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Précis #1
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Taliban, US in new round of peace talks

According to the Asia Times, there have been talks between the US and the Taliban regarding a peace deal that resolves conflicts between the Western coalition forces in Afghanistan, the Afghan government, and the anti-coalition insurgents of Afghanistan. The talk will decide the agenda of the Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte on September 10 and the course of the “war on terror” in that region. All in all, these deals aim to stop violence in selected areas and give the Taliban limited control of the government.

The article discusses that these talks will be based on previous Pakistan-inspired efforts to secure peace deals between the insurgents and the Western coalition in specific areas of Afghanistan that failed to go through. When the Taliban disagreed on these previous deals, they refined their tactics and carried out targeted actions, which included development projects. One of the key projects the US wants to act upon is a regional oil and gas pipeline project that will cost the US \$10 billion that will run from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan; also known as the TAP. In order for this project to succeed, it would help if the peace deals with the Taliban are completed.

The ultimate goal at this point is that there is a shutdown of this war. According to the United State’s National Intelligence Estimate, it shows that the Taliban and al-Qaeda assets in Pakistan are the root cause of the insurgency in Afghanistan. Pakistan was warned this year to eliminate safe shelters for the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Since then, the Taliban have left most of their bases in Pakistan. The US has accepted the fact that Pakistan still has access to and influence with the Taliban. With that said, it prompted Washington to sponsor a Pakistan-

Afghanistan peace council to indentify new players in this game before the “war on terror” enters a new stage where it can include both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hopefully, the ongoing talks with the Taliban on Pakistani soil will allow for some sort of peace.

In my opinion, the article gives a sense that the Taliban will not agree with the peace talks. The article mentions how the beliefs of the Taliban are very strong and that they will not give it up just for limited control of government. The Taliban will not waste their time on something that may potentially slow down their activities. Instead what they would rather do is seize the opportunity and try to gain a bigger bargain. It is going to be a tough shot to call to see what happens with the peace talks between the US and the Taliban. However, there is a chance the Taliban may embrace the idea due to the fact that they are refining a new command structure and need all the breathing space they can get. We will just have to wait and see what happens in the days to come.