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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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J. Ditz

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Taliban: US Has Accepted Full Withdrawal From Afghanistan

US negotiations with the Taliban have been making substantial progress in recent months, and there seem to be high hopes that a meeting next week in Doha would be a breakthrough moment. Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen suggested the deal is already effectively made.

Shaheen announced on Twitter Tuesday that the US had pledged to accept a full military withdrawal from Afghanistan, and furthermore to never again interfere in Afghan affairs.

That is certainly the direction the talks have been going, but US military spokesman Col. Dave Butler denied that any such deal was made, saying that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.”

But the basic framework has always been a US withdrawal and the Taliban keeping ISIS and al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan. Further details may need to be worked out to finalize everything, and it’s not clear where they are in that process.

Still, for the US to completely deny that a deal is agreed to seems dishonest, even if technically it isn’t finalized. The US likely just isn’t ready to make this part of the deal official, because of the backlash from Congressional hawks who want to keep troops in Afghanistan forever. June 18, 2019