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US Airstrikes in Afghanistan Soaring: 436 Bombs in a Month

By Jason Ditz

October 9, 2014

The “draw down” of the Afghan war means fewer NATO ground troops in the thick of things, but the transition to Afghan forces doing the fighting on the ground isn’t actually leading to an overall reduction in US military activity in the country.

Rather, it’s increasing, as the decrease in boots on the ground has given way to soaring numbers of airstrikes, with NATO reporting 436 US airstrikes in Afghanistan just in the month of August, the highest level in two years.

NATO says that strikes are higher during “fighting season,” which Pentagon officials said that the escalation of the air war was expected to “support” Afghan ground forces.

The number of US airstrikes reached its apex in 2011, and has been declining since then. It seems to be rebounding from its lows in 2013, however, and despite Pentagon plans to have fewer overall planes in Afghanistan by the start of 2015, the plan seems to be for large numbers of strikes in 2015 and 2016, and likely beyond, as Afghanistan’s own air force remains virtually non-existent.