



Organization for Policy Research & Development Studies (DROPS)

Afghan Peace Talks

July 2019

DROPS ANALYSIS

Can Trump win the Afghan War peacefully?

Aziz Koshan, Senior Researcher at DROPS

In the month of July two major events took place in regards to the Afghanistan “peace process,” namely the long awaited “intra-Afghan peace talks” in Qatar and the state visit by the Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan to the United States.

At the same time writing analysis about the mentioned issue has its own limitations such as the lack of proper access to information. The only source for the flow of information from behind the closed doors is the official twitter account of Zalmay Khalilzad the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation and the twitter account of Suhail Shaheen the spokesperson for the political office of Taliban in Doha. The mentioned sources for the flow of information only provides very limited information, details of these talks always remains secret both from the media and analysts. All the analysis and predictions about the Afghan “peace-process” is totally based on assumptions and unrealistic judgments.

Based on the peace [framework](#) which is consisting of four components namely a. assurances from Taliban to counter international terrorism, b. the U.S. troops withdrawal from Afghanistan, c. intra-Afghan negotiations, and d. peace roadmap which includes . The intra-Afghan talks which took place in Doha falls under the third component of this framework which is the intra-Afghan negotiations. Since the beginning of the peace talks between the U.S. and Taliban, experts and Afghans [warned](#) about the consequences of a

“hurried U.S. troops withdrawal” from Afghanistan. After each and every development with regards to the “peace-process,” Zalmay Khalilzad always assures that “[nothing is agreed until everything is agreed](#).” This means all the four components of the peace framework moves ahead simultaneously and will be “agreed” all together. But in reality the seven rounds of the talks have been laser-focused on the first two components namely the assurances of Taliban to counter international terrorism and the U.S troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. The other two components have been neglected by the negotiating teams in Doha.

The two-day intra-Afghan talks in Doha between the Afghan delegates the Taliban representatives were an effort to off-load the [criticism](#) directed towards the U.S.-Taliban talks. But the Taliban has always been [reluctant](#) to begin the intra-Afghan talks, until they have reached an agreement with the U.S.

With the involvement of Germany and Qatar, the two-day intra Afghan peace talk was held in Doha on 7-8 July between the Afghan delegates comprised of government officials, civil society activists and politicians while all of them “[participate in their own capacities](#)” and Taliban representatives.

Towards the end of the two-day talks they issued a [resolution](#) comprised of 8 articles, where all the participants from all sides agreed to bring civilian causality to zero; to release old aged and ill prisoners of war; to support the ongoing peace talks in Doha; to safeguard civilians from harm; to guarantee women’s rights in negotiations; to prohibit using educational and cultural centers during the battle; and to support the Moscow resolution.

The Afghan delegates described the intra-Afghan talks as “[ice-breaking exercise](#),” but Shaharзад Akbar the then deputy head of the National Security Council wrote an [article](#) where she described Taliban’s intension from peace talk is to reestablish their theocratic regime, and there has been very less change in their mindset.

The second event was the state visit on 21 July by the Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in the U.S where [assured](#) President Trump that “he will meet the Taliban to advance the Afghan Peace Process.” At the same time while addressing in a public talk at the United States Institute of Peace he [said](#) “for the first time in the 18-year-old Afghan conflict, Pakistan and the United States are working together to advance peace efforts in the neighboring country.”

In return for this good intension to advance the Afghan peace talks, Khan successfully gathered Trump’s [offer](#) to mediate in the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan which persists between the two countries since 1947. While President Trump [promised](#) Mr. Khan that the dried up military aid will flow again to Pakistan, depending on what both countries achieve concerning the Afghan Peace.

But still the outcome of Mr. Khan’s promise to “advance the Afghan Peace process,” is difficult to track, but the harsh comment made by Mr. Trump in this meeting was felt by every Afghan where he [said](#) “I have plans on Afghanistan that if I wanted to win that war, Afghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth. It would be gone. It would be over in -- literally in ten days. And I don’t want to do -- I don’t want to go that route.”

President Ghani protested and said in an official [statement](#) that “this matter will not go down without a notice and will keep the Afghan people posted on this issue.” Former President Hamid Karzai went much further and [said](#) The U.S. and Pakistan has made “secret deals” while undermining the Afghan sovereignty.

Studies by Afghan/Foreign Think-Tanks and Organizations

Interview: U.S. Envoy Backs Afghan Presidential Election If No Peace Deal

The U.S. peace envoy seeking to negotiate an end to the nearly 18-year war in Afghanistan said peace negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban will determine whether the presidential election slated for September 28 is held.

In an interview with RFE/RL in the Afghan capital on July 31, Zalmay Khalilzad said the vote "depends on the outcome of the negotiations among the Afghans."

"We support any outcome that is reached," said Khalilzad, a veteran diplomat and a former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan. "But until that outcome is reached, we support [holding] the election."

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The Sun Cannot be Hidden by Two fingers: Illicit Drugs and the Discussions on a Political Settlement in Afghanistan

An issue largely ignored in the current debates on peace and reconciliation is that of illegal drugs production. Drawing on the authors long term research in Afghanistan the paper analyses the role that illicit drugs and the monies they generate play in the conflict. It should not be forgotten that illicit drugs production and trade is currently the largest single economic sector in Afghanistan. Opium poppy is the country's most valuable cash crop worth US\$863 million⁴ and employs more people than any other industry in Afghanistan, over 500,000 Full Time Equivalent. The crop occupied an estimated 263,000 hectares of land in 2018; three times more land than it did in 2000 when the Taliban imposed an outright ban.

[Access full report here...](#)

A Foot Forward for Peace in Afghanistan?

By Scott Smith

Taliban and Afghan representatives agreed early this week to a basic, albeit non-binding, roadmap for intra-Afghan negotiations aimed at ending the 18-year war. Since the U.S. resumed direct talks with the Taliban last September, the two sides have focused on the withdrawal of foreign forces and the steps the Taliban will take against terrorists on Afghan soil. Meanwhile, intra-Afghan talks on a political roadmap have yet to get off the ground. After months of seeming stasis, this week's Doha meeting has injected renewed hope. USIP's Scott Smith looks at what happened this week, what it means for Afghan women, and the next steps in the peace process.

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Taliban Talks and Violence Loom Over Afghan Presidential Elections

By Scott Worden USIP Staff

Campaign season for Afghanistan's twice-delayed presidential elections opened in grisly fashion on Sunday. An insurgent attack on the Kabul office of President Ashraf Ghani's top running mate, Amrullah Saleh, killed more than 20 and wounded at least 50. As the attack demonstrates, security will be a top concern during the elections. But, the ongoing U.S.-Taliban talks and nascent intra-Afghan negotiations further complicate matters. And on top of all that, Afghanistan's post-2001 elections have been characterized by deep challenges, many of which remain unaddressed with little time to fix. USIP's Scott Worden surveys the scene two months ahead of the vote.

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Reconnecting Afghanistan: Lessons from Cross-border Engagement

By Dr. Gareth Price & Hameed Hakimi

The sustainability of Afghanistan's economy will be predicated on the degree to which it is integrated with its neighbors. The notion that Afghanistan can be a source of licit benefits for its neighbors is far from mainstream opinion. And yet, as this paper documents, there are examples where it is exactly that.

[Access full report here...](#)

Intensifying Violence Dulls Afghans' Hopes for Peace

By Burhan Osman; Staff of International Crisis Group

I travelled the war-torn districts of rural Afghanistan in June, searching for a lost feeling. I had visited the same rural areas a year earlier during the brief ceasefire that stretched through three magical days of June 2018. It was the first nation-wide ceasefire in the two decades since the U.S. invasion. Taliban fighters hugged their enemies, joining members of the Afghan security forces in celebrations of the Eid al-Fitr holiday. People of all ages flooded public squares and waved flags of the two warring sides. Youth danced in the bazaars to the sound of drums. The war seemed to be ending.

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OPINION PIECES & COMMENTARIES

Afghanistan as A 'Graveyard of Peace': Wounding The Peace Talks?

By Dr. Bawa Singh

Notwithstanding, the several peacebuilding, peacemaking initiatives along with peacekeeping, peace in Afghanistan still has been delusional even today. On the one hand, peace talk is going on and on the other, terror attacks are also taking place even with more frequency and intensity. In this sense, Afghanistan can be characterized as the 'Arc of Turbulence,' wherein the terror attacks, killings/wounding of civilians have been taking place regularly along with the peace initiatives.

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Afghanistan's Bloody Peace Process

By Ezzatullah Mehrdad

Rohullah Nabizada, a 30-year old police officer and father of two, had returned to his duty in the provincial capital of Ghazni with the hope that peace talks between the United States and the Taliban would lead to the reduction of violence.

His hope was dashed by an explosive-laden Humvee military vehicle on May 22 this year. Nabizada became the first member of his family to lose his life to the ruthless war, already into its 18th year. Like thousands of others, Nabizada was sent back home to his mother in a wooden box.

Each morning, when the sunlight first hits

صلح، انتخابات، آشفته‌گی و سردرگمی

پیمان

یک هفته از کارزارهای انتخاباتی گذشته است. هنوز این کارزارها با شور و هیجان واقعی‌اش فاصله زیادی دارد. کمپین‌ها به شهرهای بزرگ محدود شده و چهار تا پنج تیم انتخاباتی آن‌هم به گونه‌ی محدود حضورشان را به نمایش گذاشتند.

حمله مسلحانه به دفتر امرالله صالح، ترس در میان ستادهای انتخاباتی را افزایش داده است. از ستادهای انتخاباتی خبر می‌رسد که حضور دسته‌جمعی مردم بی‌نهایت کم‌رنگ است و شماری از نامزدان هنوز به تحریم انتخابات فکر می‌کنند، شمار دیگر به برگزاری انتخابات بی‌باور هستند.

[بیشتر بخوانید...](#)

Challenges and Opportunities of Peace Process in Afghanistan

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Naturally, every social or political phenomenon has opportunities and challenges but the opportunities often overcome the challenges due to multiple reasons and factors. Unfortunately, this rule is reversely true in Afghanistan, especially in case of peace issues. For example, few years ago the condition of Syria and Iraq was worse than Afghanistan but now it is not comparable to the increasing crisis in Afghanistan. It seemed that the new peace process would open a new window for peace in Afghanistan but according to new reports and evidence it is more likely to face challenge or stalemate. Though the US

remote Suka village in the Malistan district of Ghazni province, Khadija, Nabizada's mother, cannot wash her face without crying. Her son is buried right in front of their house, on the top of a hill dedicated to fallen soldiers. The sorrow goes deep and she falls apart regularly.

[Read more...](#)

Taliban vows future Afghanistan won't be terrorists' hotbed

By Deb Riechmann and Kathy Gannon

America's longest war has come full circle. The United States began bombing Afghanistan after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to root out al-Qaida fighters harbored by the Taliban. Now, more than 18 years later, preventing Afghanistan from being a launching pad for more attacks on America is at the heart of ongoing U.S. talks with the Taliban.

President Donald Trump's envoy at the negotiating table says he's satisfied with the Taliban's commitment to prevent international terrorist...

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The Lucrative Business of War The Seller, The Buyer, The Victim

By Naser koshan

Companies engaged in warfare production. These politically connected and financially sustained firms have a huge chunk of political lobbyists in a rapidly growing payroll. In retrospect, the idea of igniting unrest and promoting sectarianism at a given geography is first decided in fancy

special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmi Khalilzad, had expressed optimism during and after the seventh round US-Taliban and also on the sidelines of the third round intra-Afghan talks in Doha, for reached some agreements with Taliban.

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What Happened to the Afghan-Led, Afghan-Owned Peace Talks?

By Monish Tourangbam and Nandita Palrecha

All the stakeholders involved in Afghanistan seem to concur on the desire for peace and security there. However, differences emerge when it comes to on what, and whose, terms such a peaceful Afghanistan would be built. Countries involved directly or indirectly in the future of Afghanistan have largely supported "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" peace talks. While the Afghan government under Ashraf Ghani projects a Kabul that is in control of the shape of things to come in the country, the rising indispensability of the Taliban in the peace talks and...

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واشنگتن خیلی عجله دارد

نوسنده: فردوس

حال دیگر آشکار شده است که ایالات متحده قصد دارد نظامیان خود را تا نوامبر سال آینده می‌خواهد کاهش دهد و هم‌زمان با آن می‌خواهد روند حل سیاسی جنگ افغانستان هم کلید بخورد تا ترمپ در انتخابات سال ۲۰۲۰ پایان جنگ بیست‌ساله را به عنوان یک دست‌آورد مطرح کند.

office buildings in renowned metropolitan cities, involving these firms and paid politicians as partnered stakeholders.

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French Stance on Afghan Peace Process

On July 26th, the campaign will start. If you love your country, you have to make these two months' count. Badly. Make it a moment of real politics. Make this period a moment of vivid debates, of free expression, of respect. Make it a moment of passion. Put the 18 candidates under your own personal scrutiny. Ask questions. Tough ones. Start debates about what Afghanistan should do. About peace notably! Read the press. You have the incredible privilege of enjoying a real free and diverse press. You can rely on courageous and professional journalists. Make sure they are respected and protected. They will be your reliable spokespersons when it comes to making the candidates accountable. Also, hold the Electoral management bodies accountable.

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تردیدی نیست که جنگ افغانستان به بن‌بست راهبردی رسیده بود و تغییر این بن‌بست به سود کابل چندان ممکن به نظر نمی‌رسید،

[بیشتر بخوانید...](#)

Journey of Terrorism from Birth to Maturity

By Rajkumar Singh

Basically, the concept of 'Terrorism' is as old as the civilization of mankind itself and has existed in all ages in some form or other which might be known anarchists, revolutionaries, fundamentalist or dissents against the established authority or even ruling tyrants having no tolerance or dissent. However, terrorism was not as widespread phenomenon as it is today in contemporary political system of the world. Terrorism has, in fact, become a global phenomenon with increasing and rather well identifiable links between different terrorist group and organisation. They use each other's areas for recruitment and training, exchange of illegal weapons,

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NEWS

Intra-Afghan peace talks resume in Qatar

Dozens of powerful Afghans resumed talks with the Taliban on Monday, July 8 in Doha, where a possible ceasefire is on the table along with key issues such as women's rights.

Stakes are high for the talks which follow a week of U.S.-Taliban negotiations with both sides eyeing a resolution to the bloody 18-year conflict.

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هیأت گفت‌وگوکننده صلح تشکیل شد وزارت دولت در امور صلح اعلام کرد که هیأت گفت‌وگوکننده «جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان» در روند صلح، تشکیل شده است. این وزارت امروز چهارشنبه، نهم اسد، در یک نامه خبری گفت که هیأت گفت‌وگوکننده صلح در نتیجه رایزنی‌های مستمر و همه‌جانبه با طرف‌های دخیل داخلی و تلاش‌های...

[بیشتر بخوانید...](#)

Taliban attack in Kabul kills 16, wounds dozens of children

The Taliban detonated a powerful car bomb in an area of Afghanistan's capital housing military and government buildings, killing at least 16 people, the country's interior ministry told Al Jazeera.

The bomb went off during the morning rush hour in Kabul when the streets were filled with people, injuring 105 people, including 51 children and five women, government authorities said on Monday.

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Trump directed aides to reduce U.S. troops in Afghanistan by 2020 election, Pompeo says

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday that President Trump ordered him to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan by the 2020 election, in some of the clearest comments to date about Trump's intentions for winding down the nearly 18-year conflict.

"That's my directive from the president of the United States. He's been unambiguous: End the endless wars. Draw down. Reduce. It won't just be us," Pompeo said at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C.

Pompeo suggested that a troop withdrawal is connected to how the president views his job performance, saying a reduction of forces is "not only my expectation, it would be job-enhancing."

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Trump wants Pakistan to help 'extricate' US from Afghanistan

US President Donald Trump has voiced optimism that Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan could help broker a political settlement to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan and held out the possibility of restoring aid to Islamabad.

"I think Pakistan is going to help us out to extricate ourselves," Trump said, with Khan sitting next to him at the start of a White House meeting on Monday.

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Khalilzad Met With Pakistan's Senior Officials in Islamabad

According to a statement released by the U.S. embassy in Pakistan on Friday, Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, met with the Pakistani officials on August 1st and 2nd and discussed the progress in the Afghan peace process.

In his meetings with Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, and General Javed Bajwa, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Khalilzad defined the positive momentum in the Afghan peace process and forward steps.

Moreover, both sides discussed the role of Pakistan in the peace process and the steps this country can take for contributing to the process.

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Afghan talks: Rival sides agree on 'road map for peace'

Two-day peace talks, attended by Afghan delegates and Taliban representatives in the Qatari capital of Doha, have ended with both sides calling to reduce civilian casualties to "zero" amid the rising death toll in the war-torn country.

The so-called intra-Afghan dialogue, sponsored by Qatar and Germany, between Afghan politicians, civil society members, including women, and the Taliban is seen as a substantive step towards peace in Afghanistan...

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US envoy to return to Afghanistan, Qatar for peace talks

The United States peace envoy will travel to Afghanistan next week and then Qatar to resume negotiations with the Taliban and iron out a deal that could end nearly 18 years of military intervention, the State Department said on Monday.

Special Representative to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad will leave next Monday for the mission lasting through to August 1 "as part of an overall effort to facilitate a peace process that ends the conflict in Afghanistan," the State Department said in a statement.

In the capital Kabul, he will discuss with the Afghan government the "next steps in the peace process, including identifying a national negotiating team that can participate in intra-Afghan negotiations," the statement added.

Forming such a team is a fraught issue, as the Taliban refuse to negotiate directly with the Afghan government.

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Peace is Priority for U.S. in Afghanistan: Khalilzad

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, in an exclusive interview with Ariana News says that the United States' priority in Afghanistan is peace; however, the U.S. supports the election process to be held transparently.

"The position of the United States is that our priority is peace and we want, if God wills, to reach an agreement and framework regarding peace until September first. And we prioritize and support any decision which comes in the agreement..."

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Pakistan's Prime Minister to Visit Afghanistan

Based on the reports of Pakistani media, Imran Khan, Pakistan's Prime Minister, will come to Kabul to discuss the peace process with the Afghan officials.

Meanwhile, a close source to Imran Khan has said that Islamabad is ready to cooperate in bringing peace to Afghanistan through any possible way.

However, the Presidential Palace (ARG) says that Imran Khan's trip to Kabul has not been officially specified yet.

"We cannot any details on this with you yet because there is no detail on when he will trip to Afghanistan and what his trip's agenda is," said Sediq Sediqi, the Spokesperson to the President. Pakistan's role in the Afghan peace process is considered to be effective.

However, some commentators say that Imran Khan has made a promise to Donald ...

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Intra-Afghan negotiations to follow US-Taliban deal: Khalilzad

Direct talks between the Taliban and an Afghan negotiating team that will include top government officials will take place after the United States concludes its own "agreements" with the group, according to the US special envoy for Afghanistan. The comments by Zalmay Khalilzad on Sunday came after Abdul Salam Rahimi, Afghanistan's state minister for peace affairs, said that a 15-member government delegation would meet the Taliban within the next fortnight in Europe, without elaborating.

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U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad set to resume talks with Taliban

The U.S. special representative for peace in Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, will resume peace talks with the Taliban soon, sources with knowledge of the issue said on Wednesday.

Mr. Khalilzad, who has held eight rounds of talks with the Taliban to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan, is scheduled to travel to Qatar's capital of Doha from Kabul, via Pakistan.

"I'm off to Doha, with a stop in Islamabad. In Doha, if the Taliban do their part, we will do ours, and conclude the agreement we have been working on," Mr. Khalilzad said on Twitter.

Mr. Khalilzad, an Afghan-born American diplomat, was appointed last year to negotiate a political settlement with the Taliban, which now controls more territory than at any point since their ouster nearly 18 years ago. He arrived in Kabul in July and held meetings with President Ashraf Ghani, top security officials and senior opposition leaders, diplomats, ...

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Nabil Doubts Pakistan's Sincerity in War on Terror

Hours before Prime Minister Imran's Khan meeting with President Donald Trump, former spymaster Rahmatullah Nabil has said it will be a mistake to think the road to peace in Afghanistan lies through Pakistan. In a series of tweets, Nabil said the last time the US reliance on Pakistan led to the 9/11 tragedy. He cautioned against renewing Washington's trust in Islamabad. "The key difference between what happened in Bonn in 2001 & the US-led peace process now is that the US has given PAK & TBN veto power...

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Will Meet Taliban to Spur Afghan Peace Bid: Khan

Speaking at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington on Tuesday, Khan said achieving a political settlement to war would not be easy. For the first time in the 18-year-old Afghan conflict, Pakistan and the US are working together to promote peace efforts in the conflict-devastated country. A day earlier, the Pakistani premier met US President Donald Trump at the White House. The two sides pledged to work together to end to the war in Afghanistan. Khan said: "When I go back (home), I will meet the Taliban and try my best to get them to talk to the Afghan government so that the elections in Afghanistan must be inclusive and the Taliban also participate in it."

Absent a peace agreement with the US, the Taliban have ruled out participation in any formal intra-Afghan negotiations, involving the Kabul government. A few months back, Khan recalled, a Taliban team had desired to meet him. However, the meeting did not happen due to reservations from the Afghan government.

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'Spectacular progress', says Taliban as US talks enter fifth day

The ongoing seventh round of negotiations between Taliban representatives and US officials in Qatar has made "spectacular progress" on a draft agreement aimed at ending the 18-year-long conflict in Afghanistan, a spokesperson for the armed group has said.

Speaking to Al Jazeera on Wednesday, Suhail Shaheen, the Taliban's political spokesman in Doha, said that "80-90 percent work on the peace agreement is finished". [Read More...](#)

Intra-Afghan Negotiations to Follow US-Taliban Deal

Comment by US envoy comes after Afghan minister says government delegation to meet the group within two weeks in Europe.

KABUL - Direct talks between the Taliban and an Afghan negotiating team that will include top government officials will take place after the United States concludes its own "agreements" with the group, according to the US special envoy for Afghanistan.

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