

Pakistan not taking action against terror groups: Top US official

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Washington: A top US official today accused Pakistan of "not taking action" against terrorist groups that threaten its neighbours and pressed it to act against all such dreaded outfits including Haqqani Network, LeT and JeM.

"We believe Pakistan has not taken action against terrorist groups that threaten its neighbours," Special US Af-Pak Representative Richard Olson told members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee during a Congressional hearing.

Olson was responding to questions from the lawmakers who expressed concern over Pakistan being "selective" in taking actions against terrorist groups.

"Their (Pakistan's) stated policy is not to discriminate against terrorists. We believe there is a considerable room for improvement," said the American diplomat, who is President Barack Obama's point person for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He said it is the time to take action against terrorist groups "more robustly" that threaten Afghanistan.

Olson said the US has raised at the highest level the need to take action against terrorist groups that threaten its neighbours in particular the Haqqani network.

"We continue to press Pakistan to take action against all terrorist groups, including the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed," he said.

"We have repeatedly and frankly underscored with the most senior levels of the Pakistani leadership the need to target the Haqqani network as part of their wider counter-terrorism operations, in keeping with their commitment not to discriminate between terrorist organisations," he said.

The Haqqani Network has carried out a number of kidnappings and attacks against US interests in Afghanistan, as well as Afghan government and civilian targets.

The group is also blamed for several deadly attacks against Indian interests in Afghanistan including the 2008 bombing of the Indian mission in Kabul that killed 58 people.

JeM and LeT have carried out multiple terror attacks in India more recently JeM attacked a key air force base in Pathankot in which seven security men were killed.

The Obama Administration shares the sub-committees' disappointment in progress against these groups and continue to voice its concerns with Pakistani leadership often, Olson said.

"We will not be satisfied until Pakistan makes a decisive shift in its policy toward these externally-focused groups, nor will Pakistan's struggle with terrorism come to an end," he said.

Responding to another question on sale of eight F-16 jets to Pakistan, Olson defended the Obama administration's decision arguing that with the aircraft Pakistan has developed "precision striking capabilities" against terrorist groups.

Olson, however, did not mention India even as several lawmakers expressed concern that F-16 jets would be used

against India.

- PTI