



# US' CAATSA and Russia's S-400

## Why in News

The US lawmakers continue to voice their support for a sanctions waiver from [Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act \(CAATSA\)](#) for India.

- In October 2018, India signed a 5.43 billion USD deal with Russia for the [S-400 Triumf missile system](#) despite objections from the US and the threat of sanctions under CAATSA. India is likely to **begin taking delivery** of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia **in November 2021**.

## Key Points

### ▪ About the US' CAATSA:

- **US Law:** It is a US federal law **enacted in 2017**. The Act **empowers the US President to impose at least five of the 12 listed sanctions on persons** engaged in a **"significant transaction" with Russian defence and intelligence sectors**.
  - Its "ultimate goal", "is to **prevent revenue from flowing to the Russian Government**."
  - Besides Russia, **CAATSA is aimed at enforcing sanctions against Iran and North Korea**.
- **Types of Sanctions:** The CAATSA contains 12 types of sanctions. There are **only two sanctions that may impact either India-Russia relations or India-US relations**.
  - **Prohibition of Banking transactions:** The first of these, which is likely to have an impact on India-Russia relations, is the **"Prohibition of Banking transactions"**.
    - This would mean difficulties for India in making payments in US Dollars to Russia for the purchase of the S-400 systems.
  - **Export Sanction:** The second sanction will have greater consequences for India-US relations.
    - This is the **"export sanction"** which has the potential to completely derail the [India-US Strategic and Defence partnership](#), as it will deny the license for, and export of, any items controlled by the US.
- **Waiver Criteria:** The US President was given the authority in 2018 to waive CAATSA sanctions on a **case-by-case basis**.

### ▪ Russia's S-400 Triumf Missile System:

#### ◦ About:

- It is a **mobile, Surface-to-Air Missile system (SAM) designed by Russia**.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed **Modern Long-Range SAM (MLR SAM)** in the world, considered **much ahead of the [US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system \(THAAD\)](#)**.

- It integrates a multifunction radar, autonomous detection and targeting systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, launchers, and command and control centre.
  - It is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered defence.
- The system can **engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)** and [ballistic and cruise missiles](#) within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km.
- The system can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously.
- **Significance for India:**
  - From India's point of view, **China is also buying the system**. In 2015, China signed an agreement with Russia to purchase six battalions of the system. Its delivery began in January 2018.
    - China's acquisition of the S-400 system has been viewed as a "game changer" in the region. However, its effectiveness against India is limited.
  - India's acquisition is **crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war**, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

## India-US Defence Cooperation

- Both countries signed the '**New Framework for India-US Defense Relations**' in 2005, which was further updated for 10 years in 2015.
  - The USA recognised India as a **Major Defence Partner** in 2016.
  - The designation allows India to **buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America** at par with that of the US's closest allies and partners.
- India and US inked important defence pacts in the last few years and also formalised the four nation alliance of [QUAD](#) (India, US, Japan and Australia).
- [Four Foundational Defence Agreements](#):
  - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).
  - General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
  - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).
  - Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- **US Military Equipment in India:** Indian Air Force's C-17 heavy-lifters, Apache attack helicopters and C-130J special operations aircraft, India's Navy's P-8I surveillance aircraft and the Indian Army's M-777 ultra-light howitzers.
- **Defence Exercises:**
  - [Malabar exercise](#) (Quadrilateral naval exercise of India, USA, Japan and Australia) , [Yudh Abhyas](#) (Army); Cope India (Air Force); [Vajra Prahar](#) (Special Forces).

## India & the US

A snapshot of key agreements and weapon sales in the works:

### KEY PACTS

#### **Logistics Exchange**

#### **Memorandum of**

#### **Agreement (2016):**

Gives access to each other's military and civil facilities for repairs, supplies and refuelling

#### **Communications**

#### **Compatibility and Security**

#### **Agreement (2018):**

Gives India access to real-time imagery, military data and intercepts

#### **Basic Exchange and**

#### **Cooperation Agreement**

#### **(2020) :**

Would give India access to a database of global maps critical for precise targeting and operational planning

### THE WEAPONS

India has significantly increased US-origin weapons in its inventory. Apart from purchasing radar systems, aircraft & choppers, rifles and missiles are in the pipeline:

**The National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System:** To protect the national capital from all air threats

**P-8:** To bolster the navy's submarine hunting and maritime patrol capabilities

**Fighter Planes:** The US is pitching the **F-15EX**, the F-21 and the F/A-18 Super Hornets for the IAF and the carrier-borne F/A-18 Super Hornets for the navy

**Armed Drones:** A version of the Sea Guardian

## Way Forward

- Russia always saw India as a balancer that's why Russia facilitated India's inclusion into [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#) and formation of [Russia-India-China \(RIC\) grouping](#).
  - India today is in a unique position where it has a favourable relation with all great powers, and she must leverage this position to help in building a peaceful world order.
- The defence procurement for India has become significant amid deadly clashes with [China on Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#). Further, Russia is an all weather defence partner of India.
  - However, India **needs to balance its relation with both Russia and USA**, so that its national interest is not compromised.
- It **needs to develop closer ties with the United States**, which could balance any moves towards a strategic partnership between China and Russia.

[Source: TH](#)

