

2+2 talks: India, US ink COMCASA; signal enhanced defence cooperation

Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs Smt Sushma Swaraj and Hon'ble Minister of Defence Smt Nirmla Sitharaman welcomed Secretary of State Mr. Michael R. Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mr. James N. Mattis welcomed the launch of the 2+2 Dialogue as a reflection of the shared commitment by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Mr. Donald Trump to provide a positive, forward-looking vision for the India-U.S. strategic partnership and to promote synergy in their diplomatic and security efforts.

Recognizing their two countries are strategic partners, major and independent stakeholders in world affairs, the Ministers committed to work together on regional and global issues, including in bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral formats. The two sides further decided to establish secure communication between the Minister of External Affairs of India and the U.S. Secretary of State and between the Minister of Defence of India and the U.S. Secretary of Defense, to help maintain regular high-level communication on emerging developments.

The Ministers reaffirmed the strategic importance of India's designation as a Major Defense Partner (MDP) of the United States and committed to expand the scope of India's MDP status and take mutually agreed upon steps to strengthen defense ties further and promote better defense and security coordination and cooperation. They noted the rapid growth in bilateral defense trade and the qualitative improvement in levels of technology and equipment offered by the United States to India in recent years. They welcomed the inclusion of India by the United States among the top tier of countries entitled to license-free exports, re-exports and transfers under License Exception Strategic Trade Authorization (STA-1) and also committed to explore other means to support further expansion in two-way trade in defense items and defense manufacturing supply chain linkages. They welcomed the signing of a Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) that will facilitate access to advanced defense systems and enable India to optimally utilize its existing U.S.-origin platforms. The Ministers also announced their readiness to begin negotiations on an Industrial Security Annex (ISA) that would support closer defense industry cooperation and collaboration.

Acknowledging the unique role of technology in the India-U.S. defense partnership, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continue to encourage and prioritize co-production and co-development projects through the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) and to pursue other avenues of defense innovation cooperation. In this regard, they welcomed the conclusion of a Memorandum of Intent between the U.S. Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) and the Indian Defence Innovation Organization –

Innovation for Defence Excellence (DIO-iDEX).

Observing the strong ties of family, education and business and the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation that unite their people, the Ministers highlighted the unmatched people-to-people ties between their countries and recognized the benefits to both nations and the world from these ties, including the free flow of ideas and collaboration in health, space, oceans and other areas of science and technology.

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Warm regards,

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