

Post surgical strikes, US slams Pak for cross-border terror, calls for de-escalation of tension

30/09/2016 12:23 by admin

Washington: Sending a strong message to Pakistan and reiterating its support to India in its fight against terrorism, the Obama administration on Friday urged for de-escalation of tension between India and Pakistan.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest

“What I can tell you is that we have seen some reports from the region. Those reports include that Indian and Pakistani militaries have been in communication with one another and we encourage continued discussions between India and Pakistan to avoid escalation,” White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest told reporters at his daily news conference.

The US reaction came after Indian army announced that it had conducted a “surgical strike” in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and caused significant casualties in the attack.

Earnest said the US National Security Advisor Susan Rice spoke to her Indian counterpart Ajit Doval yesterday and asked to “combat and delegitimise” UN-designated terrorist entities, including LeT and JeM.

“Ambassador Rice made it clear that the United States continues to be concerned by the danger that cross-border terrorism poses to the region. The United States fully expects that Pakistan will take effective action to combat and delegitimise UN-designated terrorist individuals and entities,” he said.

The US, he said, is firmly committed to its partnership with India, and to their joint efforts to combat terrorism. We are prepared to deepen collaboration on UN terrorist designations,” Earnest said.

At the same time, US continues to be in close contact with Pakistan and value the important partnership that they have formed with them on a range of issues, including security, the press secretary said.

Meanwhile a State Department official called for de-escalation of tension.

“We urge calm and restraint on both sides,” the official said.

“We understand that the Indian and Pakistani militaries have been in communication, and we believe continued communication is important to reduce tensions,” the official added.

The US has repeatedly expressed its concerns regarding the danger that cross border terrorism poses to the region, including the recent attack in Uri.

“We continue to urge actions to combat and delegitimise terrorist groups like Lakshar-e-Taiba, Haqqani Network, and Jaish-e-Mohammed,” the official said.

India has blamed Pakistan-based terror outfit JeM for the attack in Uri. In the backdrop of the heightened tension with Pakistan over Uri terror attack, India on Tuesday announced its decision to not participate in the SAARC Summit, citing increased “cross-border” attacks.

Other Pakistan-based terror group LeT has been accused by India of attacking military and civilian targets in the country, including the 2001 Parliament attack and the 2008 Mumbai attack.

India wants UN to impose sanctions on JeM chief Masood Azhar. Hafiz Saeed, a co-founder of LeT and the chief of Jamaat-ud-Dawah, carries a bounty of USD 10 million on his head for his role in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

- (With PTI inputs)