Enhancing India’s Role in Afghanistan

Why is the issue?

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India must expand its development role in Afghanistan further to enhance its security profile.

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What are the geo-political developments?

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- India recently hosted both U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani for separate bilateral meets.
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- Also, USA & Afghanistan for the first time have been explicit in censoring Pakistan for its soft approach towards terrorism.
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- USA’s new South Asia policy has proposed to increase its military footprint in Afghanistan.
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- Contrary to the past, the policy has underscored India’s centrality in the ‘Af-Pak’ theatre.
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- These developments present an opportunity for a formidable tri-lateral alliance in the subcontinent between Washington, Kabul & New Delhi.
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What has been Kabul’s response?

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- Kabul has viewed these developments positively – thereby making a clear pro-India shift as opposed to Pakistan.
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- Mr.Ghani even suggested that Afghanistan would restrict Pakistan's access to Central Asia if it is not given access to India.

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- Indo-Afghan air corridor is also seen as an effective response to circumvent Pakistan’s obstructionism.
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- Notably, India was even promptly briefed on the in the sixth Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting.
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- The meet was between Afghanistan, U.S., China & Pakistan for reviving peace talks with the Taliban.
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What has been India’s role currently?

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- In recent years, India has taken a high-profile role in Afghanistan.
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- It is one of the biggest donors to Afghanistan, having committed $3.1 billion since 2001.
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- Recently, it announced that it will be working on 116 new development projects over the next 30 areas.
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- India also envisions enhancing the capacity of the Afghan state and its security forces to fight their own battles more effectively.
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- This is in line with the requirements of the Afghan government as well as the international community.
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- Also, the current conducive conditions have demanded an increase in Indian activities – an opportunity that needs to be effectively capitalised.
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Source: The Hindu

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