



## Where India stands on peace in Afghanistan



### Context:

- External affairs minister participating in the September 12 inaugural of the Doha inter-Afghan negotiations.

### India's involvement in Afghanistan:

- India's has put in considerable effort to rebuild Afghanistan after it was ravaged by Cold War turbulence and Taliban rule.
- India has constructed the Afghan parliament, a dam on the Hari Rud River, transmission lines and a power station to bring electricity to Kabul.
- India has undertaken several small Development Projects for education and health, which has led to improvements in Social indicators of Afghan people at least in certain key pockets of country.
- India has contributed to building institutions, developing human resources, training Afghan public officials and providing the country with a new generation of educated and skilled workers



## What has been insinuation levelled against India and is it true?

- Many in Pakistan insinuate that India is sabotaging the Doha negotiations because India would not like Afghanistan and Pakistan to have good relations.
- Unlike Pakistan, which fears harmonious ties between India and Afghanistan, India would be quite content with friendship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- This is because India understands that after all, the same families, clans and tribes straddle the two sides of their long and porous frontiers.

## What does India's participation in Inter-Afghan talks suggest?

- The invite to India was an acknowledgement that India has vital interests in Afghanistan.
- With participation, India has ended the erstwhile ambiguity in its policy.
- Participation does not suggest that India has now warmed to the Taliban but it underline that India has **no reservations in interacting with the Taliban** if the Afghan government has none.
- India is now willing to engage with any party committed to peace and stability in Afghanistan.

## What is India's stand with respect to Afghanistan now?

- India has supported efforts to bring inclusive peace to Afghanistan by advising leaders of different ethnicities to work in cohesion with others for peace and nation-building.
- India favours the social and political reintegration of those who give up their physical and ideological association with terrorist groups and instead embrace pluralism and democracy.
- India opposes the political accommodation of individuals, groups or Islamist entities associated with the al-Qaeda, the Daesh, and their associates since this will subvert the nascent Afghan democracy, undermine human rights, and destroy emerging Afghan institutions.

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- India does not have reasons to worry about the peace deal concluded between US and the Taliban if all Afghans agree that the peace deal safeguards their interests and if they can preserve the gains made in Afghanistan since 2001.

### Way ahead:

- While Iran's foreign minister did not participate because of the presence of the US Secretary of State, a way must be found to involve Iran in the Afghan peace process, which will receive a blow should there be a flare-up between Iran and the US.
- A subverted Afghanistan in the hands of terrorist networks will be a catastrophe for India, the region and the world. For peace in Afghanistan, there should be an immediate ceasefire.
- A ceasefire must be followed by the cessation of sanctuary, sustenance and support to the Haqqani Network, the military arm of the Taliban most closely linked to the Pakistan army, and other like-minded terrorist groups.