



Pakistan Has a Choice: Carry Messages for the “New Middle East” or a “New Crescent Bloc”

History does not reward nations that carry messages for others. It remembers those that set the agenda.

As Iran-US war reshapes the Middle East, for America’s “New Middle East,” Pakistan finds itself in a familiar, but limiting role: acting as an intermediary between Washington and Tehran. Much of the domestic discourse has celebrated this diplomatic positioning. However, this moment demands a more uncomfortable question: is Pakistan content to remain a courier, or can it rise to the level of a regional statesman?

Wars often have a shocking effect on nations. They can force nations to reassess their assumptions. They disrupt old biases and create space for new strategic thinking. Yet, Pakistan’s response to the Iran–US crisis reflects at least caution, rather than ambition and bold vision. Acting as a go-between may earn temporary relevance, but it does not translate into lasting influence. A messenger can facilitate dialogue, but cannot define outcomes. While recent diplomatic activity has increased Pakistan’s visibility, visibility is not the same as strategic power.

Statesmanship, by contrast, begins with independence of thought. It requires a leadership that is willing to articulate its own regional vision rooted in its security needs, economic interests, and civilizational outlook. A statesman does not wait to be assigned a role by a foreign superpower; he defines a vision in order to become a superpower. Pakistan’s current posture suggests a preference for short-term diplomatic utility for Washington over strategic autonomy. However, usefulness to a visibly declining, a superpower is not the same as exercising independent power.

What then should be Pakistan’s alternative? A bold regional project is possible as the region presents a rare opportunity. The United States and “Israel” have failed to subdue Iran militarily. The Gulf leadership is weakened and exposed. Iran itself requires post-war rehabilitation. These conditions create space for a new regional initiative, if sincere elements in Pakistan’s decision-making show statesmanship. They will find willing allies in Gulf and Iran who share their dismay for US-led destabilisation of the region.

This vision can be described as a “Crescent Bloc,” replacing the outdated Sykes-Picot framework imposed after World War I. The region could be reorganized along more natural political and civilizational lines, free from foreign domination. Such a vision would integrate the Middle East with South and Central Asia, creating a broader strategic and economic space.

This project could rest on three pillars. First, a regional military integration capable of fighting the Jewish entity and ensuring collective security. Second, an energy corridor linking South Asian markets with the resource-rich Gulf. Third, a broader political and economic bloc spanning the Middle East, South Asia, and Central Asia.

Iran would be a central component of this framework, not an isolated actor. This “Crescent Bloc” would not depend on U.S. military bases for security. Instead, countries such as Pakistan, Türkiye, and Egypt could act as net security providers, ideally within a unified command structure. The bloc should force US to withdraw from Middle East and an end to its support for the Jewish entity—transforming the strategic landscape.

Skeptics will argue that such ambitions are unrealistic. However, the real constraint is not capability—it is imagination. Pakistan possesses the diplomatic reach, military capacity, and geographic position to play a far larger role than it currently does. What it lacks is the boldness and independence of thought in the leadership.

The question, then, is not whether Pakistan can deliver another message between Washington and Tehran. It is whether it can deliver a vision of its own.

In times of upheaval, nations either inherit the future or help create it. Pakistan must decide which path it wants to take.

The first step to all this is the establishment of the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate), the bearer of a unique civilizational and strategic project.

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