

US hails Afghan-Pakistan cooperation against terrorism

A top US official for the South-Asian region hailed the improved relations between Afghan and Pakistani governments and emphasized that the only way to defeat terrorism in two Asian states was through their joint cooperation.

'The United States very much welcomes the cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan,' Richard Boucher, US assistant secretary of state for south and central Asian affairs, told a news conference in Kabul Wednesday.

Boucher, who was in Islamabad on Monday and met both Zardari and Karzai this week, said that he has observed 'strong determinations' on the sides of Afghanistan and Pakistan to jointly eliminate the menace of terrorism in their countries.

'We think the only way that we can beat the menace, beat back the Taliban and terrorists that are threatening Pakistanis and Afghans is by having the kind of Afghan-Pakistan cooperation,' Boucher said.

Meanwhile, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari left Kabul Wednesday for Islamabad after holding a second round of talks with his Afghan counterpart.

'President Zardari and President (Hamid) Karzai had breakfast together and then continued their discussion on bilateral issues including the two countries' war on terror,' Siamak Herawi, a presidential spokesman said.

Zardari was on a two-day-trip in Kabul for the first time as a president.

The relations between the two US allies on war against terrorism have been improved since Zardari took office in September last year.

Zardari's predecessor General Pervez Musharraf was at daggers drawn over Karzai's accusations that Pakistan was supporting the insurgents in Afghanistan.

'We have a much better understanding between our two governments, between the two presidents than ever before - God is kind in this regard to us,' Karzai told a joint press conference after talks with Zardari Tuesday evening.

Zardari also praised their improved relations, saying, 'We want to tell the world today that we are standing shoulder to shoulder, that we are together in this fight against these non-state actors who have taken nations and countries, and in fact superpowers, to war.'

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