



drishti

US to Pull Out Troops from Syria and Afghanistan

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/us-to-pull-out-troops-from-syria-and-afghanistan

United States has decided to withdraw over 2,000 US troops from Syria after it has declared victory over the Islamic State.

- US has also decided to reduce by half the US forces in Afghanistan.
- These decisions mark the end of a prolonged phase of American military interventions in the Middle East and South Asia.

Likely Impact of US Troops Withdrawal

- Allies of US like the UK, Germany, and France have expressed dismay over the decision as they also have troops stationed in Syria. The Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) warned of a military vacuum that would leave the alliance trapped between "hostile parties".
- Experts believe that the withdrawal of troops will allow regional actors like Iran to increase their footprints in Syria.
- It may lead to demands for US troops withdrawal from Iraq also.
- An imminent US withdrawal might lead to an open confrontation between Turkish and Kurdish forces.
- The withdrawal of US may lead to the resurgence of forces like Islamic State in Syria and of Taliban in Afghanistan.

Impact on India

- India must be concerned about the changes in US stance in the middle east and Afghanistan as it will **impact our interest in the region and in our neighborhood**.
- India was Impacted by the **rise of the Islamic state** after the turmoil in Syria.
- The **extremist group IS (Islamic State), extended its reach to South Asia**—home to the largest Muslim population in the world—is of concern to India, which has significant stakes in the peace and stability in South Asia.
- The threat was compounded by the fact that **IS started attracting Indian youth**.

- The resurgence of Taliban will severely impact **India's position and stakes in Afghanistan, embolden Pakistan while destabilizing the region.**

Syrian Crisis

- Syria has been in a **state of civil war since the 2011** uprising known as the "Arab Spring."
- The Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, responded to the protests by killing hundreds of demonstrators and imprisoning many more.
- In July 2011, defectors from the **military announced the formation of the Free Syrian Army**, a rebel group aiming to overthrow the government, and Syria began to slide into civil war.
- **International Involvement:** The civil war has spilled beyond the borders of Syria. It has triggered sectarian tensions (**Shia-Kurds-Sunni**), geopolitical rivalries (**US-Russia; Iran-Saudi Arabia-Israel**), and the global threat of **Islamic extremism (Islamic State)**.

India Position on Syrian Crisis

- India's position in Syria and the middle east is influenced by its own stakes in the Middle East- **namely energy security and diaspora.**
- India's support for the President Bashar-al-Assad regime in Syria is driven by two factors. The first is its **fears of instability and the rise of Islamists fundamentalism.**
- The second is its commitment to **non-interventionism**, a position shared by members of the BRICS countries.
- In addition to these factors, Assad's Baath Party's has continuously **supported India's stance on the Kashmir issue.**
- In line with this, India supports an all-inclusive Syrian-led process to chart out the future of Syria, its political structures and leadership.