



## TWO BAD OPTIONS

[sanskritiias.com/current-affairs/two-bad-option](https://sanskritiias.com/current-affairs/two-bad-option)

### **(GS 2:Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests)**

#### **Context:**

- President Joe Biden's push for an interim unity government in Afghanistan is a testament to his administration's grim assessment of the situation in the war-torn country.
- In a letter to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has proposed a senior-level meeting between the government and the Taliban in Turkey.
- This multilateral conference of envoys from the U.S., Russia, China, Iran, India and Pakistan will discuss a lasting Afghan solution.

#### **U.S. Afghan policy:**

- The peace push comes at a time when the Biden administration is reviewing the U.S.'s Afghan strategy.
- According to the February 2020 agreement signed between the Trump administration and the Taliban, the U.S. is scheduled to withdraw its troops by May 1.
- The Taliban have warned they would step up fighting targeting the coalition troops should the U.S. fail to pull out by then.
- The Biden administration is understandably under pressure.
- There appears to be a consensus in Washington that there is no military solution to the crisis.
- The U.S. wants to get out of the longest war in its history.
- But as S. Secretary of State Mr. Blinken says in the letter, the U.S. worries that if its troops are out without a peace mechanism.
- The Taliban, which already controls much of the country's hinterlands, could make "rapid territorial gains".

### **Proposed ‘inclusive’ government:**

- The U.S. seeks to stop this happening by proposing an interim “inclusive” government between the warring parties.
- Further, both sides should hold talks on the future constitutional and governance framework.
- Regional powers, including India and Pakistan, could play a decisive role in this transition as part of a UN-mandated multiparty peace process.

### **Exclusive Trump policy:**

- This approach is more inclusive approach than what the Trump administration did.
- Under Mr. Trump, the U.S. held direct talks with the Taliban excluding the Afghan government.
- And after reaching a deal, the U.S. put pressure on the Afghan government to release prisoners, but failed to get any concessions from the insurgents on reducing violence.
- Even when Afghan government representatives and the Taliban were holding talks in Doha, Qatar, Afghanistan continued to witness violence.

### **The dilemma:**

- The Biden administration does not seem to have faith in the Doha talks, which, even after months, failed to achieve any breakthrough.
- After 20 years of war, the Afghan leadership does not have any good options to end the conflict.
- If the Biden administration decides to stick to the Taliban deal and pull back troops, there is no guarantee that the intra-Afghan talks would hold.
- The Taliban would rather try to take over the whole country using force.
- If the government accepts Mr. Biden’s proposal, Afghanistan’s elected leaders will have to share power with the Taliban and agree to amending the Constitution, which means some of the country’s hard-won liberties could be sacrificed.
- Thus, it is a choice between two bad options.