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## India-US Agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

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### Why in News

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Recently, India and the US have signed a **Project Agreement (PA) to jointly develop an Air-launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV) or drones** that can be launched from an aircraft.

The PA was **signed under the Joint Working Group Air Systems in the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)**, between India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the US Department of Defence (DoD).

### Key Points

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- **About the Project Agreement (PA):**

- **Aim:** It aims towards design, development, demonstration, testing and evaluation of systems to co-develop an **ALUAV prototype**.

The PA for the ALUAV fell under the **Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation Memorandum of Agreement between MoD and US DoD**.

It was first signed in January 2006 and renewed in January 2015.

- **Indian Participants:** The PA outlines the collaboration between Air Force Research Laboratory, **Indian Air Force**, and **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- **Execution:** The **Aeronautical Development Establishment** at the DRDO and the **Aerospace Systems Directorate** at the Air Force Research Laboratory, along with the **Indian and US Air Forces** are the principal organisations for the execution of the PA.
- **Significance:** It was a significant step towards **deepening defence technology collaboration** between the two nations through co-development of defence equipment.

It could in the future **lead to joint manufacture of artificial intelligence-enabled drone swarms** capable of being launched from aircraft to overwhelm an adversary's air defence systems.

- **Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI):**

- **Formation:** The DTTI was announced in **2012** as an ambitious initiative for co-production and co-development of military systems but has never really taken off despite several efforts.
- **Aim:** To **strengthen the US and India's defence industrial base** by moving away from the traditional "buyer-seller" dynamic toward a more collaborative approach.

This would be through exploring new areas of **technological collaboration** through **co-development and co-production**.

- **Projects:** The projects under DTTI have been identified as the near, medium and long term projects.
  - The **near-term projects** included so far are Air-launched Small Unmanned Systems (drone swarms), LightWeight Small Arms Technology and Intelligence-Surveillance-Targeting & Reconnaissance (ISTAR) systems.
  - The **medium-term projects** identified are Maritime Domain Awareness Solution and Virtual Augmented Mixed Reality for Aircraft Maintenance or VAMRAM.
  - The two **long term projects** are Terrain Shaping Obstacle (lethal munitions) and anti-drone technology called Counter-UAS, Rocket, Artillery & Mortar (CURAM) system for the Indian Army.
- **Joint Working Group:** Under the DTTI, Joint Working Groups on land, naval, air, and aircraft carrier technologies have been established for focus on mutually agreed projects in respective domains.

## Other Major Agreements between India and US

- The **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** largely pertains to geospatial intelligence, and sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence.

It was signed between India and the US in 2020.

- The **Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)** was signed in 2018.

It aims to facilitate communication between the weapons platforms of the two armed forces.

- The **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** was signed a full 14 years later in 2016.

It aims to provide mutual logistics support around the world.

- The **General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)** was signed by the government in 2002.

It aims to protect the military information shared by the US.

**Source: TH**