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Pentagon To Help India Provide Improved Defence Support To Afghanistan In Fight Against Taliban

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The Pentagon has been asked by a key Senate panel to identify ways so that India can play a larger role in providing increased and coordinated defence-related support to war-torn Afghanistan.

A resolution moved in this regard by Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan was unanimously passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday as part of the the National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA-2018), which approved \$ 640 billion in critical defence spending for fiscal year 2018.

“This provision encourages the Department of Defence to identify ways that India can play a larger role in providing increased and coordinated defence related support to Afghanistan, a critical part of overcoming the current “stalemate” in the fight against the Taliban,” said a statement issued by office of senator Sullivan.

‘Encourage increased role for India in Afghanistan’ was one of the 24 amendment moved and passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee. NDAA-18 now moves to the full senate for consideration.

A similar version of the bill has also been passed by the House Armed Services Committee and has been sent to the House of Representatives.

The two different versions of the bill once passed by the House and the Senate would need to be made same by a conference committee of the two chambers before it is finally passed by the senate and house. After that, NDAA-18 would land on the desk of the US president for him to sign it into law.

Such a move by a key senate panel comes a few days after US President Donald Trump praised India’s role in Afghanistan.

Of late there has been a growing desire of the Trump administration for an increased Indian role in Afghanistan.

India is the largest regional contributor to Afghan reconstruction, pledging at least \$ 2 billion toward that effort since 2001.