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Pakistan, Afghanistan to establish working group on security

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Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to establish a joint working group on security in high level talks here on Thursday, officials said.

A joint statement issued at the conclusion of a day-long visit to Islamabad by National Security Adviser of Afghanistan, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, said the main focus during the talks was on strengthening bilateral security cooperation. "Both sides agreed on the need to take action against all terrorists without making any distinction among them and their hideouts on their respective sides," the statement said.

The joint working group will comprise representatives of relevant security institutions.

They also agreed to hold a meeting of their relevant officials in Islamabad on July 3 to enhance security coordination.

The two sides agreed that terrorism was a common enemy and emphasized closer cooperation and coordination at institutional level to deal with this common menace.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to building a comprehensive bilateral relationship, marked by enhanced trade and economic partnership.

Spanta called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and delivered President Hamid Karzai's letter. The joint statement did not say anything about contents of the letter, however, Karzai stated earlier that he would suggest a "road-map" for future cooperation.

Sharif welcomed Karzai's letter and Spanta's visit to Pakistan. Both sides reiterated their common resolve to further enhance bilateral relationship in all dimensions in a meaningful and result-oriented manner.

The Pakistani side reaffirmed providing all-out support to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Spanta participated in delegation-level talks with the Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz. He also had a meeting with the chief of the army staff.

Spanta was sent days after Karzai told Sharif over the phone last week that his team will carry a letter that will seek a "road- map" for the future bilateral cooperation against terrorism.

The visit came at a time when the cross-border firing has again caused tensions between the two uneasy neighbors.

Afghanistan claimed Monday that Pakistani troops, in civilian dress, intruded in Kunar province and killed three Afghan soldiers and eight civilians. Pakistan dismissed the claim as baseless.