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## Joint Actions in Afghanistan: China-Pakistan

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### Why in News

Recently, **China and Pakistan have decided to launch Joint Actions in Afghanistan** to stop the war-torn country from becoming a hotbed for terrorism.

The recent **withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan** has been matched by the **swift advance of the Taliban across the nation.**



### Key Points

- **Joint Action:** It has been outlined in **five areas**:
  - To **avoid the expansion of war** and prevent Afghanistan from falling into a full-scale civil war.
  - To **promote the intra-Afghan negotiations between the government and the Taliban** and establish “a broad and inclusive political structure”.
  - To resolutely **combat terrorist forces** and push all major forces in Afghanistan to draw a clear line against terrorism.
  - To **promote cooperation among Afghanistan’s neighbours** and to explore the construction of a platform for cooperation among them.
  - To **closely work on international fora** on the Afghan issue.
- **Need:**
  - **Terrorism in Pakistan:**

Pakistan is concerned over the **Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**, which has been waging an insurgency against the country for several years.
  - **Rise in Uyghur Militants:**

China is worried over the regrouping of the **Uyghur** militants from Xinjiang, China who operate under the aegis of **East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)**, which Beijing alleges has links with Al-Qaeda.

The recently released 12<sup>th</sup> report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the **United Nation** has **confirmed the presence of the ETIM militants in Afghanistan.**
  - **Economic Interests:**

If the situation in Afghanistan further deteriorates, Pakistan as well as the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** will be in danger. Also many other Chinese projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be in danger.

    - There was a recent **bomb attack on a shuttle bus carrying Chinese engineers** at Dasu area of Upper Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan where a **Chinese company is building a 4320-mw dam on the Indus river.**
    - **India has opposed the CPEC, which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)**, although China has pushed ahead with projects and stepped up its investments in PoK.

- **Background of Situation in Afghanistan:**
  - On **11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, terrorist attacks (9/11) in America** killed nearly 3,000 people.
    - **Osama Bin Laden**, the head of Islamist terror group al-Qaeda, was quickly identified as the man responsible.
  - The Taliban, radical Islamists who ran Afghanistan at that time, protected Bin Laden, and refused to hand him over. So, a month after 9/11, the **US launched airstrikes against Afghanistan** (Operation Enduring Freedom).
  - After the attacks, the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** coalition troops declared war on Afghanistan.
  - The **US** dislodged the Taliban regime and **established a transitional government in Afghanistan**.
  - In July 2021, the **US troops departed** from the biggest airbase in Afghanistan after the 20-year-long war, effectively ending their military operations in the country.
  - The US withdrawal has **turned the balance of power in the battleground in favour of the Taliban**.
- **India's Interests:**
  - **Investments:**
    - Protecting its **investments**, which run into billions of rupees, in Afghanistan.
  - **Taliban:**
    - **Preventing** a future **Taliban regime** from being a pawn of Pakistan.
  - **Pakistan's Terror Base:**
    - Making sure that the **Pakistan-backed anti-India terrorist groups do not get support from the Taliban**.

## Way Forward

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- **India's Afghan policy** is at a major crossroads; to **safeguard its assets there as well as to stay relevant** in the unfolding 'great game' in and around Afghanistan, **India must fundamentally reset its Afghanistan policy**.
- India needs to **re-evaluate its decisions and be more omnidirectional in its approach** to deal with all forces that are central to the future of Afghanistan.
- India must, in its own national interest, **begin 'open talks' with the Taliban** before it is too late. The time for hesitant, half-embarrassed backchannel parleys is over.
- The **changing political and security situation requires India to be more open** to adapting its maximalist position and starting a dialogue with the Taliban.

**Source: IE**