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Peace talks not expected with Taliban's new leader in short term: Cleveland

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The NATO-led Resolute Support Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication Army Brig. Gen. Charles H. Cleveland has said peace talks are not expected with Taliban's new leader 'anytime in the short term'.

Briefing reporters in Pentagon via teleconference, Gen. Cleveland said some Taliban members might want to abandon the fight, after seeing the precision strike that killed Mansur. Gen. Cleveland further added that some of the Taliban members might also choose peace talks after being faced with continued violence and improved capabilities of the Afghan forces.

“Our hope is that some of those lower-level people will begin to engage on the peace piece,” Cleveland said.

The Afghan government was expecting to have direct talks with the Taliban group leadership earlier in March amid ongoing efforts by the Quadrilateral Coordinaton Group members which included Afghanistan, Pakistan, United States and China.

However, the Taliban group rejected to participate in direct peace talks and instead chose to continue pursuing violence in the country.

The group announced its spring offensive earlier in the month of April and staged one of the biggest attacks in capital Kabul in the same month that led to killing of at least 64 people and wounded another 347.

The attack forced the Afghan government to change stance against the group and vowed to take strict military actions against the militants to suppress them and eventually force to participate in peace talks.