

Pentagon seeks funds to fight Taliban

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has asked Congress to approve more than \$1 billion in additional funds for Pakistan's war against the Taliban.

Gates wants lawmakers to appropriate \$400 million this year for a new Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund and an additional \$700 million for 2010, The Washington Post reported Friday.

The fund would be controlled by the Pentagon's Central Command and would be targeted for counterinsurgency training and equipment such as night-vision goggles, helicopters and intelligence capabilities.

Gates told the Senate Appropriations Committee Thursday that the Pentagon wants authority to deal with a challenge that "simultaneously requires wartime and peacetime capabilities."

Lawmakers in both the House and Senate have voiced concerns about creating a new Pakistan military funding stream through the Pentagon. Traditionally, such aid flows through the State Department.

The Obama administration is seeking as much as \$3 billion over the next five years for Pakistan's military.

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