

# BECA Agreement

The Governments of India and the United States of America signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) on October 27, 2020. It is the third of a series of agreements between the two nations that marks the beginning of a deep military cooperation.

The previous two agreements were - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).

This article will give details about the BECA agreement and its significance within the context of the Civil Services Examination.

## What is the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement?

The BECA agreement focuses on providing American geospatial intelligence to India. Geospatial intelligence is the intelligence on human activity that is gathered by closely examining satellite images and other allied information.

In this case, through accurate maps and satellite images, India can enhance its topographical and aeronautical data which will aid in its guarding its borders more effectively.

BECA will provide the Indian military with high quality GPS which will improve the accuracy of its automated systems and other guided weapons like missiles and armed drones. Defence benefits aside, the BECA will also give the required geospatial intelligence that will be crucial for an effective response towards natural disasters

The signing of the LEMOA, COMCASA and BECA completes the trio of the foundational pacts for extended defence cooperation between India and the United States.

## Impact of the BECA agreement

The following factors will become apparent with the signing of the BECA:

- Indo-Pacific strategies will be better coordinated between India and the United States.
- The QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), an informal security dialogue between the United States, India, Australia and Japan, will be further strengthened.
- In the wake of the strained India-China relations, India can keep a close watch on Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean. It will also help in combating future incursions by the Chinese on India's land borders.

- The signing of all three foundational pacts signifies the growing trust between the United States and India. The LEMOA means that both trust each other enough to show their valuable assets. COMCASA shows trust in the encrypted systems between the two, and BECA allows for classified information to be shared freely between the two countries.
- Interoperability, intelligence-sharing and joint research in weapons production.
- The foundation of a Multi-Polar World order will take shape thanks to the substantive and institutionalized cooperation that will help in managing India and America's rising global security burden.

## Concerns regarding the BECA agreement

**Aversion towards an alliance system:** Although BECA and other allied agreements are a strategic benefit to India, the strategic thinking which dates from the non-alignment days have dominated India's foreign policy. This thinking asserts that alliances are inherently bad and if not careful, such alliances can infringe on national sovereignty

**Future of Indo-Russo defence pact:** India has always been Russia's biggest customer in defence equipment since the days of the Cold War. The United States has expressed concerns about the proximity of India with Russia as it fears its technology would find its way into Russian hands.

**Divergence of Foreign Policy Interest:** In the last few decades, there has been a major policy shift between the two nations as far as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran is concerned.

## Conclusion

The signing of the BECA signifies a major power shift in which India and the United States will work together in shaping the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region but India must continue its efforts of strategic hedging with global powers and further enhance its own standing in the Indian ocean region.