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

26-October-2016 18:12 IST

16th India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation meeting held

The 16th meeting of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC) was held here today. The Indian side was headed by the Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar while the Russian delegation was led by his counterpart General Sergey Shoigu.

Following is the text of the Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar's opening remarks at the meeting:

"I welcome you for the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC).

Today's meeting is taking place against the backdrop of the highly successful 17th Annual Summit between Prime Minister of India His Excellency Mr Narendra Modi and the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin in my native state Goa. Prime Minister Modi and President Putin held very substantive discussions on wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues. Among others, we concluded many important agreements including the IGA on supply of S-400 Air defence systems and the IGA on Project 1135.6 frigates. The Shareholders Agreement for the establishment of a Joint Venture to manufacture Ka-226T helicopters in India was also signed. This is the first major defence project under the 'Make in India'. It is a concrete step in our bilateral defence cooperation.

The meeting between our leaders has further reaffirmed the robust fundamentals of our special and privileged strategic partnership. Our cooperation in energy, defence and regional and international issues are proof of our closeness and mutual trust. Russia is India's time tested and closest partner and it will continue to remain our primary defence partner.

Excellency, our meeting today will review all aspects of our defence cooperation. I am happy to note that all the subgroups under the IRIGCMTC have met and submitted their reports. Our defence cooperation continues to develop positively to our mutual benefit.

While our Military Technical Cooperation is progressing well, I feel that the traditional military-to-military cooperation needs more focus. The pace and depth of our exchanges at the level of Chiefs, training of personnel in each other's institutions, joint military exercises between all armed forces should be enhanced. We could mutually work out the modalities of increasing the military-to-military cooperation and draw up a roadmap for implementation.

Excellency, one of the key security challenges faced by India is that of cross-border terrorism. We appreciate Russia's consistent and unwavering support for India in our efforts to eliminate this menace, which is a manifestation of the continued presence of terrorist groups in India's neighbourhood. Russia has also been actively engaged in efforts to eliminate terrorists in West Asia. We both recognize that the menace of terrorism cannot be defeated with 'double standards'. There is a need for 'zero tolerance' and collective efforts to combat terrorism."

NW/NAo/DM/RAJ