

Iran 'biggest state sponsor of terrorism': US

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Tokyo: US Defence Secretary James Mattis on Saturday said that Iran was the world's "biggest state sponsor of terrorism".

File photo - US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis

"As far as Iran goes, this is the single biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world," Mattis said at a press conference in Tokyo.

He added that the US had no plans to increase troop numbers in the Middle East in response.

"I don't see any need to increase the number of forces we have in the Middle East at this time. We always have the capability to do so but right now I don't think it's necessary," the Defence Secretary said.

The remark comes in the backdrop of President Donald Trump slapping fresh sanctions on Iran's weapons procurement network.

According to US officials, the new sanctions, announced yesterday, were in response to Iran's ballistic missile test this week.

Saturday's news conference was Mattis' first since taking office January 20. He is the first career military officer to serve as Defense Secretary since George C Marshall, a former Army Chief, in 1950-51 during the Korean War. Mattis served 41 years in the Marine Corps, including a stint on Okinawa.

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