

# Implications of U.S.'s Withdrawal from Afghanistan

#### What is the issue?

 $n\n$ 

\n

• America is in the process of quitting Afghanistan as its soldiers are too expensive to send abroad.

\n

• The SAARC countries, India and Pakistan especially, are required to assess the situation and respond appropriately.

 $n\$ 

### What does the withdrawal mean for the countries?

 $n\n$ 

۱n

• Pakistan is scared of what will happen if America really quits and Afghanistan returns to its heroin-sustained warlordism.

\n

• The Afghan Taliban are winning on a daily basis and control half of the country.

۱'n

- They even eye the 250,000-strong Afghan army as future Taliban.
- India has presence in Afghanistan after the construction of the Chabahar Port in Iran and the highway that links it to Kabul.
- China is the next economic presence in Afghanistan after India.
- Turkey is also eying an opportunity to play its role to safeguard the interests of Afghanistan's Turkmen-Turkic community.
- Three South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) members Afghanistan, Pakistan, India could have cooperated.
- $\bullet$  But the countries are only moving to end up in a conflict.  $\ensuremath{^{\backslash n}}$

#### What is Pakistan's stance?

 $n\n$ 

\n

- When the Taliban ruled in Afghanistan, Pakistan's own jihadi underground in the madrasa-dominated regions was vulnerable to their influence.
- Rebellious Pakistani Taliban, safely located in northwestern Afghanistan, has hurt Pakistan as no one else in Afghanistan.
- In 2014, six of its gunmen attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar, killing more than 100 children.
- This changed the thinking of the Pakistan army.
- Pakistan no longer viewed Afghanistan as its "strategic depth" against India as it posed challenges to it in return.

 $n\n$ 

## How does Afghanistan's future look?

 $n\$ 

\n

• The Taliban have warriors in their hordes who have come from the Middle East and Central Asia.

\n

- Also, there are ISIS-Daesh and Al Qaeda still operational in Afghanistan, threatening all the three SAARC members.
- ullet It is true that most Afghans will accept the return of the Taliban.
- $\bullet$  They would welcome the destruction of the liberal order now being held up by an America-overseen constitution and American money.  $\$
- But they would like to leave the country, if they could, before a Taliban takeover.

\n

- $\bullet$  This is because Afghanistan is already on the brink of a food and water crisis.  $\ensuremath{\backslash} n$
- The "small landlocked country recovering from decades of war" is among the water-stressed nations and whose people lack sufficient dietary diversity.

\n

- The Ashraf Ghani government will not survive after the American-funded Afghan army disintegrates and joins up with the Taliban.
- $\bullet$  That's why the Taliban are refusing to even recognise the Kabul government.  $\ensuremath{\backslash} n$
- For them, the Afghan army is the low-hanging fruit that will enlarge their capacity to challenge both Pakistan and India.

 $n\n$ 



 $n\n$ 

## What lies ahead?

 $n\n$ 

۱'n

- $\bullet$  It is difficult to diagnose the state of the mind of decision-makers in Pakistan.  $\ensuremath{\backslash} n$
- But their decision to turn to India and offer talks and trade points to the possibility of the kind of normalisation needed for handling the crisis in Afghanistan.

\n

• A dead SAARC must now be revived to decide what its three members are going to do after the Americans leave Afghanistan.

 $n\n$ 

 $n\n$ 

**Source: Indian Express** 

\n

