

Indian, U.S. air forces to deepen cooperation in Indo-Pacific: U.S. Air Force chief David L. Goldfein

Gen. David L. Goldfein

Chief of the U.S. Air Force General David L. Goldfein has said Indian and U.S. Air Forces will significantly ramp up operational cooperation to complement the strategic interests of the two countries in the Indo-Pacific region, where China has been expanding its military influence.

Calling India a “central strategic partner” of the U.S. in the region, he said two of the world’s largest Air Forces were going to shift the focus jointly on the Indo-Pacific region, and asserted that the rules-based order must be preserved in the critical sea lanes.

Gen. Goldfein, who held extensive talks with Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa and the top brass in the defence establishment during his three-day visit, said the “Quadrilateral” coalition among the U.S., India, Japan and Australia would provide for deeper cooperation between the Indian and American Air Forces.

Asked if cooperation between the two forces would deepen in the wake of the four countries joining hands to contain Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region, he replied, “I do [think so] and that is a big part of my visit and in my discussions here.”

“We have common interests in preserving the rules-based order. So while we look for opportunities for partnerships, it is actually appropriate also for us to be critical of those who are trying to change,” he said in an interview in New Delhi.

Gen. Goldfein refused to commit when asked if the U.S. would increase its military presence in South China Sea. “We want to be strategically predictable but operationally unpredictable. I am not going to share with our adversaries what our intentions are. If we are to increase our presence or decrease our presence, that is something we will do at our time and place of our choosing,” he said.

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