



Five Eyes Alliance

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Why in News?

Since the **Canadian Prime Minister alleged** that the Indian Government may have “potential links” to the killing of a Sikh separatist leader and **Khalistan Movement** proponent in Canada, the ties between the two countries are under strain; where his allegations are backed by reports of **Five Eyes Alliance**.

What is Five Eyes Alliance?

- **About:**
 - The Five Eyes is an intelligence alliance comprising nations including **Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the US**.
 - These countries are parties to the **multilateral UK-USA Agreement**, a treaty for joint cooperation in signals intelligence.
- **Features:**
 - These partner nations exchange a wide spectrum of intelligence within one of the world's most tightly-knit multilateral agreements as part of the collaboration.
 - Following its origin, the agency later enlarged its core group to ‘Nine Eyes’ and 14 Eyes alliances as well, encompassing more countries as security partners.
 - The **‘Nine Eyes’** group expands to cover the Netherlands, Denmark, France and Norway, whereas the **14 Eyes bloc** further includes Belgium, Italy, Germany, Spain and Sweden.

Why was the Five Eyes Alliance Formed?

- The alliance’s origins can be traced back to the **Second World War**. The UK and the US decided to share intelligence after successfully breaking German and Japanese codes, respectively.
- In 1943, the **Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement** laid the foundations for what would become the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement.
 - BRUSA was signed to share intelligence information between the two countries to support US forces in Europe
- Following this, **the UKUSA (UK-USA) was signed in 1946. Canada joined it in 1949, and New Zealand and Australia did so in 1956, forming the alliance.**
- The Agreement was not officially acknowledged though its existence was known about from the 1980s. But in 2010, the UKUSA agreement files were released.

How does the Five Eyes Alliance Work?

- Countries often engage with each other on matters of intelligence gathering and security.
- In recent years, common interests, such as balancing the rise of China, have led to a closer alignment among the Five Eyes countries.
- Their closeness has also been attributed to a **common language and mutual trust** built over decades of association.
- In 2016, the **Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council** came into being. It includes the non-political intelligence oversight, review, and security entities of the Five Eyes

countries.

How could Five Eyes Play a Role in the Current India-Canada Issue?

- Countries like the **US, the UK and Australia especially are seen as close to India**. They also have **significant Indian and Indian-origin populations within them**, similar to Canada.
 - They have also **seen some instances of pro-Khalistan activities** in the last few years. But due to their historical closeness to Canada and the alliance on one hand, and India, an emerging global power on the other, **outright support for India or Canada is unlikely**.
- Given the state of ties, these countries, particularly **the US, could play a mediating role in the issue once they have clear intelligence and information on the matter**.

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