

India to decide on its military role in Afghanistan: US

Commander of the US Pacific Command Admiral Robert F. Willard Friday praised India's humanitarian role in Afghanistan said it is for [New Delhi](#) to take a decision on its military deployment in the war-torn country.

'We have not sought any ground level cooperation (deployment) from India. We are happy with India's re-building role in Afghanistan,' Willard told reporters here.

'It (deployment of Indian troops in Afghanistan) is for Indian military and establishment to decide,' he added.

Willard reiterated that 'succeeding in Afghanistan and stabilising Pakistan' are in the larger interests of the US.

The US has announced addition of 30,000 troops in Afghanistan and has envisaged boosting of Afghan National Army.

'This (sending of more troops to Afghanistan) will start but there is no end date on the withdrawal of troops,' said Willard.

Willard met Indian Army chief General Deepak Kapoor, Navy chief Admiral Nirmal Verma and Air Force vice chief Air Marshal P.K. Barbora Thursday. He also met Defence Secretary Pradeep Thakur.

India has time and again ruled out sending troops to Afghanistan to be part of the US-led war on terror but has been providing developmental and medical aid as mandated by the United Nations.

India's military interaction with Afghanistan has been through training its military officers in the National Defence Academy here. It also runs a medical facility in Afghanistan staffed by army doctors. It has also posted instructors to teach English and martial music to Afghan soldiers and officers.

New Delhi's assistance to Kabul began in 2001 and India has since completed the construction of the strategic Delaram-Zaranj road in western Afghanistan.

India had hosted Afghan army's chief General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi earlier this year. Mohammadi has also been seeking enhanced military cooperation between the two countries.

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