

Disappointed at India's reaction to F-16 deal with US: Pakistan

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Islamabad: Pakistan today said it is "surprised and disappointed" at India's reaction over the US' decision to sell eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, arguing that India is "the largest importer" of defence equipment and its arsenal stock is "much larger".

Pakistan reiterated the Obama Administration's justification that the acquisition would enhance the country's precision strike capability to combat terrorism.

"We are surprised and disappointed at the Indian Government's reaction. Their (India's) army and arsenal stock is much larger and they are the largest importer of defence equipment," the Foreign Office said in a statement in response to media queries.

"As regards F-16 sale, Pakistan and the United States closely cooperate in countering terrorism. US spokesperson clearly announced that the sale is to enhance precision strike capability," it added.

Pakistan's reaction comes a day after India summoned US Ambassador Richard Verma to convey its "displeasure and disappointment" over Obama Administration's decision to sell eight nuclear-capable F-16 fighter jets worth nearly USD 700 million to Pakistan.

Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar summoned Verma to the South Block and during the 45-minute meeting told him about India's concerns over US military aid to Pakistan which New Delhi believes goes into anti-India activities.

According to sources, such military aids will embolden Pakistan.

India yesterday disagreed with the US rationale that such arms transfers help Pakistan in combating terrorism.

"The record of the last many years in this regard speaks for itself," the Ministry of External Affairs had said in a statement.

The proposal is likely to face stiff resistance in the Republican-controlled Congress.

- PTI