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## Kabul plans ulema conference in Riyadh

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The Afghan government has floated a proposal for an international conference of religious scholars to be held either in Riyadh or Cairo, a Pakistani newspaper reported on Saturday.

The suggestion came after Pakistani religious scholars' refusal to attend the Pak-Afghan *ulema* conference in Kabul, which was slated for March 10, according to The News International.

It quoted unnamed sources as saying Afghan officials -- under pressure from the US to prepare a new roadmap for post-2014 stability -- had proposed the ulema conference.

The report said the event was scuttled due to the nomination of Afghan scholars who had little clout with masses. Another problem was that most of the nominees were generally bracketed with the Taliban, it claimed.

Following Pakistan's agreement to arrange a series of peace dialogue, there was strong likelihood of the international conference being held in the capital of Saudi Arabia, the newspaper said.

Aimed at promoting the peace effort, the joint conference was delayed as a result of disagreements. The event had been agreed at a trilateral summit in London on February 4.

Pakistan Ulema Council head, Allama Tahir Ashrafi, believes the Taliban should also be invited to the conference. "It will be useless to think of peace and reconciliation without their active participation," he told AFP.

A spokesman for the Jamaat-i-Islami, Farid Paracha says they would not be part of a moot aimed at advancing the American agenda.