**WHAT IS P – 8I?**

**BACKGROUND**

The P-8I Neptune is a variant of long-range "multimission" patrol aircraft P-8A Poseidon manufactured by Boeing. Designed to protect India’s vast coastline & territorial waters, it is "a weapon platform with phenomenal capacity" to give India an enormous reach. Equipped with anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare as well as intelligence, surveillance & reconnaissance - ISR aircraft, it is capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations.

After 10 more aircraft India will have 22 P8I aircraft serving as "bigger deterrence" with proven technology and the perfect replacement to the ageing Tu-142M maritime patrol aircraft of Soviet origin.

The Indian Navy is the first international customer for the P-8. The P-8I is the first international model of the P-8.

**STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE**

A very potent technology with the speed of 907 kmph and an operating range of over 1200 nm with "360 degree coverage" due to "direct data linked" with Indian submarines capable enough to detect "threats" and neutralize them if required before they reach.

P8I with its extraordinary features is enhancing India’s capability as "regional power" that serves as a maritime domain for other nations too against transnational threats.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

A Telephonics APS-143 Ocean Eye aft radar system, top-performing ocean surveillance radar with winged aircraft a cutting-edge magnetic anomaly detector (MAD), the ability to detect submarines lurking under the ocean.

Armed with U.S. weapons systems including deadly Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles & MK-54 lightweight anti-submarine warfare torpedoes, rockets etc, they are the country’s "intelligent hawk eyes" over the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) that is increasingly getting militarized.

**News**

Ministry of Defence (MoD) approves the procurement of 10 more Boeing "P-8I Neptune Maritime Patrol Aircraft" for the Indian Navy.

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In 2009, Boeing signed a contract to deliver 12 P-8I aircraft and four additional P-8 aircraft to India, currently India operates eight P-8I aircraft and rest four will be delivered by 2020.

In 2018, and U.S. signed "Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)" that enables closer interoperability between U.S. and Indian military assets. COMCASA allows India to procure transfer specialised equipment for encrypted communications for U.S. origin military platforms like the C-17, C-130 and P-8Is. COMCASA thus enables P-8I aircraft and their U.S. equivalent, the P-8A Poseidon, to share real-time operational intelligence. In 2019, the Indian and U.S. navies conducted their first bilateral anti-submarine warfare exercise.