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Commentary

Badr MoU: Search for Defence Self-Reliance in West Asia

Prasanta Kumar Pradhan

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Summary

The Badr MoU amid heightened regional tensions in West Asia reflects member countries' concerns about the prevailing security environment.

On 21 October 2026, Turkiye, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defence industry cooperation in Doha. The MoU's key objectives are to promote cooperation among the four countries in defence manufacturing and encourage collaboration in research and development, technical training, and the development of advanced defence technologies.[1] This MoU aims to advance defence industry development by leveraging each country's strengths and expertise to build defence industries, enhance production capabilities, and achieve greater integration, while also meeting the needs of partners and friendly countries.

The signatories expect that enhanced defence manufacturing capabilities will bring further economic benefits to all of them. They also believe that their defence industry cooperation will contribute to regional security and stability by achieving shared objectives.[2] The MoU intends to bring together Turkiye's military-industrial expertise, Pakistan and Indonesia's manufacturing capability, and Qatar's investment. The MoU is also open for other friendly countries to join as members.

The Badr MoU follows the signing of the Multinational Maritime Defence Coalition (MMDC) in July 2026 and the Mecca Defence Alliance in August 2026. Turkiye and Pakistan are members of these two coalitions. The Mecca Defence Alliance and the Saudi Arabia–Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA), signed in September 2025, are military pacts that treat an attack on one country as an attack on the other. The Badr MoU, by contrast, focuses on a long-term future and aims to develop the signatories' military-industrial capabilities.

The MoU has established a two-tier mechanism—an Executive Board and a Strategic Board for an effective implementation of the joint projects. While the Executive Board will identify joint projects among the four member countries, the Strategic Board will approve them and set timelines.[3] Haluk Gorgun, the chairman of Turkiye's Defence Industry Presidency, said the Badr MoU forms the foundation of a "strategic cooperation" for joint production and technology among the member countries.[4]

The signing of the Badr MoU is important in the current regional situation in West Asia. The US–Israel war on Iran and the Iranian retaliatory attacks on the Gulf Arab countries have created an unprecedented tension in the region. The signing of

[1] **"Qatar, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkiye Sign Badr MoU to Promote Defense Industries Cooperation"**, *Qatar News Agency*, 21 October 2026.

[2] Ibid.

[3] **"Türkiye, Qatar, Indonesia and Pakistan Sign Defense Cooperation Pact"**, *Anadolu Agency*, 21 October 2026.

[4] **"Turkiye, Qatar, Pakistan, Indonesia Sign Defense Cooperation Accord, Ankara Says"**, *Arab News*, 21 October 2026.

military coalitions such as the MMDC, Mecca Defence Alliance, the Saudi Arabia–Pakistan SMDA, and the Badr MoU indicates a changing perception of security and order among regional powers in West Asia.

The Gulf countries have suffered huge losses to their economic and energy infrastructure as a result of the Iranian attacks. The US has also suffered significant losses to their military bases and assets in the GCC. It has been forced to reduce personnel at several bases significantly. There is a growing perception among the Gulf countries that the strong US military presence in the region has not prevented the Iranian attacks on them. Thus, there is a need to intensify defence and security collaboration among like-minded countries in and outside the region to complement the existing US-led regional security arrangement.[5]

Turkiye's Role

Turkiye seems to be the key player behind the formation of this grouping. It has a robust defence industry and enjoys a strong defence and security relationship with other members—Pakistan, Qatar and Indonesia. Turkiye and Qatar have a strong military-to-military relationship. Turkiye has a military base in Qatar where around 5,000 Turkish military personnel are stationed. Erdogan described the Turkish military base in Qatar as "the symbol of brotherhood, friendship, solidarity and sincerity".[6] Similarly, Turkiye has a strong defence and strategic partnership with Pakistan. Turkiye is one of Pakistan's key arms suppliers.

Strategic convergence between Turkey and Indonesia is growing. For Turkiye, Indonesia is a key pivot in its Asia focus under the Asia Anew Initiative. Indonesia perceives Turkiye as an important partner for its military modernisation. For Indonesia, it is an opportunity to fulfil its strategic interests, particularly in military modernisation. During President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Indonesia in February 2025, Turkish drone manufacturer Baykar and Indonesian defence company Republikorp signed a joint venture agreement to establish an unmanned aerial vehicle manufacturing facility in Indonesia for the co-production of Bayraktar TB3 and Akıncı drones.

Defence cooperation between the two countries has significantly strengthened since the signing of a defence cooperation agreement in 2010. In 2015, Turkey and Indonesia signed an agreement to develop and produce two prototype medium-weight tanks. Turkiye delivered the first batch of the jointly developed Kaplan MT

[5] Amnah Mosly, **"Toward a Formal U.S.-GCC Framework: Completing the Dual-Track Strategy"**, Gulf Research Centre, 16 September 2026.

[6] **"Erdogan: Turkey-Qatar Military Base Serves Regional Stability"**, *Al Jazeera*, 25 November 2019.

medium-weight tanks to Indonesia in 2022.[7] In February 2023, both countries signed a defence cooperation action plan to strengthen cooperation in the defence industry and military training.[8]

While Turkiye, Qatar and Pakistan's participation in a regional grouping of this nature is neither unexpected nor unprecedented, Indonesia's inclusion raises questions, particularly from India's perspective. India and Indonesia share strong economic, military and strategic ties. Although Indonesia maintains cordial relations with the West Asian countries, it has traditionally refrained from joining regional defence and security coalitions. More importantly, India is supplying Indonesia with the BrahMos missile system and Astra air-to-air missiles, reflecting the growing depth of their defence partnership.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Indonesia in July 2026, the two countries agreed to strengthen military and maritime cooperation further. They welcomed the agreements concerning the BrahMos and Astra missile systems.[9] While Indonesia's participation in the Badr MoU should not be viewed as undermining its established defence and strategic partnership with India, its association with Pakistan and Turkiye through a wartime defence industry cooperation warrants closer Indian attention. Although the grouping is not directed against India, New Delhi would need to closely monitor its evolution and the implications it may have for the wider regional geopolitical and security environment in West Asia.

Conclusion

The signing of the Badr MoU amid heightened regional tensions in West Asia reflects the member countries' concerns about the prevailing security environment and the uncertainties surrounding the region's future. More importantly, it signals a growing recognition among regional powers of the need to develop indigenous defence capabilities and reduce dependence on external powers. The initiative marks a step towards promoting cooperation in defence production and strengthening regional defence capabilities at a time of heightened instability. Although its long-term implications remain uncertain, the Badr MoU offers an insight into the evolving security priorities of regional powers and the broader shifts underway in the regional order in West Asia.

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[7] **"Turkey Delivers 1st Batch of Tanks Developed with Indonesia"**, *Daily Sabah*, 15 March 2022.

[8] **"Indonesia Inks Defense Cooperation Action Plan with Turkey"**, *Antara: Indonesian News Agency*, 4 February 2023.

[9] **"India-Indonesia Joint Statement on the State Visit by Prime Minister of India to Indonesia (July 06 – 08, 2026)"**, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 7 July 2026.

About the Author



Dr. Prasanta Kumar Pradhan is Research Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

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Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi 110 010 India
T +91-11-2671 7983 F +91-11-2615 4191
www.idsa.in
Twitter @IDSAIndia
www.facebook.com/ManoharParrikarInstituteforDefenceStudiesAnalyses