

U.S. postpones 2+2 dialogue with India

The dialogue was designed following a summit-level meeting between Donald Trump and Narendra Modi in 2017

“U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo spoke to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj a short while ago to express his regret and deep disappointment at the U.S. having to postpone the 2+2 Dialogue for unavoidable reasons,” said Raveesh Kumar, Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs in a late evening message on his social media account.

“Secretary Pompeo sought External Affairs Minister Swaraj’s understanding and they agreed to identify new mutually convenient dates to hold the dialogues at the earliest in India or the U.S.,” said the Spokesperson.

The talks were expected to boost bilateral ease of ties in the backdrop of growing disagreement over the Iran nuclear deal and the brewing tariff war between the two sides. The high-level dialogue was designed to address bilateral issues following a summit-level meeting between President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi in 2017. Both Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj were expected to travel to the U.S. for the meeting with Secretary of Defence Mattis and Secretary of State Pompeo.

The talks were postponed earlier once when the previous Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was asked to quit by President Trump in March 2018. It was previously scheduled for April. However the latest postponement which is also being considered as cancellation by some quarters comes in the backdrop of growing differences between India and the U.S. over the Iran nuclear deal.

Last week, External Affairs Minister Swaraj met her French counterpart Jean Yves Le Drian where both sides agreed to “maintain” the Iran nuclear deal that allows for global trading with Tehran.

The latest reports suggest that the U.S. has given a November deadline to Indian and Chinese companies that continue to trade with Iran disregarding U.S. Treasury’s sanctions.

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