

Afghan peace plan and India

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In news : Recently, Russia stated that India can eventually join Afghan peace plan

What is Afghan peace plan/process?

It comprises proposals and negotiations in a bid to end the ongoing war in Afghanistan (between Taliban and the government).

Countries involved in the peace process are:

As per the media reports, Russia, China, US, India, Pakistan and Iran are at the table of the Afghanistan peace process

Key updates

- Russia said that India plays a “very important role” in Afghanistan, and its “eventual deeper involvement” in dedicated dialogue formats is “natural”.
- Russia’s statement pointed out that India can “eventually” join, which Delhi views as a sort of delaying the inevitable. Washington recognised the urgency of including India at the table
- **Prior to Russia, USA had suggested to include India on the table**

USA’s draft peace Plan

It sets forth principles for governance, security, and rule of law and presents options for power sharing that could help the two sides reach a political settlement that ends the war

Following are the some of the important elements of the plan:

- **Cease-fire:** The new peace plan offers a chance for a cease-fire, it offers a chance to bring the Taliban from the battlefield to the talks table to discuss thorny

issues of religion and its role in (the state),” without giving them all the power

- **Peace government:** The plan proposes the establishment of a “peace government” that would oversee the writing of a new constitution and elections held immediately afterward
- **Protection of Islamic values:** The plan also promises to protect Islamic values and while an independent judiciary would have the ultimate authority, the High Council for Islamic Jurisprudence would have an advisory role.
 - **US troops to stay:** Joe Biden’s peace plan has kept open the possibility that the 2500-odd US troops, currently deployed in Afghanistan, might stay on for a while. Under the agreement with the Taliban, the US had promised to withdraw all troops by May 1 this year.
- **Immediate agreement to reduce violence:** US is pressing the Taliban to accept an immediate agreement to reduce violence for 90 days that will provide the space for the peace initiative
 - **Inclusive interim government:** The plan says that the US is not “dictating terms” to the Afghan parties, but facilitating the movement towards an inclusive interim government, an agreement on the “foundational principles” for a new political order, and a “permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”
 - **Role of Turkey:** US is asking Turkey to convene a meeting of the government in Kabul and the Taliban to finalise a peace settlement.

Role of UN & Unified approach: US is asking the United Nations to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers from China,

Russia, Pakistan, Iran, India and the United States to develop a “unified approach” to peace in Afghanistan

India and Afghanistan

- India and Afghanistan have been historical neighbours, and share cultural ties.
- India was the only South Asian country to recognize the Soviet-backed Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in the 1980s, though relations were diminished during the 1990s Afghan civil war and the Taliban government.
- Following the withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces from Afghanistan in 1989, India continued to support Najibullah’s government with humanitarian aid.

India’s role in Peace plan

- As a good neighbor of Afghanistan, India will take a strong interest in the ambitious new US framework.
- New Delhi, for long on the sidelines, reached out to all key players in Afghanistan and other countries to make its way to the negotiating table
- As a part of the Peace Plan, New Delhi hopes to have a role in setting the terms especially concerning terrorism, violence, women’s rights and democratic values.
- India’s refrain has been that it wants an Afghan-led, Afghan-controlled and Afghan-owned process but ground realities have been such that other players have dictated terms.
- India’s diplomatic spadework included talks during the visits to India by former Afghan vice president Abdul Rashid Dostum in September last year; and by former Afghanistan Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah (now chair of High Peace Council) and Afghan leader Ata Mohammad Noor in October.