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US Rejects Pakistani Demand to Leave Air Base

By Jason Ditz

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Fresh off of the [public demand by Pakistani Defense Minister Chaudhry Mukhar that the United States must immediately vacate the Shamsi Air Base](#), a small airfield in Pakistani Balochistan which the US has been using for drone attacks, the Obama Administration has officially rejected the demand.

The consequences of this unprecedented stance remain to be seen, but [US officials insist that Shamsi is not being vacated, nor will it be vacated, and that the US will rather continue to use the base](#). If they assume that the Pakistani government will simply let the matter drop or not, they seem intent on occupying the base outside of the Zardari government's consent.

Pakistani Air Force officials say that the military has already informed the US personnel operating at the base that no security will be provided to them, though the [district's MP insists that there has been no local indication of removal since the government first broached the subject nearly two months ago](#).

The Shamsi air base has been the source of CIA drone strikes across Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the demand to vacate the base comes amid repeatedly Pakistani demands to stop unilateral drone strikes, which the US has repeatedly refused to do. Other Pakistani military officials say two bases were originally given over to the US, and that the US had already vacated the Jacobabad base some time ago.