

Sanctions act passes, sans any waiver provision

The U.S. Senate has ignored the Donald Trump administration's request for inclusion of waiver provisions in the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). The act requires the Congress to impose sanctions on countries that have "significant" defence relations with Russia.

The Senate version of the National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) for 2019 was passed on Monday and has no waiver provisions. The version of the NDAA 2019 passed earlier by the House of Representatives had provisions for waiver, but that is inadequate to address India's concerns about the law.

Setback for India

The House version allows for waivers for 180 days, provided the administration certifies that the country in question is scaling back its ties with Russia. This formulation is inadequate as it links waiver to India rolling back its ties with Russia.

India is currently caught in the crossfire of the bipartisan law against Russia, due to its defence relations with Kremlin. The House and Senate versions of the Bill are usually reconciled through a conference process, but any hope of a legislative resolution to the CAATSA headache now appears out of reach.

People lobbying for changes in the law in order to ensure that India's increasing defence purchases from America won't be interrupted by sanctions said lawmakers would be more amenable to change after the November 2018 midterm elections.

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