strategic multi-alignment, economic diversification and energy diplomacy, proactive mediation, regional stability, and sovereign autonomy. These principles form the foundation of a pragmatic



and adaptive diplomacy designed to safeguard Saudi Arabia's national interests while contributing to a more balanced and inclusive international order.

Strategic multi-alignment allows Riyadh to engage constructively with diverse global powers, maintaining flexibility and independence in an era of shifting alliances. Economic diversification and energy diplomacy reflect the Kingdom's drive to transition from a hydrocarbon-dependent model toward a diversified, innovation-based economy, leveraging energy partnerships not only as a source of revenue but as a tool of global engagement and stability. Proactive mediation positions Saudi Arabia as a neutral convener, capable of facilitating dialogue and de-escalation across regional and global conflicts. Regional stability remains central to the Kingdom's security and prosperity, emphasizing cooperation through institutions such as the GCC, Arab League, and OIC. Finally, sovereign autonomy underscores Saudi Arabia's determination to craft independent policies rooted in its national priorities, free from external pressures or zero-sum alignments.

Together, these interdependent pillars define the Kingdom's emergence as a constructive and strategically autonomous power, one that seeks to transform the region from a zone of rivalry into a platform for cooperation in an increasingly fragmented world order.

The Doctrine of Multi-Alignment in a Multipolar World

Saudi Arabia's embrace of multi-alignment reflects a response to the evolving global order and the diffusion of power across East and West. The Kingdom recognizes that no single alliance can singularly guarantee its long-term stability or prosperity. Instead, flexibility and diversification have become the hallmarks of its

engagement with the world, allowing it to advance national interests in a complex and increasingly multipolar environment.

The shift toward multi-alignment is both strategic and structural. On the security front, Riyadh has broadened its engagement with non-Western partners and multilateral institutions, signaling a redefinition, not a rejection, of its traditional Western alliances. Saudi Arabia's participation in the BRICS Summit held in Brazil on July 6-7, 2025, where His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, represented the Kingdom, exemplifies this approach. While Saudi Arabia remains an invited participant rather than a full member, its engagement highlights a pragmatic desire to strengthen dialogue with major emerging economies. From the Saudi perspective, whether in BRICS or any other multilateral framework, the Kingdom's focus is not on bloc politics but on engagement through constructive collaboration, rather than pursuing narrow or interest-based agendas. Instead of binary choices, the point of departure is the possibility of win-win situations and alignments.



Source: [SPA](#) (2025)

Similarly, the Kingdoms' decision to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a Dialogue Partner in March 2023, marked a step toward institutionalizing cooperation with



Asian powers. This decision reflects Riyadh's recognition of China's growing global role and its willingness to build partnerships across both traditional and emerging power centers, despite broader global competition and divergent security perspectives.

It is important to underline that these engagements do not supplant the historic U.S.–Saudi partnership but rather complement it, providing Riyadh with greater strategic flexibility. By engaging with multiple power centers, the Kingdom strengthens its leverage, ensuring that its security and economic policies remain anchored in sovereign autonomy and the principles of national interest.

Economically, the multi-alignment doctrine reflects Saudi Arabia's recognition that its future is also closely tied to Asia and other high-growth regions, which serve as hubs of global energy demand, technological advancement, and investment capital. The Kingdom's dual involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and India's Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) illustrates this pragmatic balance and a strategic capacity to engage in complementary, not competing, frameworks, positioning it as a central hub linking Asia, the Gulf, and Europe. This ensures its economic centrality regardless of shifting geopolitical alignments and affirms its long-term vision of serving as a bridge between East and West.

Push to frame and align priorities and programs between the BRI and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 primarily focused through high-level meetings between leaders of the two countries during King Salman's visit to China in 2017, led to the establishment of subcommittees and designated entities to facilitate bilateral cooperation in specific areas including political and diplomatic affairs, BRI-related infrastructure, investment, and energy cooperation, and finance and economy. In July

2025, Acwa Power signed agreements with several international partners aimed at creating a green hydrogen and renewable energy export value chain between Saudi Arabia and Europe and was in part of the Kingdom's role in enhancing global logistics connectivity and its leadership in the IMEC, driven by its geographical location connecting East and West.



Source: [Al Jazeera](#) (2025)

In the security and defense domain, Saudi Arabia continues to diversify its partnerships as part of a broader strategy to strengthen regional deterrence and resilience. The 2025 Saudi-Pakistan defense cooperation agreement reinforced a long-standing military relationship extending beyond traditional Western frameworks. It encompasses cooperation in training, intelligence-sharing, air defense, counter-drone and missile capabilities, logistics, and maritime security, thereby introducing a cross-theater deterrence logic that raises the cost of potential aggression against any GCC state while avoiding formal alliance entanglements.

This cooperation also reflects lessons learned from recent regional security incidents, most notably, the twin attacks on Qatar that occurred within a three-month span in 2025 and involved both Iran and Israel, marking the first unprovoked, simultaneous military assault on a GCC state by two adversaries. These developments highlighted the vulnerabilities of relying solely on external security guarantees



and underscored the need for diversified, regionally grounded partnerships.

While the United States remains the Kingdom's principal security partner and the cornerstone of regional deterrence, Saudi-Pakistan defense cooperation fills important capability gaps, particularly in manpower, counter-drone systems, and contingency logistics, enhancing burden-sharing and reducing the frequency and intensity of direct U.S. operational involvement. For Riyadh, this partnership represents a pragmatic step toward defense diversification, ensuring strategic flexibility while reinforcing the Kingdom's commitment to collective Gulf security.

The same diversification logic applies to advanced technology and energy cooperation. Under Vision 2030's modernization agenda, Saudi Arabia has expanded strategic partnerships across Asia, Europe, and North America. In the nuclear energy sector, Riyadh and Seoul signed a cooperation framework on small modular reactor (SMR) development in 2019, complementing their ongoing collaboration on the Smart Reactor (SMART) project originally initiated between the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (K.A.CARE) and Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI).



Source: [Arab News](#) (2018)

In clean energy and hydrogen, the Kingdom has deepened cooperation with Japan through the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030 partnership, including

projects led by Aramco and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) on blue ammonia, hydrogen transport, and carbon capture. The NEOM Green Hydrogen Company, a joint venture involving Air Products and ACWA Power, also plans exports to East Asia, reinforcing Riyadh's role in Asia's future energy mix.

At the same time, the Kingdom has deepened its partnerships with leading global technology firms. In October 2024, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and Google Cloud announced a landmark strategic partnership to establish a global artificial intelligence (AI) hub near Dammam in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. Signed during the 8th Future Investment Initiative (FII8), this collaboration positions Saudi Arabia as a global destination for AI innovation and enterprise development. Beyond its economic impact, the initiative supports national goals to expand the information and communication technology (ICT) sector by 50%, while creating programs to train millions of Saudi students and professionals in advanced AI skills.

Together with joint ventures in semiconductors, robotics, and digital infrastructure, these initiatives underscore Riyadh's ambition to position the Kingdom as a regional hub for innovation, digital transformation, and data-driven industries, a central pillar of Vision 2030's modernization agenda. Collectively, they demonstrate how Saudi Arabia's technology and energy diplomacy aligns with its broader multi-alignment strategy, bridging partnerships between East and West, balancing strategic diversification with national development priorities, and embedding the Kingdom within the world's most dynamic industrial and technological ecosystems.

Taken together, these engagements demonstrate that Saudi Arabia's multi-alignment strategy is not simply a rhetorical



posture but an operational reality, anchored in pragmatic diplomacy, economic diversification, and strategic autonomy. By engaging constructively across global blocs, the Kingdom strengthens its position as a bridge between emerging and advanced economies, advancing not only its national interests but also contributing to the broader stability and inclusivity of the international system.

Saudi Arabia's Global Mediation and Conflict Resolution Diplomacy

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy transformation extends well beyond economic diversification and multilateral engagement to encompass a sustained and deliberate commitment to conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding. This evolution reflects the Kingdom's recognition that long-term regional stability and global credibility are best secured through dialogue, consensus-building, and inclusive diplomacy. Riyadh's diplomacy increasingly prioritizes negotiated solutions, grounded in respect for sovereignty and international law, and aims to de-escalate conflicts through pragmatic engagement rather than confrontation.

Mediation on the Global Stage

Since the onset of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, Saudi Arabia has maintained a delicate balance of engagement with both Moscow and Kyiv. Riyadh has hosted several rounds of informal consultations, leveraging its credibility with all parties to encourage dialogue on humanitarian issues and prisoner exchanges. The Jeddah Meeting on Ukraine in August 2023, which brought together more than 40 countries, underscored Saudi Arabia's ability to serve as a neutral mediator amid deep global divisions. This initiative demonstrated the Kingdom's growing profile as a bridge between East and West, committed to promoting peace through

pragmatic, results-oriented diplomacy rather than ideological alignment.

Amid escalating tensions in Gaza, Saudi Arabia has assumed a leading role in rallying global diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. The Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, initiated and coordinated by the Kingdom and held its first meeting in Riyadh in October 2024, seeks to mobilize international political and financial support for a just and sustainable peace process grounded in international law and UN resolutions.



Source: [SPA](#) (2024)

Building on this, Saudi Arabia, together with France and under UN auspices, co-chaired the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on September 22, 2025. The High-Level Conference led to the adoption of the New York Declaration, endorsed by the UN General Assembly with an overwhelming majority of 142 votes.

During the conference, the recognition of the State of Palestine by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Andorra, Monaco, and San Marino, alongside France, was formally confirmed at the United Nations. As of September 2025, 157 of the 193 UN member states, representing just



over 80% of the international community, officially recognize the State of Palestine as a sovereign nation.

Within just one year of launching the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, the Kingdom has successfully sustained diplomatic pressure and coalition-building across regions, uniting Arab, Islamic, European, and Global South partners around a shared commitment to peace. Riyadh's ability to maintain this coordinated momentum and consensus underscores its growing capacity to lead collective global diplomacy and transform moral and political advocacy into measurable progress.

The Kingdom's leadership in this process reaffirms its long-standing commitment to the Palestinian cause, anchored in a constructive, internationally coordinated approach that prioritizes diplomacy, reconstruction, and coexistence as the foundation for a lasting and just peace in the Middle East.

Regional Mediation

Saudi Arabia's regional de-escalation efforts have been shaped by a pragmatic approach that balances diplomacy with security concerns. The Kingdom has sought to stabilize Yemen by engaging in dialogue with the Iran-backed Houthi group while maintaining its broader regional strategy of mitigating threats to its security and economic interests. These direct talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthi group, along with discussions between the Kingdom and Yemen's legitimate government also led to ceasefire negotiations in Riyadh in September 2023. This marked a step in Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve a lasting political resolution to the conflict.

In Sudan, Saudi Arabia has been mediating between the opposing parties since the civil conflict started in April 2023, conducting

several rounds of talks in an effort to bring about reconciliation. In July 2024, Sudan's Transitional Sovereignty Council and Saudi Arabia held discussions aimed at ending Sudan's ongoing civil war through renewed efforts to revive the peace talks. Saudi diplomatic efforts have been evident across other critical issues concerning the security, stability, and unity of the Arab region. This includes Saudi Arabia's investment in Egypt's security and stability, providing political and economic support to safeguard Egyptian society and prevent internal divisions and conflicts. Saudi Arabia has embraced Syria throughout its internal crisis, offering support both before and after political transitions. It has prioritized preventing chaos, limiting foreign interference, ensuring the country's security and stability, and assisting in its reconstruction efforts.



Source: [SPA](#) (2025)

In parallel, the Kingdom has also taken a leading role in efforts to restore Syria's stability and reintegration within the regional and international system. Engaging constructively with the new administration in Damascus, Saudi Arabia has launched a series of meetings and initiatives focused on supporting Syria's recovery and long-term reconstruction. The Riyadh Meeting on Syria, held on January 12, 2025, exemplified this renewed momentum, bringing together representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN) under the leadership of His



Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign ministers and delegates from more than 20 nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Turkey, and Egypt, participated in the discussions to coordinate a roadmap for Syria's stabilization, reconstruction, and sovereign reintegration. The Kingdom's proactive engagement in this process underscores its commitment to advancing Arab consensus, strengthening collective diplomacy, and ensuring that Syria's future is anchored in regional ownership, political dialogue, and sustainable recovery.

Saudi Arabia's mediation efforts are not episodic but reflect a systematic effort to institutionalize dialogue as a tool of statecraft. The Kingdom increasingly coordinates with international organizations such as the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and emerging frameworks like the Global Alliance for Gaza. This institutional approach is gradually transforming Riyadh into a global hub for preventive diplomacy, post-conflict recovery, and multilateral consensus-building.

Conclusion: Toward a New Framework of Regional Diplomacy

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy transformation under Vision 2030 represents more than a tactical adjustment, it signals the emergence of a new diplomatic paradigm rooted in pragmatism, inclusivity, and global responsibility. Through strategic multi-alignment, diversified partnerships, and institutionalized mediation, the Kingdom has redefined its engagement with both regional and international actors. It has demonstrated that dialogue, not deterrence alone, can serve as the foundation for a stable and prosperous regional order.

Riyadh's role in shaping global initiatives, from mediating in Ukraine and Sudan to leading the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, illustrates its capacity to convert moral conviction into coordinated diplomatic action. These initiatives reveal a maturing foreign policy that bridges divides, mobilizes coalitions, and seeks to institutionalize peace through cooperation rather than confrontation.

As the Kingdom consolidates its role as a convener of dialogue and a hub for multilateral engagement, its diplomacy is increasingly defined by continuity, credibility, and strategic foresight. The interdependence of national transformation and regional stability ensures that Saudi Arabia's global posture will remain deeply invested in promoting coexistence, de-escalation, and inclusive growth.

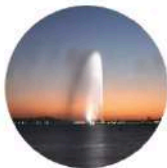
Ultimately, this evolution from dialogue to diplomacy positions Saudi Arabia not only as a pivotal Gulf power but as a responsible global actor, anchoring stability in a turbulent world and embodying the spirit of Vision 2030: a confident, connected, and constructive Kingdom shaping the future of multilateral diplomacy.

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