



## India's NSA Visit to Afghanistan

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### Why in News

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

### Key Points

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- **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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**

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- 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**