



The Role of Middle Eastern Powers in India-Pakistan Relations

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** hosted by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence** on **Thursday 7 May 2026** from **17:00** until **18:30**.

India-Pakistan relations are often analysed through the prism of bilateral historical grievances and strategic rivalry. However, examining the broader strategic environment is essential to fully comprehend the complex dynamics between the two powers, as multiple external actors continue to shape their diplomatic choices, economic alignments and defence postures.

Middle Eastern powers play an important role in this regard. They influence India-Pakistan dynamics in distinct ways, and the US-Israeli attacks in Iran that started on 28 February 2026 make this aspect even more relevant. Both India and Pakistan are feeling the impact of maritime traffic disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, which reduce their supply of oil, gas, fertilisers and aluminium. The outbreak of hostilities risks undermining Iran's generally cordial ties with India and Pakistan, while putting to the test the latter's mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia – which in turn is also a major hydrocarbon supplier to both countries. At the same time, Israel's expanding security cooperation with India – including in defence technology – adds another layer to the evolving strategic balance; the same applies to Türkiye's close political and defence ties with Pakistan. Understanding these intertwined and multi-layered interactions, as well as the economic and security uncertainties generated by the conflict in Iran, is important as they make the Middle Eastern influences on India-Pakistan relations more relevant than ever. Moreover, these interactions provide vital insights into the wider geopolitical dynamics.

To explore this complex topic, we are pleased to welcome Mr Umer Karim, Associate Fellow at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies.

This conference will be held **in English** at the **auditorium K.10.24 (room Peeters)** at **campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**) on **Thursday 7 May 2026 at 17:00**. There will be no simultaneous interpretation available. Please note that online participation will also not be possible.

Kindly register in advance at www.defence-institute.be. **Registration is required by Wednesday 29 April 2026 at the latest.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng

Rear Admiral

Aide-de-Camp to the King

Director-general

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16:30:	Welcome
17:00:	Conference and Q&A
18:30 – 19:30:	Reception