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Gen. Allen: No Question US Troops Will Remain in Afghanistan for a 'Long Time'

By Jason Ditz

May 26, 2013

While maintaining that the US military is enjoying significant success and the Taliban are “fighting for their lives,” Gen. John Allen, the recently retired former chief of occupation forces in Afghanistan, insists US troops will remain in the country for a “long time” to come.

Allen’s replacement, Gen. Joseph Dunford, has been loathe to comment specifically on plans for Afghanistan troop levels post-2014, insisting no decision has been made. Since stepping down in February, however, Allen has repeatedly given opinions on the long-term levels.

In part this is because the exact numbers are still being negotiated with the Afghan government, though President Obama has already signed a deal to keep troops in the nation through 2024, and Afghan President Hamid Karzai has offered nine essentially permanent US bases.

After 11 and a half years of occupation, US military officials still regularly proclaim their “progress” in the war, but the level of violence doesn’t seem to be markedly affected by these claims, and all indications are that they will simply continue to spin their wheels in the country until they can find some other uses for the troops.