

AIR Spotlight - Geopolitical Scenario in Afghanistan and its Implications on India

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the geopolitical scenario in Afghanistan and its effects on India.

Participants:

1. T C A Raghavan, Former Ambassador
2. Simran Sodhi, Senior Journalist

Context:

With the Taliban taking over Afghanistan, the situation in Afghanistan has become chaotic.

Current situation in Afghanistan:

- The current situation in Afghanistan is due to certain internal issues, Pakistan's support for Afghanistan as well as the way in which the US withdrew from Afghanistan.
- Apart from Pakistan, China has also developed good relations with the [Taliban](#). Earlier, a Taliban delegation had visited China.
- In the whole episode, Pakistan has gained with the Taliban taking over the Afghanistan administration.
- However, it should be noted that things never remain permanent in international relations. So, things may change in the future.
- Though the Taliban promises that it will not allow using the land of Afghanistan for terrorism, it may be possible that terrorists will get the Taliban's support.
- It is also possible that the rule of the Taliban will once again put Afghanistan in a situation like the 1990s, when there were violations of human rights, especially that of women.

Role of the USA:

- The US president Joe Biden is being criticized by many for the manner in which the USA has withdrawn from Afghanistan.
- The USA is being blamed for all the chaos happening in Afghanistan by many commentators.
- Though the withdrawal of the USA was a certainty, however, the manner in which it happened took many by surprise. It has certainly affected the image of the USA and other western powers.

Role of India:

- The government of India has reached out to opposition parties, apprising the happenings in Afghanistan. The evacuation of Indians stranded in Afghanistan is the top priority of the Indian government.

- The development work done by India in Afghanistan and the goodwill that it has generated among the Afghan people have received a big setback with the Taliban taking control over Afghanistan.
- India has invested much in Afghanistan when the civilian government took over after the 9/11 incident (terror attack on the USA) and the subsequent American war on terror.
- The investment made by India in the reconstruction of Afghanistan is a long-term investment and will not be forgotten for a long time.
- Now, India is in a wait and watch mode and closely monitoring the activities of the Taliban.
- India should also not pre-judge the Taliban which is stating that it will form a broad-based inclusive government. If this happens, then India should welcome it.
- In the current situation, India can't do much except reaching out to Afghan people and providing them with medical and educational visas.
- It is good that India has initiated electronic visas for Afghan people.
- The Indian Prime Minister has spoken to his German and Russian counterparts over the issue and it is expected that more such talks will happen in the future.
- India needs to engage with all the countries which are dealing with the Afghanistan issue.
- Also, India needs to engage with Iran specifically over Afghanistan. India has invested much in developing the [Chabahar port](#) which also benefits Afghanistan.
- While the Taliban issue is important for India, India's foreign policy interests are much wider. When it comes to dealing with the Taliban, every country has its own interests which may differ from India's interests. However, the broader understanding is that there should be peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Way forward:

- India can take the following measures at this point in time.
 - First, India should keep on maintaining people-to-people contact such as providing medical visas or educational visas to the Afghan people.
 - Second, India should engage with other countries in maintaining peace in Afghanistan.
 - Third, India should wait and watch the developments in Afghanistan without any preconceived notions about the Taliban.