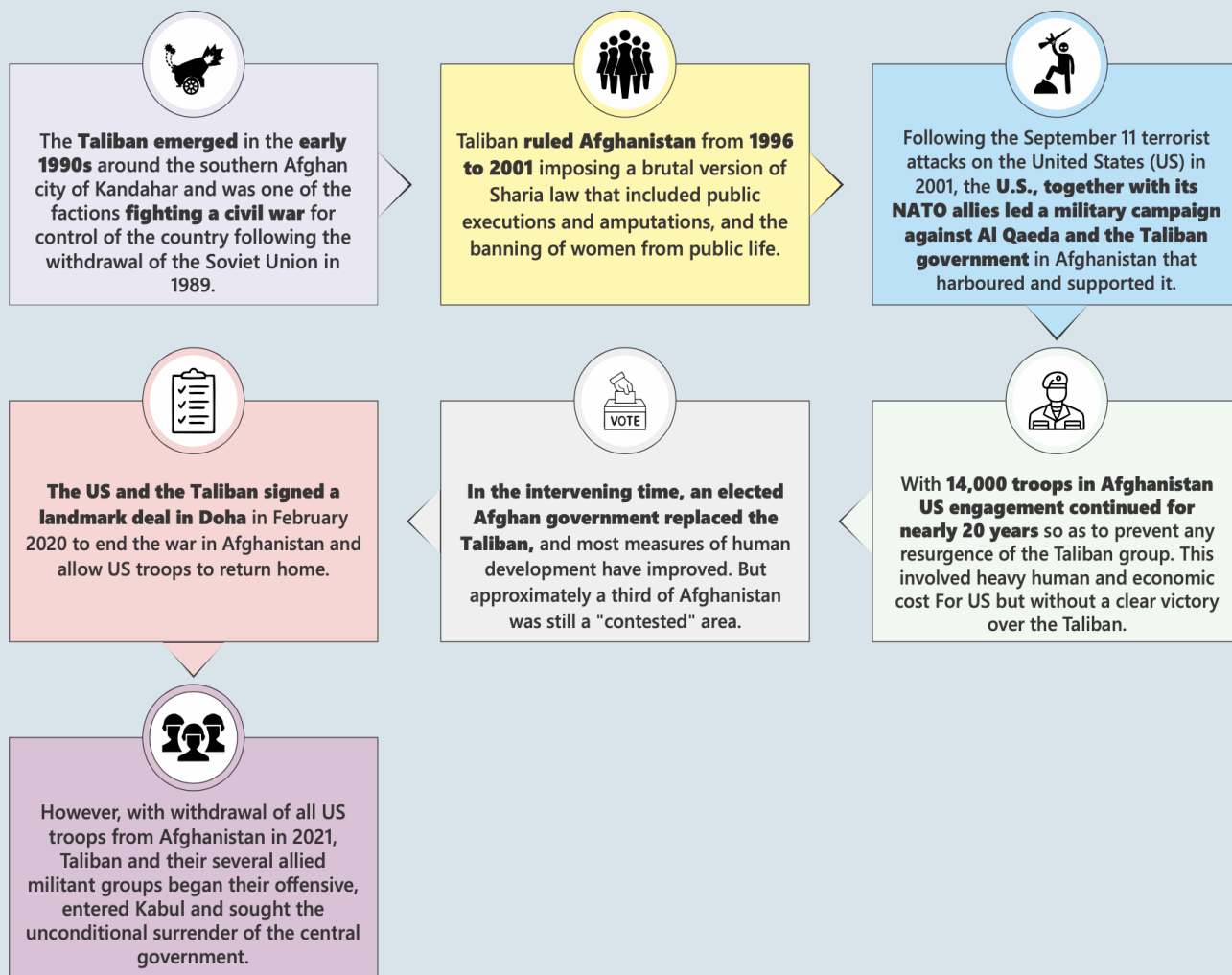


- The present engagement is therefore **seen as change in India's approach with respect to Taliban.**
- The **government has however clarified** that the ongoing visit did not amount to granting diplomatic recognition to the Taliban regime in Kabul.

BACKGROUND OF AFGHAN-TALIBAN ISSUE: THE STORY SO FAR



Why should India engage with Taliban?

- **Rising International Engagements:** India has so far focused on the isolating Taliban. However, beyond a point, this option will yield diminishing returns, as many other countries are now starting to engage the Taliban and India is an important stakeholder in Afghanistan.
- **Declining Influence of Pakistan:** Back in the 1990s, apart from security assistance, Pakistan was also able to help the Taliban financially and economically. While Pakistan remains a pivotal player even today, its influence and control over the Taliban are circumscribed by its own economic, diplomatic, and security challenges.
 - The Pakistani Taliban (TTP)'s terrorist activities in Pakistan and disagreements between the Kabul and Pakistan, over Durand Line (disputed border) are among the factors responsible.
 - A view that has gained ground in the Indian establishment is that it is time to **de-hyphenate Pakistan from the Taliban** especially in this scenario.
- **National Security:** Afghanistan in the past, provided space to terror groups like al Qaeda and ISIS. Taliban also has ties with the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. An engagement with the Taliban would give an **opportunity to convey Indian concerns directly** and encourage those elements within the group who wish to open up its diplomatic choices.