

Comment by the Information and Press Department on the refusal by the US to take part in Moscow-format consultations on Afghanistan

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It is with regret that we learned about the statement by the US Department of State announcing the refusal of the US to take part in the September 4, 2018 meeting of the Moscow format to which representatives from Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and five Central Asian countries were also invited.

That said, this is hardly surprising. The US ignored a similar meeting in April 2017 under the pretext that its new strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia was not ready. This time, the US put forward a far-fetched explanation, whereby it is a matter of principle for the US not to participate in initiatives that are not Afghan-owned and -led. This excuse is obviously unsound and indefensible, since Washington knows all too well that the Moscow meeting is to be co-chaired by Russia and Afghanistan. It may be the case that the US wants to attend only meetings that are US-led and correspond to its interests.

The decision by the US stresses yet again the false nature of Washington's rhetoric regarding Afghanistan, where people over the past 17 years have had to endure and are still experiencing so much suffering and losses resulting from US policy toward this country.

The main objective of the Moscow format consultations is to enable participating countries to come together in order to facilitate the launch of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and put an end to a fratricidal war there. The refusal to contribute to these efforts shows that Washington's interests lie elsewhere.