

WITH MODI, GHANI RAISES ISSUES OF IS, PAK. TERRORISTS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Afghanistan

Common concerns:Narendra Modi with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in New Delhi on Wednesday.R.V. Moorthy

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday discussed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi the growing presence of the IS (Da'esh) in Afghanistan, and the continuing influx of terrorists from Pakistan, during his day-long visit to Delhi, government sources said.

Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has announced that Kabul has deported an Indian national who had travelled to Afghanistan in an attempt to join the Islamic State.

According to a statement from the NIA, the Afghan government deported Nashidul Hamzafar, 26, who had illegally entered the country to join the Islamic State in 2017. He had reportedly travelled from India to Afghanistan via Muscat, Oman and then through Iran, and was detained by the Afghan security forces shortly after.

Talks with Taliban

At a reception hosted by think tank India Forum later, Mr. Ghani said it was necessary to separate such external elements from the Taliban, which, he said, must be engaged in a peace process.

"Taliban are part of our society. Foreigners, members of Da'esh, these international networks are different. So we need to devise a way to separate what is internal to what is regional and global," he said, making a strong pitch for talks with the Taliban, something India had traditionally opposed.

An official said New Delhi would back the Afghan government on its decision to engage the Taliban in talks that are "Afghan-owned, Afghan-led." Mr. Ghani said the talks had the support of the Afghan people, which was seen during the Id ceasefire in June this year, which the Taliban joined, a week after attacks had seen 1,000 people die.

"During the ceasefire, over 30,000 Taliban came to the cities. Were they greeted with hatred? Were they lynched? Were they shot at? No. You saw scenes of all Afghans join in the celebrations and accepting each other. The most important thing we learned from the ceasefire is that Afghan people as a nation are willing to forego the past in order to gain the future," President Ghani said.

Peace with the Taliban was important so that security forces could concentrate on fighting other terrorist groups like the Islamic State, he said.

Siege of Ghazni

During his meeting with Mr. Modi, President Ghani made a special mention of the siege of Ghazni city in August where a sizeable number of foreign fighters had fought alongside the Taliban. "He said at least 100 attackers of Ghazni came from Pakistan and they were identified as Pakistani nationals," said the government source.

(With inputs from

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