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## Taliban seek new Afghan constitution to join peace process

December 22, 2012

Taliban militants group in Afghanistan following a declaration issued by representatives at a landmark meeting in France called for a new constitution as the group's pre-condition to join the fledgling peace process.

Afghan officials and Taliban group representatives on Thursday attended a two day conference to discuss the future of Afghanistan. Political observers believe that the talks will help bolster relations between the involved parties in Afghan war.

The Paris conference on Afghanistan which is an informal summit has paved the way for the senior Taliban group representatives, Afghan government representatives and other opposition groups to sit down and discuss the issues of Afghanistan face to face for the first time since the US-led attack against the Taliban group in 2001.

"Afghanistan's present constitution has no value for us because it was made under the shadows of B52 bombers of the invaders," said the declaration, which was handed to participants during the meeting and later released to the media.

"Islamic Emirate, for the welfare of their courageous nation, need a constitution that is based on the principles of the holy religion of Islam, national interest, historical achievements, and social justice," it read.

Foundation for Strategic Research (FRS) organized the meeting in France which was organized behind the closed doors and in an undisclosed location near Paris.

The conference was organized with the aim to accelerate peace talks efforts with the Taliban group and other anti-government armed militant groups in a bid to encourage the groups for a ceasefire before NATO troops leave Afghanistan at the end of 2014.

In the meantime Afghan high peace council as a first step in that direction, Karzai's administration has been attempting to secure the release of top Taliban prisoners held by neighbouring Pakistan however the declaration by the Taliban group reflects lack of trust in the Afghan government.

The declaration by the Taliban group representatives added, "The invaders and their friends don't have a clear roadmap for peace," it stated.

"Sometimes they say we want to talk to the Islamic Emirate, but sometimes they say we will talk with Pakistan. This kind of vague stance will never get to peace," it said.

The Taliban group in Afghanistan regards the Afghan government as the puppet of the United States and therefore has denied to negotiation any peace deal with Kabul besides suspending peace talks with Washington back in March.

In France the Taliban was represented by their senior figures Shahabuddin Dilawar and Naeem Wardak, a move seen as a sign that the Islamist group is contemplating going beyond exploratory discussions.

The Taliban, who ruled in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, were ousted from power by a US-led invasion and have since waged an 11-year insurgency to topple the US-supported government of Karzai.