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## Obama Threatens Karzai: Planning Pullout If No Troop Deal Signed

By Jason Ditz

February 25, 2014

Following up weekend reports that President Obama had “given up” on pressing Afghan President Hamid Karzai to sign a troop deal to continue the occupation, and was simply waiting the election of Karzai’s successor, President Obama is again ratcheting up the rhetoric.

President Obama called Karzai today, telling him that the US is planning a “full Afghan pullout” now, and the only thing that can change his mind is for Karzai to sign off on the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), which would keep US troops in Afghanistan “through 2024 and beyond.”

The White House also issued a public statement saying they’ve ordered the Pentagon to prepare for the “possibility” of withdrawing from Afghanistan, and said that the longer Karzai waits to sign the less occupation troops he’ll get.

The Pentagon has yet to address this, but has repeatedly thrown cold water on previous reports, saying they weren’t even considering the possibility of not occupying Afghanistan for years to come. The threats are so often made for Karzai’s benefit it isn’t clear if they are sincere at all.

And while officials are playing it up again today, over the weekend they confirmed talks with “frontrunners” in the April election about signing off on the deal, so it is exceedingly unlikely that Karzai’s refusal to sign the pact is really a deal-breaker.