

## AIR Spotlight - Delhi Regional Security Dialogue

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program 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 Delhi Regional Security Dialogue for a stable, inclusive and peaceful Afghanistan.

### Participants:

- Ashok Sajjanhar, Former Diplomat
- Simran Sodhi, Journalist

### Context:

Delhi hosted the regional security dialogue on 10th November and the topic of discussion was the ongoing situation in Afghanistan.

### Introduction:

- Delhi Regional Security Dialogue was convened by India over the situation in Afghanistan.
- The Dialogue held was at the level of National Security Advisers or Secretaries of Security Councils and was chaired by India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.
  - The main issue or agenda of the meeting was the evolving situation of Afghanistan.
- In August, the [Taliban](#) took control of Afghanistan and since then there has been a rapid escalation of violence and chaos in the country. This has also affected the neighbouring countries and the global community as a whole.

### Significance of the meeting:

- India was present in Afghanistan for the last 20 years ever since the United States came in 2001 and dislodged the Taliban government. India had excellent relations with the administration as well as with the people of Afghanistan.
- India has done major infrastructure projects there including the Salma dam that is now known as the India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam, the parliament building, the Park line, etc.
- The increasing dominance of the Taliban over Afghanistan is a strategic loss to India. Hence, this meeting is very significant and India has invited the National Security Advisors (NSAs) of countries like Iran, the five Central Asian Countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan), Russia, China, and Pakistan.

### Pakistan and China:

#### Pakistan:

- Pakistan has said that its NSA will not be a part of this meeting, and it's not surprising because the objective of Pakistan has always been that India should have no role to play in Afghanistan.

- The move by Pakistan not to attend the meeting will expose Pakistan's disinterest in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. This will also show that they want to have a dominant role or control as far as the Taliban government is concerned.
- Taliban has got refuge in Pakistan for 20 years, and have been able to carry on their attacks in Afghanistan against the U.S security forces, the NATO security forces, and the Afghan National Defence Security Forces only because they have been supported by Pakistan not only in terms of providing them safe havens but also with equipment and ammunition.
- There is a particular section of the Taliban that is very beholden to Pakistan. If we recall the month of September 2021 then the NSA of Pakistan visited Afghanistan on 4th September even before the caretaker government in Afghanistan was announced.
- The NSA ensured that the Haqqani Network that is very closely related to the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, has got the major positions.
- Pakistan probably thinks that not being present at the meeting will reduce the importance of this meeting.
- But, the presence of other countries including Russia, Iran, and the Central Asian republics that share borders with Afghanistan will be quite adequate to bring the discussion in a very substantive manner and come up with ideas through which the situation in Afghanistan can be restored.

**China:**

- China did not send its NSA to India because it supports Pakistan and the relation between India and China is also very stressful these days.

**Know more about [India – China relations](#).**

**Points discussed in the meeting:**

- The security situation in Afghanistan.
- Radicalization, extremism, drug production, and trafficking.
- Threats emanating from military weapons left behind in Afghanistan.
- Issues of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.
- Review of the security situation in the region arising from recent developments in Afghanistan
- Measures to address the relevant security challenges and support the people of Afghanistan in promoting peace, security, and stability.

**Other countries in the meeting:**

- Other countries including Russia, Iran, and the Central Asian countries want to ensure that the commitments that have been made by the Taliban would be fulfilled. But, the current situation shows that the commitments have been breached rather than being followed.
- Hence, all these countries are very worried about the prevailing situation and if the terrorist groups or the elements of the Taliban itself create problems in the Central Asian countries, then this will also directly affect Russia.

- That is why Russia is under the edges of the [Collective Security Treaty Organization \(CSTO\)](#) and it has been bilaterally having military exercises with many Central Asian countries and is committed to protecting territorial security.

#### **Delhi Declaration:**

- The joint declaration of eight countries called for ensuring that Afghanistan must not turn into a haven for terror activities. The declaration said, “Afghanistan’s territory should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing any terrorist acts.”
- The Delhi Declaration matters as it indicates several subtle changes in India’s policy and equation with the country and its neighbourhood.

#### **Key takeaways of the meeting:**

The NSAs during the dialogue:

- Reiterated strong support for a peaceful, secure, and stable Afghanistan while emphasizing the respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, and non-interference in its internal affairs.
- Expressed deep concern over the suffering of the people of Afghanistan arising from the security situation in Afghanistan and condemned the terrorist attacks in Kunduz, Kandahar, and Kabul.
- Emphasized that Afghanistan’s territory should not be used for sheltering, training, planning, or financing any terrorist acts.
- Condemned in the strongest terms all terrorist activities and reaffirmed their firm commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including its financing, the dismantling of terrorist infrastructure, and countering radicalization, to ensure that Afghanistan would never become a safe haven for global terrorism.
- Called for collective cooperation against the menace of radicalization, extremism, separatism, and drug trafficking in the region.
- Stressed the necessity of forming an open and truly inclusive government that represents the will of all the people of Afghanistan and has representation from all sections of its society, including major ethnopolitical forces in the country. Inclusion of all sections of the society in the administrative and political structure is imperative for the successful national reconciliation process in the country.
- Recalling the relevant UN Resolutions on Afghanistan, the participants noted that the [United Nations](#) has a central role to play in Afghanistan and that its continued presence in the country must be preserved.
- Emphasized the importance of ensuring that the fundamental rights of women, children, and minority communities are not violated.
- Expressed concern over the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, and underlined the need to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.
- Reiterated that humanitarian assistance should be provided in an unimpeded, direct, and assured manner to Afghanistan and that the assistance is distributed within the country in a non-discriminatory manner across all sections of the Afghan society.
- Reiterated commitment to provide assistance to Afghanistan to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Reiterated the importance of their dialogue and agreed to remain engaged with each other in the future.

**Conclusion:**

This meeting holds a very substantive and forward-looking deliberation that would be helpful to bring peace and security to Afghanistan.

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