



P-8I Patrol Aircraft

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Why in News

The **US State Department** has approved the **sale of six P-8I patrol aircraft** and related equipment to **India**.

- The six aircraft **will come fitted with encrypted systems**, as India has signed the **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)** with the US.
- The **Defence Acquisition Council** approved the procurement of the aircraft in 2019.

Key Points

- **About the P-8I Aircraft:**
 - It is a **long-range maritime reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft**.
 - It is a **variant of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft** that Boeing company developed as a replacement for the US Navy's ageing P-3 fleet.
 - With a **maximum speed of 907 kmph** and an **operating range of over 1,200 nautical miles**, the P-8Is detect threats and neutralize them if required, far before they come anywhere near Indian shores.
 - **Indian Navy became the first international customer** for the P-8 aircraft in 2009.

- **Indo-US Defence Ties:**

- This proposed sale will help to **strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship.**

For the US, **India** continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the **Indo-Pacific and South Asia region.**

- **Defense purchases** from the United States have been increasingly an integral part of growing ties between the two countries.

From **near zero in 2008**, India-US defence trade touched **USD 20 billion in 2020**, helped along by major policy upgrades.

- The US **designating India a Major Defence Partner** (in 2016) and then **granting it the same access to defence technology as NATO allies** and Australia, Japan and South Korea under Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA) in 2018.

- **COMCASA Agreement:**

- **COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement)** is meant to provide a legal framework for the **transfer of communication security equipment** from the US to India that would facilitate “interoperability” between their forces — and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links.

- It is **one of the four foundational agreements** that the US signs with allies and close partners to facilitate interoperability between militaries and sale of high end technology.

- It is **an India-specific version of the Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA).**

Four Foundational Agreements between the US and its Partners

- **General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)**

- GSOMIA allows militaries to share the intelligence gathered by them.
- Signed by India in 2002.

- **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA):**

- LEMOA allows both countries to have access to each other’s designated military facilities for refueling and replenishment.
- Signed by India in 2016.

- **Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)**

- **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)** is the India specific version of CISMOA.
- Signed by India in 2018.

- **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)**

- BECA will allow India and US militaries to share geospatial and satellite data with each other.
- India has **signed BECA** in 2020.

Defence Acquisition Council

- The Defence Acquisition Council is the **highest decision-making body in the Defence Ministry** for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.
- The **Minister of Defence is the Chairman** of the Council.
- It was formed, after the Group of Ministers recommendations on 'Reforming the National Security System', in 2001, post Kargil War (1999).

Source: TH