

# THE UNITED STATES AND THE TALIBAN: CHALLENGES FOR EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

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The current political and security situation in Afghanistan has forced all involved to realize that the war cannot be won through military engagement. It will only come to an end if political negotiations take place between the United States and the Taliban. For negotiations to succeed, mistrust, the prolongation of the war, and unrealistic expectations and demands must first be addressed. Furthermore, efforts should be made to withstand pressure from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Once these obstacles are removed, a multi-step approach is needed to move toward the negotiation process. The aim of negotiations should be to reach a comprehensive peace settlement that addresses the grievances of all parties and establishes a lasting peace.

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## INTRODUCTION

The current war, the political upheaval, and the increase and lethality of violence have complicated the political and security state of affairs in Afghanistan since 2001. Even though the United States has scaled up its military presence, and both the United States and the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) have used various tactics in their attempts to defeat the Taliban and establish peace, security, and the rule of law, the situation continues to deteriorate. Besides infiltrating the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, the Taliban have used direct attacks and suicide bombs to inflict maximum damage on Afghan and foreign troops. Despite notable gains made by the Taliban, many realize that under current circumstances, the war in Afghanistan cannot be won by military means.

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