

## **US, France to intensify military cooperation against IS**

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**Washington:** The US and France have agreed on "concrete steps" to further intensify their military cooperation on fighting the Islamic State terrorist group in the wake of the terror attacks in Paris, the Pentagon said on Sunday.

The agreement was reached during a phone conversation between US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter and his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian on Sunday, Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

Cook said the Paris terror attacks was "an opportunity to share actions that both governments are taking" in fighting terrorism.

"They agreed on concrete steps the US and French militaries should take to further intensify our close cooperation in prosecuting a sustained campaign against IS," Cook said, without revealing further details.

Carter reiterated "the firm commitment" of the US to support France and move together to ensure IS was dealt "a lasting defeat," the spokesman said.

The two defence chiefs also agreed to "remain in close contact" in the days ahead, he added.

This was the second time the two military leaders talked over the phone since the Paris terror attacks, which killed 129 people and wounded 352 others in Paris. IS has claimed responsibility for the coordinated attacks.

US President Barack Obama reiterated the US "steadfast, unwavering support for the people of France, our oldest ally and friend, and reaffirmed the offer of any necessary support to the French investigation," the White House said in a statement issued on Friday in reacting to the Paris attacks.

The Pentagon also pledged in a statement on Friday that, as NATO allies and leaders of the counter-IS coalition, the US and France "will only strengthen our resolve" in fighting the terror group.

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