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US to give Afghanistan C-130 choppers

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With President Hamid Karzai and members of his delegation having a flurry of meetings in Washington, the Obama administration on Thursday promised more equipment for Afghan security forces, including C-130 helicopters and other planes.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between President Hamid Karzai and US Secretary of defense at the Pentagon, the presidential spokesman, Aimal Faizi, told Pajhwok Afghan News. As negotiations on the issue continue, he would not go into details.

The Pentagon asked the Afghan army to first carry out a threat assessment and determine the nature of the force it wanted to become in the future, before seeking arms, equipment or fighter jets.

General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, told reporters after a meeting with his Afghan counterpart: “What we talked about was, let's move beyond a wish list and start by discussing what is your vision for the future of the Afghan military against threats and requirements?”

“He (Gen. Bismillah Mohammadi) was very open, very eager to enter into that kind of comprehensive strategic review. And from that will come, it seems to us, a view of how to move from where they are today, which is clearly focused on counterinsurgency, to something they may wish to become in the future,” Dempsey said.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, said quite a bit of progress had been made in this regard and hinted at some announcement by the White House on Friday after a meeting between US President Barack Obama and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai.

“That was one of the discussions we made. I don't want to speak to what ultimately will be announced later, but I think it's fair to say that we made very good progress on the kind of equipment that we would try to make available to them,” Panetta said