

Encouraged by Pak's promise to investigate Pathankot attack: US

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Washington: The US has said it is encouraged by the fact that the Pakistan government has condemned the Pathankot terror attack and promised investigation.

"Our expectation is that investigation will be thorough and complete and as transparent as possible. But in terms of its progress and where they are, you'd have to talk to Pakistani authorities on it," State Department Spokesman John Kirby said at his daily news conference.

"We're encouraged by the fact that the Pakistani Government condemned the attack and said that they would investigate," he said.

The spokesman said that the US would like the two countries to continue with their peace talks.

Last week US Secretary of State John Kerry asked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to find out the truth and stressed on the need to stay focused on the pressing challenge of terrorism in the region.

"He (Kerry) certainly encouraged India and Pakistan to work bilaterally to continue discussions and to try to work through these problems. I don't think they spoke with any great detail or specificity about the next round of talks and what's on the calendar. But writ large, yes, this was a topic of discussion with the Prime Minister," Kirby said.

In their call on January 9, Kerry and Sharif talked a lot about this issue.

"Then he stressed that it's obviously United States interest that India and Pakistan continue to look for ways to work better together to...terrorism concerns but to reduce the tensions between the two countries," he said.

"...the State Department remains focused and committed to working bilaterally and multilaterally on counterterrorism challenges," Kirby said in response to a question.

Meanwhile, senior US officials believe that Pakistan is serious about investigation this time unlike in the past.

"We do not talk much in detail about the diplomatic conversations. He (Kerry) came away believing that the Pakistani government is serious about this particular incident, serious about investigating it, serious about trying to work with partners in the region, Afghanistan specifically," a senior State Department official said.

"I am not going to define it as change in tone. I think, we all recognise that more can be done, including by Pakistan.

But that does not mean that we would not keep working at it," the senior administration official said when asked if Secretary Kerry feels that there is a change in tone of the Pakistanis given that they have been dilly-dallying on similar issues in the past.

- PTI