

## US, India may sign pact for transfer of communication security gear

**HUMA SIDDIQUI**  
New Delhi, August 10

**AHEAD OF THE** 2+2 India-US dialogue in the first week of September, the two countries are expected to ink the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) later this month. The pact is meant to provide a legal framework for transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India that would facilitate “interoperability” between their forces and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links.

Speaking to *FE*, an officer said, “The agreement, part of a set of three military agreements that the US considers “foundational” for a functional military relationship, is expected to be inked later this month.”

According to officials, the use of high-end secured communication equipment, to be installed on military platforms being sold to India, will be facilitated by such an agreement. The Indian forces are currently flying C-130Js and P8I maritime surveillance aircraft; the first of the M777 ultra-light howitzers has already come for the Indian Army. A contract has been signed for Apache AH 64E attack helicopters.

With the US confirming category one UAV technology, Sea Guardian drones have been released per India's request. The Sea Guardian, built by US firm General Atomics, is the naval version of the Predator B armed drone.

The Indian Air Force has also requested for 100 units of Predator C Avenger aircraft worth \$8 bn. Given the capabilities and effectiveness of the Sea Guardian, offering these drones to the Indian Navy demonstrates a major change in the US policy.