

INDIA, U.S. RESOLVE TO WORK THROUGH TRADE DIFFERENCES

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He clarified that the U.S. decision to withdraw India's GSP preferential trade status this month had not come up for discussion.

Mr. Jaishankar said both sides had come away with a "better understanding" of each other's concerns on a wide variety of issues besides trade, including energy, defence, investment concerns and people-to-people contacts, as well as the growing conflict in the Gulf with Iran and the peace process in Afghanistan.

Rejecting calls by the United States and the threat of sanctions under its CAATSA law, Mr. Jaishankar said that India will take its decision on the purchase of the Russian S-400 Triumph anti-missile system in its own "national interest", and conveyed this to his American counterpart during talks here on Wednesday.

"On the CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act) issue) I explained to Secretary Pompeo in some detail that we have many relationships with many countries, and many of them have some standing and they have a history," said Mr. Jaishankar, referring to India's traditional relationship with Russia.

Mr. Jaishankar also raised India's concerns over growing U.S.-Iran tensions and their impact on India's energy security.

While India has zeroed out all oil imports from Iran since the U.S. sanctions deadline ran out on May 2, it has maintained a cordial and close relationship with the Iranian government. In response, Mr. Pompeo lashed out at the Iranian government, which he called a "terrorist regime", adding that India and the U.S. had a "shared understanding" of the terrorist threat emanating from Iran.

"We know that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terror, and the Indian people have suffered from terror around the world. So I think there is a shared understanding of the threat and a common purpose to ensuring that we keep energy at the right prices and deter this threat," Mr. Pompeo said.

The MEA declined to comment on whether it supported Mr. Pompeo's remarks, which were made in Mr. Jaishankar's presence. Mr. Pompeo, who leaves for Osaka on Thursday morning, also met with PM Modi and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Wednesday.

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