

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2022 · 10 marks

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

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro
routes

R1 Oct 2020, third 2+2 → last of the four → GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA complete **R2** NGA to MoD → partnership shifts from selling platforms to sharing the data they run on

Body flow

content: geomagnetic/gravity, charts, imagery, high-quality GPS → navigation + precision targeting → Oct 2025 ten-year framework → co-production in surveillance, undersea domain awareness → hinge: access ≠ capability

Counter-
view

Sinha: no obligation to supply, nothing on Pakistan, China depends on the administration → March 2026 imagery halt → India announces its own Defence Geospatial Agency

Conclusion
routes

R1 capability + interoperability without a duty to defend → entente, not alliance **R2 Pant:** 2026 US defence strategy does not name India → better eyes, borrowed, not India's own

Signed at the third 2+2 dialogue in October 2020, BECA completed the four foundational agreements, after GSOMIA (2002), LEMOA (2016) & COMCASA (2018).

It ties America's National Geospatial-Intelligence agency to India's Ministry of Defence & moves the partnership from selling platforms to sharing the data they need.

Its content is geomagnetic & gravity data, maps, nautical and aeronautical charts, imagery & high-quality GPS for navigation & precision targeting. The 10-year defence framework of October 2025 extends this into co-production in surveillance and undersea domain awareness.

Manoj Sinha argues that US need not supply in every case, is unlikely to help on Pakistan, and may be less obliging on China under another administration.

In March 2026 a US imagery firm halted West Asian sales for a fortnight. India has since announced its own Defence Geospatial Agency.

BECA raises capability & interoperability without obliging US to defend India, an entente rather than an alliance. Harsh V. Pant views the 2026 US defence strategy, which does not mention India, as a warning against assuming that commitment.

Therefore, BECA lends India better eyes and it does not make them India's own.