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US Sends Billions in Equipment That Kabul Can't Afford

By John Glaser

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In an attempt to hide the Afghan government's military dependency on the United States, the [US is sending \\$2.7 billion of military equipment](#) to the beleaguered, corrupt Afghan government. But neither government can afford it.

Preceding the NATO [pull out in 2014](#), the shipments will include 22,000 US vehicles, 20 Russian helicopters, 120mm artillery guns, and transport aircraft from Italy. It will not include tanks, fighter jets, or Black Hawk helicopters, despite Afghan requests.

Estimates of NATO expenditures on Afghanistan's security infrastructure are expected to be \$11 billion by 2014, and \$10 billion for military hardware. It takes approximately \$6 billion a year – more than three times the Kabul government's annual income – to sustain these assets. And the US is unprepared to cover that cost.

The US is finding itself pressured in its attempt to cut costs due to budgetary deficits, while also beefing up Afghan security forces to at least feign some measure of ready independence. A [recent congressional report](#) uncovering tens of billions of dollars of waste in Afghanistan warned the losses could continue to accrue if the Afghan is unable or unwilling to sustain US-funded projects after withdrawal.