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Taliban Leadership: No Talks With Karzai Govt.

By Jason Ditz

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With no meaningful role for the Afghan government in US-Taliban peace talks, Afghan President Hamid Karzai [has been desperate](#) to kick-start separate peace talks with the Taliban over the past few days, [even approaching Pakistan with the hope that it could facilitate such a meeting](#).

The Taliban has other ideas, however. New reports to the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reveal that the Taliban central leadership council has confirmed plans for limited US talks. The council added [that it would have nothing to do with the “illegal and powerless” Karzai government](#).

This is in keeping with long-standing Taliban policy. Its leadership has argued that Karzai’s government exists only at the pleasure of 100,000+ NATO occupation forces with no real power or support of its own.

Even the US talks, according to the AIP report, will be limited to prisoner exchanges for the time being. The [US has reiterated the possibility](#) of releasing detainees from Guantanamo Bay, saying this might provide an incentive for broadening the peace talks. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper says no decision has been made on the releases.