

## Delhi Declaration on Afghanistan

The Delhi Regional Security Dialogue was held in November 2021 hosted by India and participated by seven other nations wherein the situation in Afghanistan was discussed. The participating countries adopted the Delhi Declaration at the end of the dialogue.

This is a significant development with respect to India's foreign policy and is hence is an important topic for the [UPSC exam](#). In this article, you can read all about the Delhi Declaration on Afghanistan and the Delhi Regional Security Dialogue.

### Delhi Regional Security Dialogue



### DELHI DECLARATION ON AFGHANISTAN

INDIA, IRAN, RUSSIA, UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, TURKMENISTAN

## Delhi Regional Security Dialogue

Chaired by NSA Ajit Doval  
Held in November 2021

#### Agenda:

Cooperation to fight:

1. Terrorism
2. Drug Trafficking
3. Radicalisation

Continue humanitarian aid to the Afghan people

India hosted the third Regional Security Dialogue in Delhi in which seven other countries including Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated.

- The first two dialogues in the series were held in Iran in 2018 and 2019.
- In this third meeting, the security heads of all the countries participated and it was chaired by India's National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval.
- India had extended the invitation to Pakistan and China as well but they declined to attend.
  - Pakistan skipped the event blaming the 'negative attitude' of India while China cited scheduling issues.
  - India reacted to Pakistan skipping the event as 'unfortunate but unsurprising'.

- With respect to China's decision, India said that even though unable to attend the dialogue, China has expressed its willingness to sustain contacts with India on Afghanistan through bilateral and multilateral channels.
- The next (fourth) round of the dialogue is expected to be held in 2022.

### **Agenda of the Delhi Regional Security Dialogue**

- The agenda is to seek a common approach towards practical cooperation in combating the increasing threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, and radicalisation that is feared to engulf Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover.

### **Why was Afghanistan not invited?**

- Afghanistan was not invited since the government heading that country now is the Taliban, whom India has not formally recognised.
- The previous two Regional Security Dialogues were attended by Afghan representatives from the legitimate government there.
- Since the Taliban usurped power in August 2021, the Afghan embassies in foreign countries are manned by representatives from the Ashraf Ghani era and there is also a government-in-exile led by Amrullah Saleh.
- However, India did not extend invitations to either of the above parties probably because it did not want to antagonise the Taliban.

### **Why is India hosting the dialogue focussed on Afghanistan?**

- Having a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is essential to peace in the region and also for India considering how the Taliban has provided safe havens to Pakistan-sponsored terrorist groups in the past.
- After the US withdrawal of troops and the rather swift takeover by the Taliban, the entire region was tense amidst concerns of refugees streaming out of the country and causing a resource-burden on neighbouring countries.
- There is also the concern of a re-emergence of terror strikes on Indian soil from actors that got covert and overt support from the Taliban.
- India enjoyed very good relations with the previous dispensation in Afghanistan and had invested and contributed heavily to rebuilding the war-torn country with several infrastructure projects ever since the US defeated the Taliban in 2001.
- India with hopes of being a global power and a key player in the South Asian region, would want to stay engaged with the scheme of things in Afghanistan.
- Additionally, India justly regards itself as a neighbour of Afghanistan, given its legal and Parliament-mandated claim on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

## **Delhi Declaration on Afghanistan**

The participants of the Dialogue discussed the security situation in Afghanistan and also its regional and global repercussions. They talked about the political situation in Afghanistan along with the threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and radicalisation. The parties also discussed the importance of continued humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

The eight participating nations adopted the Delhi Declaration as an outcome of the security dialogue. The NSAs/security heads:

1. Emphasized strong support for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan while stressing the respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs.
2. Expressed concern for the suffering of the people of Afghanistan emanating from the precarious security situation there and also condemn the terrorist attacks that took place in Kabul, Kunduz and Kandahar.
3. Stressed that the territory of Afghanistan should not be used for harbouring, nurturing or financing any terrorist activity.
4. Condemned all terrorist activities and reaffirmed their staunch commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including its financing, the dismantling of terrorist infrastructure and countering radicalization, to assure that Afghanistan would never become a safe haven for global terrorism.
5. Called for cooperation to fight radicalization, extremism, separatism and drug trafficking in the region.
6. Emphasised the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan that would be truly representative of all the different factions and sections of Afghan society.
7. Stressed the important role played by the [United Nations](#) in the region and said that its continued presence there is warranted.
8. Reiterated that the fundamental rights of women, children and minorities are maintained.
9. Stressed the need to continue giving humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan in a non-discriminatory manner.
10. Reiterated the importance of their dialogue and agreed to remain engaged with each other in the future.

### ***Delhi Declaration – Taliban's Response***

Surprisingly, the Taliban has responded positively to the Delhi Declaration on Afghanistan. The Taliban spokesperson said that it agrees with all that was said in the NSA-level meeting in Delhi. This is significant because despite Pakistan and China declining to attend the event, and despite Pakistan's negative attitude towards India's role in Afghanistan, the Taliban seem to be more welcoming of India's moves.

Earlier, the Taliban had said that it appreciated everything India had done for Afghanistan such as developmental and infrastructure projects.

The fact that the Taliban, despite their historical animosity towards India, has supported the security dialogue, shows that there is back-channel communication happening between India and the Taliban.