



Mains Practice Question

Q. US-Taliban deal will have many geo-strategic and geo-economic concerns for India. Discuss. (250 words)

07 Apr, 2020 GS Paper 2 International Relations

Approach

- Briefly highlight the deal.
- Highlight how the deal presents concerns- positive and negative at geostrategic and geo economic level.
- Suggest needed steps and strategy that India should adapt to gain maximum in this scenario.

Introduction

The recent **US-Taliban deal** can be termed as a landmark event as it seeks to end the 18 year war in Afghanistan. The deal envisages withdrawal of US troops in 14 months and starting an intra-Afghan dialogue.

Apart from it, the Taliban made a commitment to not allow Afghanistan soil to be used against the US and its ally. Also, sanctions over Taliban leaders will be removed and prisoners from both sides (Taliban's fighters and Afghan's soldiers) shall be released.

Body

The US-Taliban deal will impact the internal and regional geopolitics of the region and affect other stakeholders like India, China, Pakistan, Central Asia, Iran.

Geostrategic Concerns for India

- India has a major stake in the continuation of the current Afghanistan government in power, which it considers a strategic asset vis-à-vis Pakistan. However, if the deal is fructified the Taliban will control political power in the country.
- An increased political and military role for the Taliban should be of great concern to India since the Taliban is widely believed to be favoured by Pakistan.
- Further, China may leverage Pakistan's influence on the Taliban, to propel its strategic projects like the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Taliban's links with terrorist organisations is also a cause of worry for India.

Geoeconomic Concerns for India

- India has a major stake in the stability of Afghanistan, as India has invested **considerable economic resources for Afghanistan's development.**
- Afghanistan is the gateway to Central Asia, the deal might dampen India's energy and trade interest in Central Asia.
- Consequently, projects like the International North-South Corridor, TAPI pipeline will also suffer.

Conclusion

In the past, India insisted on a moralistic approach towards Taliban i.e India will not engage in any dialogue with any terrorist group. However, realising the shift in power dynamics, India is now moving to diplomatically engage with the Taliban. India's presence at the agreement-signing ceremony is the first sign of a possible diplomatic opening.

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