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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپائی

November 13, 2018

J. Ditz

15.11.2018

US Discusses Suspending Afghan Presidential Election

They've been profoundly corrupt and often meant little, but Afghanistan's elections have long been enough to provide the illusion of a functioning democracy. The Trump Administration is in ongoing discussions on maybe backing away from that.

The [Wall Street Journal reported ongoing discussions are being held](#) at the behest of US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who has been pushing the idea of telling the Afghan government to simply indefinitely suspend the presidential election, which is supposed to happen in April.

The US interest in this plan is apparently centered on the attempts to negotiate with the Taliban on settling the ongoing war, with officials, including Khalilzad, believing that such negotiations would be too hard in the middle of a nationwide election.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is opposed to the idea, saying he considers suspending elections unacceptable, and wants to see continuity in the Afghan democracy. Though theoretically this is the Afghan government's call, and not the Trump Administration's, officials believe that the US can use its funding of the Afghan government to virtually compel them to abandon elections at will.

Where this would leave Afghanistan is anyone's guess, as even if it did please the Taliban during negotiations, having the US plainly cancel Afghanistan's elections would also underscore the Taliban's long-standing position that the government has no credibility of its own and is simply a US puppet.