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US plans to keep up to 9,000 troops in Afghanistan after 2014: Report

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The United States plans to keep up to 9,000 troops in Afghanistan despite a previous pledge to completely withdraw all forces from the Asian country by the end of 2014.

The US Defense Department has prepared plans which call for up to 9,000 US troops to stay in Afghanistan after 2014, *The Wall Street Journal* reported late Friday.

The troops are expected to launch attacks on militants and engage in training Afghan forces who will be tasked with providing national security in the violence-hit country.

The Commander of the US-led forces in Afghanistan, General John R. Allen had earlier submitted three plans to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, outlining troop levels ranging between 6,000 and 20,000, *The New York Times* cited a senior Pentagon official as saying on January 2.

Meanwhile, Afghan President Hamid Karzai is supposed to discuss the US security presence in Afghanistan after 2014 with his American counterpart, Barack Obama during his visit to Washington next week.

The Wall Street Journal added that presently Washington and its allies are holding talks about future troop commitments to Afghanistan “on the basis of a formula that calls for US troops to make up two-thirds of any follow-on force.”

The paper further pointed out that a smaller troop presence will increase the US dependence on drones after the majority of manned aircraft and their pilots leave the country.

The United States, which currently has about 66,000 troops stationed in Afghanistan, led the invasion of the country in 2001, under the pretext of eradicating Taliban forces and bringing stability to the country.

The invasion removed the Taliban, but torn apart by a war that has lasted for 12 years, Afghanistan is still dealing with untamed violence, rising insecurity, and social problems.