

## Ahmadinejad urges India to ease tension

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Iran says India should take measures to ease tension with its neighbors, after Pakistani troops were deployed on the borders with India.

“Iran believes that powers outside the region aim to damage growing relations between Iran, India” and Pakistan, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a Saturday telephone conversation.

His remarks came after Pakistani officials said Friday that some 20,000 troops had been moved to the eastern borders of the country.

A senior Pakistani military official was quoted by the New York Times as saying that the decision was made “in view of the prevailing environment.”

Deteriorating relations between Islamabad and New Delhi in the aftermath of Mumbai attacks have fueled speculation that the two nuclear-armed neighbors are headed to a military conflict.

The redeployment was seen as a response to new intelligence that suggested India could launch an attack inside Pakistan by early next week to fight the militants.

India blames a Pakistan-based militant group for orchestrating the November 26 attacks on Mumbai, which claimed the lives of some 179 people. Pakistan says it will take all necessary measures to halt anti-Indian operations by such militants groups.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani said he would not resort to a military action against India, but would retaliate with full force if attacked.

Ahmadinejad, on Saturday, called on the two nuclear-armed neighbors to adopt coordinated measures to fight regional terrorism while warning against any action that would have dire consequences for both India and Pakistan.

“The terrorist attacks in Mumbai targeted peace, stability and security of the region,” he added.

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