

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q20

What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS II · 15 marks · India and its Neighbourhood

India and its neighborhood - relations.

Core demand of the question

- What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region
- Honour the official stem. Compare logistics and intel foundational agreements with legacy Soviet/Russian platforms; keep Indo-Pacific stability as the test
- Keep the discussion within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Russia still underwrites much of India's existing fighters, submarines and armour.

US deals since the 2010s emphasise logistics, secure comms, geospatial data and Indo-Pacific-range ASW and lift.

BECA (2020), **LEMOA** and **COMCASA** are the interoperability spine, not a NATO accession.

Indo-Pacific stability needs Indian maritime awareness with partners and a usable legacy force.

Significance 'over' Russia is theatre-and-network, not a completed inventory swap.

Introduction

- **India's arsenal was built on Soviet and then Russian platforms:** fighters, submarines, tanks, and nuclear-submarine know-how. Indo-US defence deals of the 2010s-2020 are smaller in inventory share but large in the kind of interoperability they buy. For Indo-Pacific stability the significance is not that Washington has replaced Moscow in the hangar; it is that India can operate with Quad partners at sea while still hedging with Russian spares and S-400-era air defence.

Body

Indo-Russian deals - what they still mean

- **Legacy dependence:** Sukhoi, MiG, Kilo/Sindhughosh, T-90, and the nuclear-submarine lease lineage make Russia the maintenance and upgrade partner for the existing force.
- **Strategic autonomy memory:** Russia transferred sensitive tech (BrahMos joint, reactor assistance) when Western regimes were tight.
- **Limits for the Indo-Pacific:** Russian gear is not built to plug into US-Japan-Australia networks; CAATSA risk after S-400 showed that the old partner now collides with the new theatre.

- A purely Russian inventory would leave India a strong continental power with a weaker ability to share the maritime picture with Indo-Pacific partners.

Indo-US deals - what is significant

- **Foundational agreements:** LEMOA (logistics), COMCASA (secure communications), and BECA (geospatial) - the 2020 BECA signing is the intelligence-map piece. These are not 'a squadron of aircraft'; they are the wiring for coalition maritime domain awareness.
- **Hardware:** C-17, C-130, P-8I Poseidon, Apache, Chinook, and MH-60R - lift, anti-submarine warfare, and helicopters that match Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific distances.
- **Industrial and staff talks:** DTTI, 2+2, and Major Defence Partner status aim at co-production over time, still thinner than the old Soviet licensed-production depth.
- **Significance over Russian deals is qualitative:** ISR, logistics on the move, and political signalling to a revisionist China, not yet quantitative replacement of the Russian share.

Indo-Pacific stability as the test

- **Stability here means deterrence without a great-power war:** a capable India that can see and stay at sea, plus crisis communication, plus no forced choice that splits India's force into unusable halves.
- US deals raise the cost of Chinese maritime coercion in the Indian Ocean and the approaches to the Malacca-South China Sea arc by knitting India into a common operating picture with Japan and Australia.
- Russian deals still keep India from being a US treaty client, which itself can stabilise: a non-allied India is acceptable to more of Asia than a NATO-East.
- Over-weighting US deals to the point of CAATSA-broken Russian maintenance would destabilise by grounding a large part of the IAF and Navy - the opposite of stability.
- Over-weighting Russia alone would isolate India from the maritime coalition that actually polices Indo-Pacific commons in 2020.

Balanced significance

- 'Over' in the stem is best read as strategic incremental significance for the Indo-Pacific theatre, not as a ledger where every new US contract cancels a Russian invoice.
- **The stable mix:** Russian (and domestic) muscle for the force in being; US deals for C4ISR, ASW, and logistics that make India a net security provider in the Indian Ocean.
- Atmanirbhar defence is the third term the stem omits; without it, both relationships are dependencies.

Flow diagram

Indo-Russian platforms -> Force in being

Indo-Indo-US LEMOA COMCASA BECA P8I LEMOA COMCASA BECA P8I -> Maritime MDA with partners

Force in being -> Indo-Pacific stability

Maritime MDA with partners -> Indo-Pacific stability

China maritime coercion -> Indo-Pacific stability

Conclusion

Indo-US defence deals matter more than additional Russian platform sales for Indo-Pacific stability because they buy logistics, secure comms, geospatial intelligence, and ASW lift that work with Quad partners. Indo-Russian deals still matter for the fleet and air force India already has. Stability needs both: American-era maritime awareness without a messy divorce from Russian sustainment.

Facts & figures

LEMOA

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement; reciprocal access to supplies and bases on a case basis.

COMCASA

Communications compatibility and security agreement for US-origin comms equipment.

BECA, 2020

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on geospatial intelligence; the map layer for maritime operations.

P-8I Poseidon

US-origin long-range maritime patrol and ASW aircraft central to Indian Ocean surveillance.

S-400 / CAATSA

Russian air-defence deal under US sanctions threat; the collision of the two supplier relationships.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/what-is-the-significance-of-indo-us-defence-deals-over-indo-russian-defence-deals-discuss-with-reference-to-stability-in-the-indo-pacific-region/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com