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Officials: Pakistan ‘Left Out’ of Afghan Peace Talks

By Jason Ditz

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State Department officials today [insisted that they were hoping Pakistan would “support” the ongoing peace talks in Afghanistan](#), with spokesman P.J. Crowley suggesting the nation’s “legitimate role” in the process was largely giving its official blessing to a peace deal.

Yet top [Pakistani officials are complaining that they have been virtually cut out of the process, with one saying that NATO had left them “out of the loop” on the matter](#). One official suggested Pakistan had no more information regarding the talks and their participants than the general public does.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmoud Qureshi insisted last weekend that the government was eager to facilitate the peace process, and others are said to have solicited the Afghan government with offers to help. [The government is also said to have released Taliban leader Mullah Baradar from detention, so he could play a role in the talks](#).

But Western officials in particular are likely keen to keep Pakistan sidelined as much as possible [after their admission that they deliberately sabotaged a previous peace process](#) over fear that the deal would strengthen India’s influence over the region.

