US exits from Afghanistan

Why in news?

Recently US has announced withdrawal of its troops in the long-running war in Afghanistan.

How does this impact Afghanistan?

- According to the Council of Foreign Relations, the Taliban are stronger now than at any point since 2001, when US forces invaded Afghanistan.
- Of the Afghanistan's 325 districts, Taliban controls 76 or 19%, government forces have 127 or 32% and the remaining area is contested.
- The Afghan President said that his government respects the US decision and will work with US partners to ensure a smooth transition.
- The investment made in the last 15 years for a democratic Afghanistan will go in vain and there is deep apprehension of returning to the 1990s.
- But there is also a view that the Taliban too have changed over 25 years and would not want to alienate the international community as they did when they ruled Afghanistan during 1996-01.

How it will impact Pakistan?

- The Taliban is a creation of the Pakistani security establishment and when U.S. invaded Afghanistan, they moved to safe havens in Pakistan territory.
- The Taliban High Council operates from Quetta in Balochistan and it was Pakistan that persuaded the Taliban to do a deal with the U.S.
- India had excellent relations with the Afghanistan governments and Taliban capture of Afghanistan would finally bring an end to India friendly government in Kabul.
- But US withdrawal also means Pakistan will need to shoulder the entire burden of the chaos which includes the flow of refugees into Pakistan.
- The Taliban are not a monolith and have shown streaks of independence from Pakistan.
- So Pakistan has to guard against instability in Afghanistan from spilling over the border.

How it will impact India?

- India would be nervous about the US withdrawal and it was a reluctant supporter of the intra-Afghan talks between the Taliban and Afghan government.
- With the new administration in U.S., India was hopeful of a US reset which now seems to have no future.
- Moreover India-focused militants such as Laskhar- e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed can relocate in large numbers to Afghanistan.

How does it impact Russia, China & Iran?

- China would have much to lose from instability in Afghanistan as this could have an impact on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.
- A Taliban regime in Afghanistan might end up stirring unrest in the Xinjiang Autonomous region, home to the Uighur minority.
- In recent years, Russia has taken on the role of peacemaker in Afghanistan and said that they did not support the establishing a Islamic Emirate, leaving the Taliban angry.
- Russia's growing links with Pakistan could translate into a post-US role for Moscow in Afghanistan.
- Iran shares borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan and can face active security threats from both the countries.
- But Iran, with links to the Hazaras in Afghanistan, has of late played all sides.
- Recently, it has even hosted a Taliban delegation at Tehran.

Source: The Indian Express

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