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Taliban's political office may be shifted from Qatar

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Islamabad and Washington are weighing the option of shifting the Taliban's political bureau from Qatar to another country in a bid to revive the stalled reconciliation process in Afghanistan, a media report said on Monday.

The option came under discussion during US Secretary of State John Kerry's recent visit to Islamabad, where the two sides explored a variety of ways of breaking the deadlock in peace negotiations, a Pakistani newspaper quoted unnamed officials as saying.

"Islamabad and Washington are not very hopeful about the revival of the Doha process and are now looking at other options to jumpstart the peace talks with the Afghan Taliban. Options currently on the table include transferring the Taliban office..." the Express Tribune said.

As alternatives to the Doha initiative are being studied, no final decision has been taken so far. "The future of the Doha process certainty hangs in balance. We are not very sure if this process will ever resume," one Pakistani official told the daily.

Pakistan's National Security and Foreign Affairs Advisor Sartaj Aziz, who visited Kabul earlier in the month, also suggested the likely transfer of the Taliban office. He told the newspaper Islamabad wanted the Afghan reconciliation process to resume soon.

"For us, the Afghan reconciliation process is important, not the location," Aziz was quoted as saying. The key issue was to push the process forward, he argued. "Whether talks are held in Dubai or Istanbul, Pakistan will facilitate it."

The option of transferring the Taliban office has reportedly been shared with Kabul. "We leave it to the Karzai administration. But time is running out and the peace process has to resume sooner than later," another official told the paper.