

RELEASE IN PART B5

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 6:29 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: SecDef Panetta calls India, China 'threats'

Another fun one.

From: Patel, Nirav S
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 05:41 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Campbell, Kurt M
Subject: Fw: SecDef Panetta calls India, China 'threats'

Nirav Patel
 Senior Adviser
 Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs

This message is sent via bb

From: Keshap, Atul
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 05:34 PM
To: Pelletier, Michael P; Vrooman, Peter; Burleigh, Peter; Lu, Donald; Mustafa, Herro K; Rana, Gautam A; White, Richard B; Spurlock, Kenneth R
Cc: Blake, Robert O; Pyatt, Geoffrey R; Ayres, Alyssa; Moore, James R; SCA-Press; SCA-India Desk-ONLY; Renzulli, Anthony F; Sanghera, Basant S; Patel, Nirav S
Subject: SecDef Panetta calls India, China 'threats'

B5

Pentagon chief calls India, China 'threats'

GROTON, November 17, 2011 (AFP) - US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta referred to India and China as "threats" on Thursday, but his spokesman quickly sought to clarify his remarks.

The Pentagon chief, speaking to workers at a Connecticut shipyard that builds attack submarines, described an array of threats facing the United States, including Iran, North Korea and cyber attacks.

He then strayed from standard US policy rhetoric by adding India and China to the list of security dangers, saying the United States would need to make clear to these "rising powers" that it would not be pulling out of the Pacific region.

"We face the threats from rising powers, China, India, others that we have to always be aware of, and try to make sure that we always have sufficient force protection out there in the Pacific to make sure they know we're never going anywhere," he said.

The US government never openly portrays China as a security threat, even though it frequently voices concern about Beijing's military buildup and assertive stance in the South China Sea.

As for India, US officials view the country as an increasingly vital ally and the Pentagon is anxious to bolster security ties.

Panetta's comments came at an awkward moment just as President Barack Obama was on a tour to promote a renewed US focus on the Asia-Pacific region, including a stepped up military presence.

Pentagon spokesman Captain John Kirby told reporters later that Panetta did not view China or India as military threats.

"Any suggestion that he was implying that either country was a military threat is just false," Kirby said.

"He was referring instead to the challenges these rising powers face within themselves, challenges that we share with them as we try to forge better relationships going forward in a very turbulent, dynamic security environment."

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