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US Envoy: Karzai Unlikely to Meet New Deadline on Troop Deal

By Jason Ditz

January 9, 2014

After missing the Obama Administration’s “ultimatum” to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) by the end of December, officials told the Karzai government they wanted it done within “weeks, not months.”

Now, US Ambassador James Cunningham is admitting that the Karzai government is “unlikely” to meet that deadline either, saying he thinks Karzai will stick to his initial pledge not to sign until after the April vote.

The BSA would govern the US occupation of Afghanistan “through 2024 and beyond,” and Karzai has repeatedly said he won’t sign the deal before the election, which ends his term in office.

Karzai had been pushing for the US to make pledges to end night raids and drone strikes, citing the growing civilian casualties, while the US demands the deal be signed exactly as written.

Though the Obama Administration has made it clear they want the BSA signed as soon as possible, it is unclear why they keep going public with ultimatums that they don’t believe Karzai will accept, and coupling them with threats to withdraw that they have no intention of following through on.