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Karzai: US Must Pay at Least \$2 Billion Per Year to Stay

By Jason Ditz

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In a speech today, Afghan President Hamid Karzai discussed the ongoing negotiation with the US over continuing its military presence through 2024, saying that he wants the “partnership agreement” to include a pledge from the US to give the Afghan government a minimum of \$2 billion a year to pay for its own military.

The US has been negotiating on the pact since last summer, and the agreement to allow the Afghan government total control over night raids (which US officials say they won’t abide by anyhow) was seen as a major breakthrough in pushing the deal through the Afghan parliament.

US officials have said that they will almost certainly provide far more than the \$2 billion demanded annually, saying they will probably pay closer to \$4 billion. They objected to putting it in writing, however, saying the partnership agreement was never meant to cover every aspect of US involvement in Afghanistan.

Recently the spiraling costs of propping up the Afghan military have become a subject of discussion among NATO member nations, who after years of annually pledging to make the Afghan military bigger now find themselves on the hook to pay for virtually the entire behemoth themselves.

