COMCASA
SHOULD INDIA SIGN?
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Print so small and so much detail that no one wants to read it. Text just goes on and on and on and no one cares. If we really need all this detail, why is it so difficult to read? For all that is holy, can someone please conquer the details?

The devil is definitely in the details.
India close to signing COMCASA with US

Being a ‘Major Defence Partner’ of the US, it is imperative for India to sign the three mandatory foundational pacts - Getty Images/iStockphoto
WHAT IS COMCASA?

Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement

COMCASA essentially provides a legal framework for the transfer of COMSEC equipment from the US to India that would facilitate ‘interoperability’ between Indian and US forces, and potentially with other militaries as well that use US-origin systems for secure tactical data links.
Furthermore, not signing COMCASA also means that certain things such as high-precision GPS or the latest guidance packages for US-origin air to air missiles will not be available to India.
COMCASA

• COMCASA is one of three foundational agreements that guide US high technology cooperation in defence sector with other countries. It was earlier called Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) before name was changed to reflect its India-specific nature. Other two agreements are Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and BECA.

• Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement
It is worth considering whether COMCASA has the potential to compromise India’s operational security while protecting that of the US. COMCASA may also increase pressure on India to source all of its COMSEC equipment from US vendors in the future.
ISSUES

• Encryption algorithm

• Now COMCASA requires that US operators perform functions such as keying for the encryption. Indian operators will not be allowed to even participate in the maintenance of these systems.

• American platforms like C-130Js and the P8I maritime surveillance aircraft.
WHAT ABOUT OUR OLDER EQUIPMENT?

Officials from Defence ministry have held reservations about signing COMCASA as they fear US’s intrusive access to Indian military communication systems. They also fear that indigenous Indian military and large quantity of Russian-origin platforms may not be compatible with COMCASA.
The US had granted India the status of a ‘Major Defence Partner’ in 2016 but no tangible benefits on military technology front have come to New Delhi so far.

AS PART of preparations for the 2+2 dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of India and the US in Washington next month, a team of specialists from the Pentagon will be meeting their counterparts on the Indian side in Delhi from Monday to negotiate the text of a “foundational” military communications agreement.
• But the need for signing COMCASA becomes mandatory if India is to get the armed version of the Sea Guardian drones from Washington.

• New Delhi has been intimated by the US officials that there is no possibility of India using the high-end drones, which is dependent on a secure data and communication system link, without signing the COMCASA.
US Pressing India to Choose between Predator Drones or S-400 Air Defence System

By Eurasian Times - May 31, 2018

Why is the US administration threatening to block sales of Predator Drones to India? How is the Russian S-400 Air Defence System linked to American Predator Drone? Will India’s acquisition of the state-of-the-art Russian S-400 Missile Defence System come at the cost of getting access to American cutting-edge and lethal Predator Drones?

William Thornberry, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said: "The acquisition of this technology (Predator Drones) will limit, the degree with which the US will feel comfortable in bringing additional technology into the country. Thornberry added that the acquisition of the S-400 Russian Missile Defence System would imperil their ability to work interoperably in the future.

More at Eurasian Times

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