# Indo-US 2+2 Meeting

## Why in news?

India and the US are preparing for the third 2+2 ministerial meeting.

## What is the agenda?

- The meeting will be between External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister of India, and US Secretary of State and Defense Secretary.
- The meeting will happen in New Delhi.
- One of the items on the agenda will be the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).
- BECA is a pact that would lay the foundation for deeper military cooperation.
- In the last two meetings, agreements known as LEMOA and COMCASA were signed.

## What is BECA?

- The BECA largely pertains to geospatial intelligence, and sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence.
- Signing BECA will allow India to use the US's advanced geospatial intelligence.
- This will enhance the accuracy of automated systems and weapons like missiles and armed drones.
- It will give access to topographical and aeronautical data and products that will aid navigation and targeting.
- This could be a key for Air Force-to-Air Force cooperation.

## What is LEMOA?

- The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed between India and the US in August 2016.
- It allows the military of each country to replenish from the other's bases: access supplies, spare parts and services from the other's land facilities, air bases, and ports.
- This can then be reimbursed.
- This is extremely useful for Navy-to-Navy cooperation, since the US and India are cooperating closely in the Indo-Pacific.
- If signing LEMOA needed trust, its application enhances the trust.

## What is COMCASA?

- The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) was signed in September 2018, after the first 2+2 dialogue.
- It allows the US to provide India with its encrypted communications equipment and systems.
- Because of this, Indian and US military commanders, aircraft and ships can communicate through secure networks in peace and war.
- It paved the way for transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India to facilitate “interoperability” between their forces.

## What do these three pacts put together mean?

- LEMOA means one partner trusts the other enough to expose its valuable assets.
- COMCASA means one is confident that it can rely on encrypted systems to connect the two militaries.
- BECA means it can share highly classified information in real time without fear of being compromised.
- All this signals the level of trust that has developed between the two countries and their militaries, faced with an aggressive China.

## What does this mean in the context of the ongoing border standoff?

- Amidst the longest India-China border in three decades, India and the US have intensified under-the-radar intelligence and military cooperation at an unprecedented level.
- This cooperation has facilitated information-sharing between security, military and intelligence branches of the two countries.
- It includes sharing of high-end satellite images, telephone intercepts, and data sharing of Chinese troops and weapons deployment along the 3,488 km Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The Indian defence establishment also has enhanced capability with some American equipment.
- The armed forces have used at least five American platforms at the LAC.
- Now, with these key defence pacts in place, cooperation can happen in a more structured and efficient way, rather than episodic.

## Is there a catch in all this?

- The US wants India to move away from Russian equipment and platforms.
- It is because the US feels that this may expose its technology and information to Moscow.
- India is wary of Pakistan’s ties with Pentagon, and US’s dependence on

Rawalpindi for access to Afghanistan as well as its exit strategy.
- But, because of Chinese belligerence being the clear and present danger, New Delhi’s strategic embrace of Washington is the obvious outcome.

**Source: The Indian Express**

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