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Q5(d)

Explain the significance of Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement (BECA) for Indo-US strategic relations.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 2 · 10 marks · Changing International Political Order

Changing International Political Order: Rise of super powers; strategic and ideological Bipolarity, arms race and Cold War; Nuclear threat; Non-aligned movement; Collapse of the Soviet Union; Unipolarity and American hegemony; relevance of non-alignment in the contemporary world.

Core demand of the question

- Explain the significance of Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement (BECA) for Indo-US strategic relations
- Keep the answer within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

BECA (2020) shares geospatial intelligence for navigation and precision.

It sits with **LEMOA** and **COMCASA** as the US foundational set.

The pact thickens Indo-US military interoperability for the Indo-Pacific.

Quad awareness gains; a NATO **Article 5** does not appear.

Data-trust and Russia-origin platforms remain the practical ceiling.

Introduction

BECA is a 2020 foundational defence agreement on geospatial intelligence. With **LEMOA** and **COMCASA** it moved India-United States military ties from political talk to interoperable systems.

Body**What BECA does**

- It allows sharing of maps, satellite data, and geospatial products that guide missiles, aircraft, and navigation.
- Accuracy at sea and in the Himalaya rises when Indian platforms can use US-origin geospatial feeds under agreed safeguards.

Strategic significance

- Together with **LEMOA** (logistics) and **COMCASA** (communications security), BECA completes a triad that the United States usually signs with close partners.
- It supports **Quad** maritime domain awareness and Indo-Pacific operations without a NATO treaty.
- It signals that New Delhi will take enabling pacts with Washington while keeping Russian kit, which is autonomy as multi-alignment, not non-alignment as distance.

Limits

- Trust over data, end-use monitoring, and India's other suppliers still cap how deep the plug-in goes.
- China reads BECA as balancing. That is part of the significance, not an accident.

Flow diagram

LEMOA logistics -> Foundational triad
COMCASA comms -> Foundational triad
BECA geospatial -> Foundational triad
Foundational triad -> Indo-US Quad operations

Conclusion

BECA's significance is geospatial interoperability plus a political marker that India-US strategic relations now include the sensitive layer of maps and targeting support. It is an enabler of partnership, not a mutual defence clause.

Facts & figures

BECA 2020

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on geospatial cooperation between India and the United States.

LEMOA

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (2016) on reciprocal access to supplies and bases support.

COMCASA

Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (2018) on secure radios and data links.

Quad

Australia-India-Japan-US grouping that uses maritime awareness; BECA-quality data supports that mission.