No plans for joint maritime patrol with India in South China Sea: US

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Washington: The US and India have a shared vision of peace, stability and prosperity in Asia, a topAmerican official has said but dismissed reports that the two countries were planning a joint maritime patrol in the Indian Ocean or South China Sea.

"At this time, I can say there is no plans for any joint naval patrols," State Department Deputy Spokesman Mark Toner told reporters at his daily news conference yesterday.

"The US and India do have a shared vision of peace, stability and prosperity in Asia. We are committed to work together with others in the region to achieve our shared goals in an open, balanced and inclusive security structure," he said.

Toner was responding to a question on news reports that India and the US were considering joint naval patrol.

According to the State Department official, no such decision has been taken either in the Indian Ocean or South China Sea.

When asked, "No plans for naval patrol on South China Sea or anywhere?," Toner replied in the negative.

"Even in the Indian Ocean, there is no plan," Toner was asked again, to which he said "No".

Recently, there were some media reports which said that India and the US have held talks on conducting joint naval patrols in areas including the South China Sea where Beijing has maritime and territorial disputes with several neighbours.

The US wants its regional allies to adopt a more united stance against China over the South China Sea, where tension has spiked since China's construction of seven islands in the Spratly archipelago.

China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea, resulting in overlapping claims with several other Asian nations like Vietnam and the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

They accuse China of illegally reclaiming land in contested areas to create artificial islands with facilities that could potentially be for military use.

- PTI