

## **Bill to triple non military aid to Pakistan introduced**

Press Trust of India

April 3, 2009

WASHINGTON— A bill has been introduced in the US House of Representatives to triple non-military aid to Pakistan, amounting to a whopping USD 1.5 billion as part of the new Af-Pak policy.

Planned for the next five years, the aid can be extended for another five years. However, the bill puts conditions on Pak military, linking the aid with their success in fighting against terrorism.

The US President Barack Obama announced the Af-Pak policy last Friday, in which he had asked the US Congress to support his Administrations endeavor to provide massive non-military aid to Pakistan, which he termed as "down payment" and "investment" into Americas future and security.

**The bill, carrying bi-partisan support, was introduced by Howard L Berman, Chairman of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee. An identical bill is scheduled to be tabled in the US Senate anytime now.**

**"This bill has one essential purpose: to strengthen our relationship with Pakistan," Berman said on the floor of the House while introducing the bill.**

**Berman said the bill also boosts military aid to help Pakistan disrupt and defeat al Qaeda and insurgent elements, but requires a majority of such assistance to be focused on critical counter terrorism efforts.**