

## **China, Pakistan take swipes at Trump's Afghan policy; to hold three-way talks later this year**

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**Beijing:** China and Pakistan today took swipes at President Donald Trump's newly unveiled Afghanistan policy as they called for new talks with the Taliban to resolve the 16-year conflict in the land-locked nation.

### **Wang Yi shakes hands with Khawaja Asif at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who met Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif here, announced that both the countries along with Afghanistan will hold a new series of three-way talks later this year in Beijing to push forward settlement negotiations with the Taliban.

The development comes almost a fortnight after the US announced to double down on its military campaign and issued the sternest warning to Pakistan for providing safe havens to terrorists and sought an enhanced role for India in bringing peace in the war-ravaged country.

Asif said that Pakistan believes the crisis in war-torn nation can't be solved through military and called for a political solution to settle the issue.

"It's our firm view that there is no military solution in Afghanistan, the focus should be on a politically negotiated settlement. China is playing a very constructive role in this regard," Asif said.

Asif was reaction to US officials remark this week that USD 225 million in military aid for Pakistan have been suspended while about 3,500 additional troops will head to Afghanistan to reverse the Taliban's battleground advances and gain leverage in negotiations.

Pakistan has repeatedly rejected US accusations that it is abetting groups like the Taliban-linked Haqqani Network, a position that China has backed.

"The government and people of Pakistan have made huge sacrifices in the fight against terror for everyone to see and the international community should recognize that," Wang said.

The two Ministers also mentioned that ties between the two all-weather allies have grown even closer.

The meeting comes close on the heels of China handing Pakistan an unexpected diplomatic setback at the BRICS Summit in Xiamen when all the five permanent members – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, declared the Pakistan-based militant groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad as terrorist organizations, in a move that was praised by New Delhi and Washington.

- AP