

Mike Pompeo says U.S.-Taliban talks dead for the time being



Washington, September 9 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the 'peace talks' with the Afghan Taliban militant group are "dead" for now and that the administration in Washington will not negotiate any future deal without commitments from the militants.

Pompeo made the remarks in an interview with Fox News on Sunday, after U.S. President Donald Trump cancelled peace talks with Taliban leaders following the group's recent attack in Kabul, which killed an American soldier and 11 other Afghan people on Thursday.

"They tried to use terror to improve their negotiating position, and I think anyone who's observed President Trump knows... if in the course of a conversation, where we're trying to improve both teams' outcomes, if the other team commits an act that's inconsistent, with that, President Trump's not going to take that," he said, referring to the attack.

"We're looking for more than words on paper, we're looking for real delivered commitment and the Taliban demonstrated either that they weren't willing to or couldn't live up to the commitment they needed to make to reduce violence there," he added.

When asked by a Fox News host whether the talks were "dead," Pompeo replied, "For the time being they are." Pompeo added: "I hope we get them started back. It will ultimately be up to the Taliban. They have

got to demonstrate that they're prepared to do the things that we ask them to do in the course of those negotiations."

Prior to the cancellation of negotiations, American officials had expressed hope that an end to the 18-year war in Afghanistan was near. U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad presented a draft U.S.-Taliban agreement to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the beginning of the month, which outlined plans for a US withdrawal from the country in exchange for a Taliban pledge not to plot attacks on the United States and its allies.

The Taliban on Sunday warned that Trump's decision to cancel the talks would lead to the further loss of American lives and assets. Nearly 20,000 foreign troops, most of them Americans, are currently deployed in Afghanistan as part of a mission to purportedly train, assist and advise Afghan security forces.

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