

Ensure terrorists don't get haven, US tells Pak

New Delhi: The US wants Pakistan to ensure that terror groups do not "enjoy safe haven in Pakistan". Alice Wells, assistant secretary in charge of south Asia in the US state department told reporters, "We are urging the government to do more to bring pressure to bear against these organisations' externally-oriented terrorist groups."

Wells, who arrives in Delhi on Thursday, said Washington wants Pakistan to "reinforce" the message to Taliban that they should get to the negotiating table. "We have encouraged Pakistan to take stronger steps to ensure that Taliban either come to the negotiating table or are expelled back into Afghanistan rather than enjoy safe haven outside of the country."

Wells will have talks with Indian officials in

preparation for the forthcoming 2+2 dialogue here on September 6. She will also attend an Indian Ocean conference organised by Ram Madhav's India Foundation in Hanoi on August 27-28, which will also be attended by foreign minister Sushma Swaraj.

In a sign that the US and India are moving closer together on the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean strategy, Wells also said, "We're expanding our diplomatic engagement with the Indian Ocean Rim Association, or IORA... lending its expertise to the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, to pursue collective action on regional

maritime security issues."

Wells' remarks coincided with the release of a new report on Indian Ocean regional security by four think tanks from the Quad countries of US, Japan, Australia and India. They suggested that the four nations should work with partner countries to oppose the establishment of permanent Chinese military bases in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). "This should include demonstrating to China that its security needs can be met through cooperation and consultation with other nations and without recourse to a disruptive unilateral military presence," the report said.