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Afghan Peace Team Seeks Taliban Talks in Dubai

By Jason Ditz

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In what is likely to be President Hamid Karzai's last major push for peace talks before his term in office ends, a delegation of the High Peace Council (HPC) has been dispatched to Dubai to try to arrange talks with the Taliban office there.

In the past the HPC and other Karzai representatives have met with Taliban officials in Pakistan to try to get the process going, and the latest meetings apparently convinced them that if they went to Dubai they'd be received.

The Taliban has also had some major meetings in Dubai in recent days, and figures linked with the group have recently expressed support for a "peaceful solution" to the ongoing war.

There's still plenty of obstacles out there for the peace process, however, and Maulvi Abdul Raqeeb, a former Taliban minister and a major backer of the peace process, was assassinated today in Peshawar, in northern Pakistan. Raqeeb was reportedly in Dubai recently, and was likely playing a role in setting up those talks. It is unclear what impact his death will have.