



COMCASA to help keep a watch over Indian Ocean

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Highlights

- The foundational agreement **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)** which India concluded with the U.S. at the 2+2 dialogue will enable Indian military to get a better picture of the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** which is seeing increasing Chinese movements.
- “With CISMOA [COMCASA is an India-specific version of CISMOA], Indian armed forces will get to fully exploit the capability of the military platforms procured from the US.
- As a consequence of CISMOA, India will get access to Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System, or **CENTRIXS**, which is the **secure communication system network of the US**.
- Navy ships with CENTRIXS on board can **communicate securely with the U.S.**
- Navy when needed and can benefit from the **wider situational picture of the region** as they have a large number of ships and aircraft deployed.
- This will **reduce the stress on our assets and allow us prioritise our deployments** more efficiently.
- Even within the system there are also **specific codes/keys** which have to be verified by both sides **to enable communication or access information**.
- However, there are **persistent concerns** that this would allow **U.S. Navy access to India’s own secure communication** network and also that the information shared with the U.S. will be **accessible by Pakistan**.

‘Safeguards in place’

- Officials brushed aside these fears as specific measures have been incorporated in the agreement to **“have full access to the relevant equipment and there will be no disruptions”**.
- **Data** acquired through such systems **cannot be disclosed or transferred** to any person or entity **without India’s consent**, adding this is an enabling instrument and does not commit India to acquiring U.S. platforms.
- So far in joint exercises, Indian Navy used to temporarily plug in portable CENTRIXS systems to communicate with U.S. assets.