

## Pakistani action on terrorists superficial: U.S.

The Donald Trump administration is not satisfied with the measures taken by Pakistan in recent months to crack down on terrorist groups, a senior U.S. official has said. "So far, these steps have been reversible, superficial, and steps that we have actually seen them take in the past, in periods of high pressure," the official told *The Hindu*.

The official said the U.S. was concerned about tensions between India and Pakistan, "two nuclear armed states", but added the onus was on Pakistan to create conditions conducive for talks and improvement in relations.

### FATF plenary

The official said the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary in Paris was yet to take a decision on action against Islamabad on the question of terrorism financing. "My understanding is that the FATF discussions are ongoing, FATF is aimed at ensuring that the countries are implementing the statutes and the laws that are necessary to counter terrorist financing, money laundering and those sort of things..." the official said, refusing to elaborate more, since the meetings were still on.

The Trump administration has zero tolerance towards terrorism and terrorist sanctuaries inside Pakistan, said the official. "President Trump has been clear that we need to see decisive action, not superficial action and half measures... but decisive action against terrorist militants in Pakistan."

The official said the U.S. had been "very clear with Pakistan about our expectations". "We have been very specific and detailed in what we expect Pakistan to do. So I think Pakistan understands what we are looking for. Unfortunately, we have not seen the strategic shift in behaviour that we are seeking... What we have seen is that they definitely want to be seen as taking action... Which is good... They are not completely thumping their nose at the U.S... They are taking steps, and they want to be seen as responsive."

However, the U.S. has not seen "that determination, in really going after terrorist leaders that operate freely on their territory", the official said.

### Potential attacks

Asked about the current state of India-Pakistan relations and its impact on the U.S. policy for the region, the official said: "We are concerned about the status of India-Pakistan relations. Two nuclear armed states... we know there is potential for things to escalate very quickly, and we are very concerned about terrorist groups that continue to function inside Pakistan, and have the ability to conduct terrorist attacks inside India. But until Pakistan really demonstrates seriousness in cracking down on LeT or Jaish-e-Mohammad, there is not going to be that conducive atmosphere for any dialogue or talks to take place."

The official noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reached out and travelled to Pakistan in 2015. "...and six days later, you had the major attack on Pathankot. I think there is probably some hesitation in India about reaching out and the potential impact or backlash to any effort to reach out to Pakistan. Situation between Indian and Pakistan, it is really not moving forward, and I think this is unfortunate," said the official.

"Frankly, they are moving in the wrong direction. The release of Hafiz Saeed last November was a

step in the wrong direction. We will continue to monitor the situation closely... you have skirmishes, almost on a daily basis. (But) we don't have any interest in trying to mediate the dispute over Kashmir. That is something for the two sides to deal with."

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