



India's NSA Visit to Afghanistan

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Why in News

Recently, the **National Security Advisor (NSA)** of India visited Afghanistan for talks on strategic issues with the leadership in Kabul.

Key Points

- **First official visit since initiation of Intra-afghan talks:**
 - This visit is significant because it was the first visit by any senior Indian official amidst the **Intra-Afghan Talks**.
 - **Intra-Afghan** talks refer to the **negotiation meetings between the Taliban and the Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation** (representative of Afghan Government) opened in Doha in 2020.
 - These talks are **facilitated and supervised by the United States**, representatives of the Ghani government and the Taliban aimed at ending the decades-old war and forging a political settlement.

- **Issues discussed:**

- **Exchanged views on the Peace Process, the beginning of 2nd round of (Intra-Afghan) talks, and the role of India in establishing peace in Afghanistan.**
- Emphasis to **synchronise efforts to combat terrorism** and maintain peace in Afghanistan which shall become more challenging after the USA troops withdraw after **Doha Peace Pact (2020).**

Doha Peace Pact: In February 2020, the USA and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha, (Qatar's capital) which included:

- USA to withdraw all of its troops from Afghanistan in 14 months and would also release Taliban prisoners, held captive by the Afghan government.
- Assurance by Taliban that they would not allow transnational jihadist organisations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State to use Afghanistan as their base and also committed to start direct talks with the Afghan government, which began in September 2020.

- **India's Role in establishing Peace in Afghanistan:**

- By **participating in the intra-Afghan inaugural dialogue** in Doha, India has shown its willingness to engage with all Afghan parties including the Taliban for peace in Kabul.
- India conveyed that the peace process must:
 - Be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled;
 - Respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan; and
 - Promote human rights and democracy.
- India has a major stake in the stability of Afghanistan since it has **invested considerable resources in Afghanistan's development.**



Significance of Stable Afghanistan for India:

- A stable Afghanistan government in power is a **strategic asset vis-à-vis Pakistan.**

An increased political and military role for the Taliban and the expansion of its territorial control should be of great concern to India since the Taliban is widely believed to be a protégé of Islamabad.

- The country has the **Central Asian Republics** to the North, Pakistan to its East, and through Iran and Pakistan the Indian Ocean deeper south.
- Withdrawal of the USA troops could result in the **breeding of the fertile ground for various anti-India terrorist** outfits like **Lashkar-e-Taiba** or Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Way Forward

- India has reaffirmed its **support to the Doha Agreement (2020) and intra-Afghan peace negotiations** facilitating Afghan peace process and reiterated its commitment to Afghanistan's pursuit of "**sustainable peace and reconciliation**".
- India's vision of a **sovereign, united, stable, plural and democratic Afghanistan** is one that is shared by Afghanistan, cutting across ethnic and provincial lines.
- **Continuing such active engagement** will enable India to work with like-minded forces in the region to ensure that the vacuum created by the USA withdrawal does not lead to an unravelling of the gains registered during the last two decades.

Source:IE