

EXPERTS RAISE CONCERNS FOR INDIA OVER U.S.-TALIBAN AGREEMENT

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

New Delhi has signalled its acceptance of the U.S.-Taliban and U.S.-Afghanistan peace agreements in Doha and Kabul that aim to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan, by sending envoys to witness them.

The two agreements set out a course for the next 14 months, including the pull-out of U.S. troops, the denial of space to foreign terrorist groups and any violence against the U.S. and allies, and intra-Afghan dialogue.

However, after a closer look at the texts of the two agreements distributed to news agencies, named the "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban, and the United States of America", and the "Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan", diplomatic and security experts say the impact on India may be a cause for worry for the government.

Terms still nebulous

"The reduction in violence is a much-needed respite for Afghans," said Amar Sinha, National Security Advisory Board member and former Ambassador to Afghanistan.

However, Mr. Sinha added that "all Taliban demands have been front-loaded, while the actual terms of the 'peace deal' are yet to be negotiated between the Taliban and the Afghan side, facilitated by the U.S. So, much of the heavy lifting remains."

More critical of the agreement, Anand Arni, former Special Secretary in the Research & Analysis Wing, who worked closely on Indian policy in Afghanistan, said it was "entirely one-sided". "Taliban cannot deliver on the assurances it has given, and yet the U.S. has handed over Afghanistan to them. There is no reference to the Constitution, rule of law, democracy and elections," he said.

The salient points of concern are:

Does the term "U.S. and Allies" include India?

In the Doha agreement, the Taliban has guaranteed "enforcement mechanisms that will prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies". However, it is unclear whether India, which is not a U.S. ally, is included in this definition, and whether Pakistan-backed groups that threaten India, would still operate in Afghanistan. The Kabul declaration with the Ghani government more specifically commits to stopping "any international terrorist groups or individuals, including al-Qa'ida and ISIS-K, from using Afghan soil to threaten the security of the United States, its allies and other countries."

Impact of prisoner release and lifting sanctions

Officials worry most about the “mainstreaming of the Haqqani network”, which Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists reportedly fight alongside and were responsible for the 2008 bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul. According to the agreements, 5,000 Taliban prisoners will be released by March 10, 2020, the first day of intra-Afghan negotiations, and the remainder in another three months. Officials also point out that the U.S. has committed to taking Taliban leaders off the UN Security Council’s sanctions list by May 29, 2020, which could considerably bring down the number of terrorists Pakistan is accused of harbouring, according to the FATF greylist conditions. This might benefit Pakistan during the June 2020 FATF Plenary, when it faces a blacklist for not complying.

Handing powers to Taliban

In the Doha agreement, the U.S. has committed to clearing five bases and bringing troop levels down to 8,600 in four and a half months, and even appears to submit to the possibility of a Taliban-led government, by extracting promises that the Taliban will not provide “visas, passports, travel documents or asylum” to those threatening the U.S. and its allies. This appears to sideline the “Intra-Afghan” dialogue, and India’s support for the election process for leadership in Afghanistan. In the last section of the agreement, the U.S. and Taliban seek “positive relations with each other and expect that the relations between the United States and the new post-settlement Afghan Islamic government as determined by the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations will be positive”.

Afghan govt. in peril?

This indicates that the Ghani government, which India has recognised as winner of the 2019 election, will only serve for an interim period. This also raises a big question mark on the future of Afghanistan’s government, and whether it will remain a democracy. “The bottomline is that India cannot look at the agreements or the route to Kabul via Washington’s view,” said Mr. Arni.

Above all, experts warned the Afghanistan-Pakistan dialogue facilitated by the U.S. on cross-border terrorism and mechanisms must not cut India out of the region’s security architecture.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or [Subscribe to The Hindu](#).

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com