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US, Afghan Officials at Odds Over Post-2014 Pact

By Jason Ditz

October 6, 2013

While President Obama had already signed an agreement in principle to continue the US occupation of Afghanistan through 2024, the actual status of forces agreement that will govern operations beyond 2014 remains elusive, and according to a Karzai government spokesman, it is the core issues that are holding it up.

The US wants a deal that would allow troops and CIA agents to continue to launch unilateral operations beyond 2014 to capture or kill "suspects" inside Afghanistan, while the Karzai government argues that's a threat to their sovereignty.

At the same time, the Afghan government wants some commitments from the US to provide aid to defend the country if it comes under attack from abroad, something the Obama Administration wants to avoid because it would mean bringing the pact to Congress for ratification.

That's something recent presidents have tried to avoid at all costs, with President Bush drawing the Iraqi status of forces agreement around getting the Iraqi parliament to ratify it, but managing to avoid a Congressional vote by arguing it was an executive agreement.