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Taliban's Office Location is Not Important, Their Intention Is

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With cooperation from Pakistan, the US is mulling over relocating Taliban's Doha Office but to where and why? Time will answer. Taliban, US and the Afghan government have been playing cat and mouse over the so-called peace process making its destination completely vague to the people.

In June, the Taliban officially inaugurated their office in Qatar. After much effort, the Taliban were persuaded to have an office the main purpose of which, near Kabul and Washington, remains to be ending the 12-year long conflict in Afghanistan through negotiations. But the Taliban named their Doha office as Political Office of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and raised their flag over it. With that name before the eyes, it is seemed like Taliban's Emirate of Afghanistan which was demolished in 2001, has revived. Such an inauguration faced serious reaction from the Afghan government and eventually the name and flag were removed.

The Taliban have been rejecting any possibility of talks with Karzai administration. At the same time, the Afghan government wants the peace process to be Afghan-led. Seemingly, the US government which is eager to withdraw most of its forces from Afghanistan by the end of next year, is having no easy time in trying to make a patch-up possible by considering conditions of all the parties involved. And now it is relocating the newly-established Taliban's Office from Doha to elsewhere. This is either at the request of Qatar, Pakistan or Afghanistan.

In response to reports about relocation of Taliban's office, Mohammad Ismail Qasimyar, High Peace Council (HPC) Foreign Relation Advisor has said, "We are completely aware about the ongoing developments and hope that the peace negotiation process will be on the right track. However, the exact venue for the office has not been announced."

The important point to be noted is that when the Taliban were to establish their office in Doha with name of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and their flag, the High Peace Council (HPC) or any other Afghan government authority did not have any know-how about it, though it was a very critical issue. But now, that the Taliban office is being relocated – a minor issue indeed –, HPC says it has been kept in the loop. This indicates how much value the HPC has?

Indeed, it is not important where the office of Taliban should be. What is important is existence of a true intention to end the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan through meaningful table talks. And Taliban lack such an intention.