

India-US 2+2 Dialogue provides positive and forward-looking vision for strategic partnership between the two countries

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar met US Secretary of Defense Dr Mark T Esper and Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo in Washington DC on December 18, 2019 for the second annual India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. This 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries and provides for a review of the security, defence and strategic partnership between India and the United States. This was the second 2+2 meeting and the first in US.

At the Dialogue, both sides positively appraised the growing partnership between India and the United States, and noted that important milestones had been achieved since the inaugural 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi in 2018. Both sides reiterated their commitment to advancing a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

At the Dialogue, both sides also committed to further deepen military-to-military cooperation, including between the Indian Navy and the US Navy Fleets under US Indo-Pacific Command, Central Command, and Africa Command and intend to expand similar cooperation between their respective Armies and Air Forces. A number of other initiatives to enhance military-to-military cooperation were also agreed upon.

The two sides concluded the Industrial Security Annex during the visit. Priority initiatives have been identified for execution under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) programme. The two sides also concluded a standard operating procedure for this process. These measures are expected to provide momentum to collaboration between the private defence industries of both India and the US. The two sides also agreed to move forward in their engagement in the area of defence innovation.

Earlier, on the morning of December 18, Raksha Mantri was received at the Pentagon by US Secretary of Defence Dr Mark T Esper, with a ceremonial Guard of Honour and accorded a 19-gun salute. Shri Rajnath Singh and Secretary Esper later held delegation level bilateral talks at the Pentagon on further strengthening India-US defence partnership and External Affairs Minister held bilateral talks with his counterpart Secretary Pompeo. Shri Rajnath Singh also paid floral tributes at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arlington National Cemetery.

After the 2+2 meeting, Shri Rajanath Singh, along with Dr S Jaishankar, called on President of the United States, Donald J Trump at the Oval Office. They were accompanied by US National Security Adviser Ambassador Robert O'Brian.

Raksha Mantri began his visit to the US from New York on December 16 where he had addressed a large Indian community reception. From New York, Shri Rajnath Singh travelled to the Norfolk Naval Air Station on December 17, where he was briefed on the naval and air assets stationed at the base.

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