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US senator threatens Afghans over deal

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The chairman of the US Senate Armed Services Committee has said he would not support continued aid to Afghanistan if there is no acceptable security deal between Kabul and Washington.

Sen. Carl Levin (D-Michigan) made the comments on Thursday after he returned from a visit to Afghanistan where he met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Earlier this month, US Secretary of State John Kerry also traveled to Afghanistan for talks with Karzai over a deal that would allow US troops to remain in Afghanistan after 2014.

The two sides said they agreed on the terms of the Bilateral Security Agreement. However, no agreement was reached over the issue of immunity for US troops in Afghanistan.

Washington is insisting that any US troops left in Afghanistan after the 2014 withdrawal of foreign forces from the country must enjoy legal immunity from Afghan courts.

Kerry said last week that US troops must remain under Washington's jurisdiction, and it is the US courts where American troops would stand trial. However, Kabul says what the US is demanding is a violation of its sovereignty.

Another issue over the agreement is related to US drone attacks across Afghanistan which wrongly target many innocent civilians.

Meanwhile, a recent analysis of the Pentagon's budget shows the average cost of each US troop in Afghanistan will almost double next year.

According to the analysis, the figure would soar to \$2.1 million for every US trooper in 2014 while the cost remained steady at \$1.3 million over the past five years.