

India, US to deepen collaboration against LeT, JeM

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Washington: India and the US have agreed to deepen their already close collaboration against Pakistan-based terror groups Lashkar-e-Taeba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), blamed for terrorist attacks in India, and other terrorist threats.

Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and US National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice agreed to do so at a meeting at the White House here Tuesday.

While LeT is held responsible for the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, JeM is blamed for the Jan 2 attack on the Indian Air Force station at Pathankot.

Rice and Jaishankar also "affirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation on climate change, trade, and defence," according to a statement by National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Ned Price.

"They also discussed US-India collaboration against Lashkar-e-Taeba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and other terrorist threats," it said.

"Building on their leaders' commitment to make the US-India partnership a defining relationship for the 21st Century, they agreed to deepen their already close collaboration on these issues."

Rice and Jaishankar also noted preparations for the upcoming March 31-April 1 Nuclear Security Summit that is expected to be attended by about 50 world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif.

There is widespread speculation that Modi and Sharif would meet on the sidelines of the summit.

The last time the two premiers met was on Dec 25, 2015, when Modi made a surprise visit to Lahore, a first by an Indian prime minister in over a decade.

Modi briefly attended Sharif's grand-daughter's wedding ceremony and then held a brief meeting with his Pakistani counterpart.

The attack on the Pathankot airbase came a week later leading to the cancellation of foreign secretary level talks between India and Pakistan.

During his visit to Washington last week, Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz expressed Islamabad's "gratitude" to Secretary of State John Kerry and President Barack Obama for their "consistent support to the revival of Pakistan-India dialogue."

He also affirmed Pakistan government's commitment to acting against all terrorist groups without any distinction.

- IANS