

U.S.-Taliban agreement

Why in News?

A deal has been signed between the United States of America (USA) and the Taliban insurgents in Doha.

What is this deal about?

- This deal could pave the way toward a full withdrawal of foreign soldiers from Afghanistan over the next 14 months.
- This will also represent a step towards ending the 18-year-war there.
- In October 2001, the U.S. went into Afghanistan after the 9/11 terror attacks with the goals of defeating terrorists and stabilising Afghanistan.
- Almost 19 years later, the U.S. now seeks to exit Afghanistan with assurances from the Taliban that,
 - 1. They will not allow Afghan soil to be used by transnational terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and
 - 2. They would engage the Afghan government directly to find a lasting solution to the civil war.
- For U.S, the deal represents a chance to make good on his promise to bring U.S. troops home.

What did the war cost?

- For U.S., the Afghan war is estimated to have cost \$2-trillion, with more than 3,500 American and coalition soldiers killed.
- Afghanistan lost the lives of many civilians and soldiers.
- After all these, the Taliban is at its strongest moment since the U.S. launched the war.
- The insurgents control or contest the government control in half of the country, mainly in its hinterlands.

What is the issue with this deal?

- The war had entered into a tie long ago and the U.S. failed to turn it around despite U.S. Presidents having sent additional troops.
- Faced with no other way, the U.S. just wants to leave Afghanistan. But the problem is with **the way it is getting out**.
- ullet The fundamental issue with this deal is that it deliberately ${f excluded}$ the

Afghan government because the insurgents don't see the government as legitimate rulers.

• By giving in to the Taliban's demand, the U.S. has practically called into question the legitimacy of the government it backs.

What were the concessions made in the agreement?

- The Taliban was not pressed enough to declare a ceasefire.
- Both the sides settled for a 7-day "reduction of violence" period before signing the deal.
- The U.S. has committed to pull out its troops in a phased manner in return for the above-mentioned two assurances from the Taliban.
- But the Taliban has not made any promises on whether it would respect civil liberties or accept the Afghan Constitution.
- The Taliban got what it wanted i.e. the withdrawal of foreign troops without making any major concession.

What would be the impact?

- Security experts have called the deal a foreign policy gamble that would give the Taliban international legitimacy.
- The U.S. withdrawal will weaken the Kabul government, altering the balance of power both on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.
- A weakened government will have to talk with a resurgent Taliban.
- The U.S. in a bid to exit the war has practically abandoned the Kabul government and millions of Afghans who do not support the Taliban's violent, tribal Islamism, to the mercy of insurgents.

Source: The Hindu

