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## No political office for Taliban in new Afghan peace mechanism

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According to reports, Afghanistan, United States and Pakistan are working on new mechanism where Afghan Taliban will have no formal office in any country.

The new mechanism is part of the effort in seeking direct talks with the Taliban group and to break Afghan peace talks deadlock, in a bid to end decade old violence in the country.

A Pakistani official familiar with the development told Pakistan's The Express Tribune that the idea behind the new mechanism, was to pre-empt any controversy that might prove to be a 'deal breaker'.

Peace negotiations with the Taliban group failed with the closure of the Taliban office in Doha earlier this year, due to objections raised by the Afghan government regarding the flag-raising ceremony for the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan'.

In the meantime, the Pakistani official speaking on the condition of anonymity also acknowledged that the Doha process was mishandled.

The official said, "The Taliban should not have used the Doha office to project the image that it was their embassy or foreign mission."

He said, “Under the new plan, discussions will probably take place in Saudi Arabia but without giving Afghan Taliban any formal office.”

Diplomatic sources have also confirmed to The Express Tribune that talks with the Taliban group will take place in Saudi Arabia, and Taliban deputy commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar will also attend peace talks.

According to the sources, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar may play a crucial role in peace negotiations and bring the insurgents on to the dialogue table.