

# U.S. Military Chief: Pentagon To Focus On Asia

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Pentagon to give special focus to Asia: Mullen

*-“We will be prepared to support and defend our freedom of navigation and access to the global commons. Our partners and allies are our greatest strategic asset in the region. We will work with them to conduct multilateral exercises and operations.. ..”*

Washington: With North Korea displaying an aggressive posture and China becoming increasingly assertive, the US Defense Department would lend special focus to Asia to demonstrate a “responsible military leadership” in the region, America’s top military leader has said.

In his annual guidance for 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the US would closely monitor the developments in North Korea while seeking to resume appropriate military-to- military ties with China.

“In response to an aggressive North Korea and a more assertive China, our efforts to balance risk have increasingly focused on Asia.

“We will demonstrate responsible military leadership in the region that both reassures our allies and partners and strengthens the international norms that serve the interests of all nations,” said Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his annual guidance for 2011.

The Pentagon will closely monitor the uncertainty stemming from political succession in North Korea and maintain a robust deterrent against future provocations, he said.

“We seek to resume appropriate military-to- military relations with China in order to prevent miscommunication and foster cooperation on areas of mutual interest,” Mullen said.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates is travelling to China next week to resume military to military dialogue with China.

“We will be prepared to support and defend our freedom of navigation and access to the global commons. Our partners and allies are our greatest strategic asset in the region. We will work with them to conduct multilateral exercises and operations that enhance broader regional stability,” he said.

Mullen said the United States must continue to balance global strategic risk by maintaining a ready, forward presence and available forces that can meet the full scope of its security commitments.

“Since our top priority this year is success in Afghanistan, our air and maritime forces must shoulder additional responsibilities and provide the primary capabilities to balance global strategic risk elsewhere,” he said.

As the US faces additional challenges and opportunities elsewhere around the globe, it must continue to support local efforts to combat the extremist threat that emanates from places like Somalia, Yemen and North Africa, he asserted.

“To do so, we will complement US and international development, governance, and rule of law efforts – the true bedrock of a sustainable counter-terror strategy.

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