



India in Afghan Peace Process

Why in News

Recently, the USA President has envisaged a **New Peace Initiative (Plan)** to decide on the roadmap for peace in Afghanistan.

- Under the plan, the USA proposed a **regional conference** under the [United Nations](#) auspices with **foreign ministers of the USA, India, Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran** to discuss a **“unified approach”** on Afghanistan.

Key Points

▪ USA President's New Peace Initiative:

- **Delay in Withdrawal of Troops:** This peace plan has kept open the possibility that the USA troops, currently deployed in Afghanistan, might stay on for a longer time.
 - Under the earlier [USA- Taliban Deal](#), the USA had promised to withdraw all troops by May, 2021.
- **Immediate Action:** The USA is pressing the Taliban to accept an immediate agreement to reduce violence for 90 days that will provide the space for the peace initiative.
- **Inclusive Process:** The USA will **not be “dictating terms”** to the Afghan parties, but **facilitating** an inclusive interim government, an agreement on the **“foundational principles”** for a new political order, and a **“permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”**.
- **Turkey's Role:** The USA is asking **Turkey to convene a meeting of the government** in Kabul (capital of Afghanistan) and the Taliban to finalise a peace settlement.
- **Unified Approach:** The USA asked the **United Nations** to convene a meeting of the **foreign ministers from China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, India and the United States** to develop a “unified approach” to peace in Afghanistan.

▪ India's Role in Peace Process Through “Unified Approach”:

- India is an **important player** in the peace process – it has also been acknowledged by the USA.
- India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan which are **inclusive** and [Afghan-led, Afghanowned and Afghan-controlled](#).
- India has invested heavily in infrastructure developments, training security forces and supplying them with necessary equipment.
- India has a major stake in the **stability of Afghanistan** since it has invested considerable resources in Afghanistan's development.
- India hopes to have a role in setting the terms especially concerning terrorism, violence, women's rights and democratic values.



▪ India's Interest in Afghanistan:

- **Economic and Strategic Interest:** Afghanistan is a gateway to the oil and mineral-rich **Central Asian republics**.
 - Anyone who is in power in Afghanistan controls the land routes connecting India with Central Asia (via Afghanistan).
- **Developmental Projects:** The massive reconstruction plans for the country to offer a lot of opportunities for Indian companies.
 - Major projects include **the Afghan Parliament, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam)**.
 - Also India's assistance of more than **USD 3 billion in projects**, hundreds of small development projects (of schools, hospitals and water projects) have cemented its position in Afghanistan.
- **Security Interest:** India has been the victim of **state-sponsored terrorism** emanating from Pakistan supported terrorist group operating in the region (e.g. Haqqani network). Thus, setting up a friendly government in Afghanistan can help tackling Pakistan supported terrorism.

▪ Challenges:

- The Afghan government as well as Taliban are unwilling for any power sharing.
 - Taliban is even not willing to give up its sanctuaries in Pakistan. Nor will it accept any dilution of the strict Islamic system that it wants to enforce.
- Also, the Taliban is fragmented or divided internally. It is composed of various regional and tribal groups acting semi-autonomously.
 - Therefore, it is possible that some of them may continue to engage in violence impacting the peace process and dialogue.

Way Forward

- An independent, sovereign, democratic, pluralistic and inclusive Afghanistan is crucial for peace and stability in the region.

- In order to ensure the same, the Afghan peace process should be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.
- Also, there is a need for the global community to fight against the global concern of terrorism. In this context, it high time to adopt the [**Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**](#) (proposed by India at UN in 1996).
- Though the new initiative by the USA is a good step, the road ahead would not be easy. Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require patience and compromise among all parties.

[**Source: IE**](#)

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