

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q7(b)

What steps has India taken to regain its foothold in Afghanistan since the Taliban has taken over the country in August 2021?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy

Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy: India's position on the recent crisis in Afghanistan, Iraq and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; vision of a new world order.

Core demand of the question

- Examine how India can retain a foothold in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of August 2021
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

August 2021 ended India's Republic-era development partnership as it stood.

Foothold now is aid, a technical presence, and counter-terror diplomacy.

Chabahar remains the land-sea work-around to Pakistan.

Recognition of the Taliban is still withheld.

Success is measured by access and by security, not by a return to 2019 politics.

Introduction

The Taliban entered Kabul in August 2021 as US and allied forces left. India's embassy closed. Foothold now means humanitarian access, political contact without full legal recognition, connectivity options, and limits on anti-India terrorism. It does not mean the pre-2021 development-and-democracy partnership restored as it was.

Body

What was lost

- India had built the Afghan parliament building, the **Salma Dam**, power lines, and training for civilians and some security personnel under the Republic.
- Direct air and political access collapsed. Pakistan's geography again sat across the land route.

What foothold can still mean

- Humanitarian food, medicine, and earthquake or winter aid keep an Indian name among Afghans and a channel to de facto authorities.
- A **technical mission** in Kabul, opened after 2021, is a thin diplomatic presence short of ambassadorial recognition of the Taliban government.
- Intelligence and regional tables with Russia, Iran, and Central Asian States aim at **ISKP** and at any use of Afghan soil against India.
- **Chabahar** and the INSTC idea remain a way to reach Afghanistan and Central Asia without Pakistan, if Iran sanctions and Afghan security allow cargo.

Constraints

- The Taliban's ideology, treatment of women, and intra-Afghan war limit any values partnership.
- Pakistan's influence is real though not total. China talks economic access. India is not first in either queue.
- Full recognition would clash with India's own line on terrorism and with Western sanctions maps. Non-recognition without contact would mean zero foothold.

Policy mix

- **Pragmatism:** talk to the authority that holds Kabul. Culture and past investment: stay on the Afghan people's side with aid.
- Do not outsource the file only to the Quad or only to Russia. It is a regional security file first.

Flow diagram

Taliban Aug 2021 -> Republic projects paused
Republic projects paused -> Humanitarian technical mission
Humanitarian technical mission -> Limited foothold
Chabahar regional talks -> Limited foothold

Conclusion

India retains a foothold after August 2021 through aid, a limited mission, regional security talks, and the **Chabahar** option. It cannot restore the Republic-era political project. The test is whether Afghan soil is used against India and whether a civilian channel survives.

Facts & figures

15 August 2021

Taliban takeover of Kabul as the US-led military presence ended.

Salma Dam

Indian-built hydroelectric and irrigation project in Herat, a symbol of pre-2021 civilian investment.

Technical mission

Limited Indian staff presence in Kabul after 2021 without full recognition of the Taliban cabinet.

Chabahar

Iranian port developed with Indian participation as a route toward Afghanistan and Central Asia.

ISKP

Islamic State Khorasan Province, a militant threat that also concerns regional capitals after 2021.