



Taliban Delegation in Pakistan

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Why in News

Recently, a **Taliban delegation visited Pakistan** to discuss the way forward in the Afghan peace process.

The Taliban delegation was led by their political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

Key Points

- **Pakistan Stand:**
 - It had played a facilitating role on the Afghan issue, which led to a peace agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban.
 - The next step it seeks is intra-Afghan peace dialogue, to which Afghanistan has also agreed.
 - It has reiterated its commitment to further deepen the ties with Afghanistan and enhance cooperation in all fields.
- **Issues Involved:**
 - The Taliban visited Pakistan in the backdrop of stalled intra-Afghan peace dialogue over the issue of **prisoners release**.
 - The Taliban also want to speed up the intra-Afghan peace dialogue.
 - Earlier, to resolve the issue the Afghanistan government had convened **Loya Jirga (grand assembly)**, which also approved the release of prisoners and further the peace process.
- **Background:**
 - The **USA signed a deal with the Taliban** that paved the way towards a full withdrawal of USA troops from Afghanistan and also represent a step towards ending the 18-year-war in Afghanistan.
 - The peace deal was expected to **kick-off two processes- a phased withdrawal of US troops and an 'intra-Afghan' dialogue**.
 - The deal is a fundamental step to deliver a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire and the future political roadmap for the Afghanistan peace process.

- **India's Interests in Afghanistan:**

- India has a **major stake** in the stability of Afghanistan. India has invested considerable resources in Afghanistan's development. **E.g. the Afghan Parliament, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam)** among others.
- India favours the continuation of the current Afghanistan government in power, which it considers 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 Pakistan.

- Afghanistan is the **gateway to Central Asia**.
- Withdrawal of US 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 should support any genuine peace process in Afghanistan. However, the peace process in Afghanistan appears to be **one-sided and pushed by the U.S.A. and Pakistan.**
- India should not recognise or publicly engage the Taliban until it recognises the Afghanistan government.

Source: TH