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Afghan lawmakers approve Kabul-Washington strategic pact

5/26/2012



Afghanistan's parliament has approved a recently signed security pact between Kabul and Washington, which extends the US presence in the war-torn country to another decade beyond 2014.

The deal allows the US military to stay in Afghanistan for at least another decade after 2014, when most foreign forces are planning to pull out of the country.

Around 180 Afghan lawmakers voted for the pact on Saturday and only four legislators voted against it.

The US president Barack Obama signed the deal with his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in Kabul on May 2 to provide aid, advisers and support for a period of 10 years after the expected departure of foreign combat troops in 2014.

The controversial parts of the pact had been earlier removed and dealt with separately; including giving Afghan forces the control of night raids and prisons.

Following the signing of the agreement, Afghan political party, National United Front, condemned the pact, describing the deal as illegal and “imperialistic.”

In a televised speech prior to his departure from Afghanistan, Obama warned that if foreign forces left Afghanistan immediately, they would lose everything they had gained and urged the forces to finish the job they had started before withdrawing from the country.

However, France's newly elected President Francois Hollande has vowed to pull out his country's troops from Afghanistan immediately.

The public opinion in the US and other NATO members has begun to turn against the US-led war in Afghanistan, as casualties have risen there over the past few months.

The US-led invasion of Afghanistan was launched in 2001. The offensives removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity continues to rise across the country, despite the presence there of about 130,000 foreign troops.