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**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Ministry of Defence**

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**Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar's Opening Statement at the Joint Press Conference with US Secretary of  
Defence Dr. Ashton Carter at Washington**

The Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar is on a three-day visit to the United States of America from 29 August 2016. Shri Parrikar met the US Secretary of Defence Dr. Ashton Carter amongst other senior officials on 29 August 2016. Shri Parrikar's opening statement at the Joint Press Conference with Dr. Ashton Carter is as follows:

"I was deeply moved by my visit to the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial. We in India feel your anguish and pain at being the target of terrorism. I thank Secretary Carter for joining me on my visit to the Memorial.

I am pleased to be at the Pentagon again to meet Secretary Carter. I thank him for the warmth of his welcome. We have had excellent discussions, and both of us are satisfied at the progress we are making in our defence ties.

As was noted, this is our sixth meeting in about a year. This reflects our shared intent to take the India-US defence partnership forward.

Indeed, defence cooperation between India and the United States has never been stronger than it is today.

For this, I wish to thank Dr Carter. It is his vision, his deep, personal commitment and untiring work that have helped elevate our partnership to this level.

I fully share his ambition and resolve to make the India-US partnership one of the defining partnerships of the Twenty First Century.

We appreciate the decision of the US government to designate India a Major Defence Partner. In our discussions today, we looked at how this could provide further energy and momentum to our partnership on defence technology and manufacturing. We agreed to continue efforts to establish a fast and efficient framework to encourage tie-ups between our defence companies.

The United States is today one of India's primary sources of defence equipment. The US has shared some of its cutting-edge platforms with India. We would like to take this forward through greater collaborative projects spanning even higher levels of technology and through cooperation in manufacturing ventures.

The DTTI, of which Secretary Carter is both founder and architect, met last month in Delhi. We decided to significantly expand the scope of its activities and the quality of exchanges in DTTI. I am confident that we will be able to develop workable models of engagement covering newer areas, even as we take forward ongoing collaboration in the DTTI framework.

The partnership between our Armed Forces has grown from strength to strength. The Indian Armed Forces deeply appreciate the strong capabilities of the US military and value their engagement with their US colleagues.

Today, India has more cooperative activities with the US military than with any other country. Over the past few months, our Air Forces have jointly exercised in Red Flag as have our Navies in RIMPAC and Malabar. The Army Exercise Yudh Abhyas is to be held shortly. Our decision to sign the LEMOA today would make it easier for our Armed Forces to carry out joint activities, such as training and exercises, as well as HADR missions.

Our engagement on maritime security is developing well. India and the United States have a shared interest in freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce as part of a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Our officials met in May 2016 for the inaugural Maritime Security Dialogue. We have tasked them to meet more regularly as we implement the Joint Strategic Vision. The signing of the White Shipping agreement and the Information Exchange Arrangement on Aircraft Carriers recently underlines our desire to work closely together in the maritime domain. Today we decided to further enhance our engagement on Maritime Domain Awareness.

We also resolved to continue our cooperation on counter-terrorism. India and the United States are fellow democracies. Our open and diverse societies are committed to peace. However, as the United States has shown, there can be no compromise when we are faced with terrorism. The forces that seek to undermine our progress and our way of life require a comprehensive and robust response. We appreciate the support from the United States in our efforts to eliminate terrorism in India's neighbourhood. Secretary Carter and I agreed that countering terrorism is an important shared objective.

The partnership between India and the United States is driven by our shared values and congruent interests. This was underlined by the warmth and enthusiasm with which the US Congress received Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June this year. Even as we meet in Washington today, the US Secretary of State and the US Commerce Secretary are in Delhi jointly meeting their Indian counterparts to take forward our strategic and commercial partnership.

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Recently, we have further liberalised our policies on foreign investment, including in the defence sector, where upto 100 percent FDI is now permitted. We have also given a major reforms push to the tax system with the progress on GST. Combined with the many flagship initiatives of the Prime Minister, including on ease of doing business, this makes India one of the most attractive global business destinations. I wish to invite US industry, including the defence industry, to be part of this new journey of hope and transformation in India.

I am delighted to have had another opportunity to work together with Secretary Carter in taking our bilateral defence partnership to even greater heights. I look forward to continuing my discussions with him in the coming days to advance our shared objectives of peace, prosperity and progress.

Thank you!"

NW/NAo/DM/RAJ