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## 10 Years In: Will Afghan War Ever End?

By Jason Ditz

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Ten years ago, the United States invaded Afghanistan, nominally to find Osama bin Laden. Today with bin Laden dead, 150,000 US troops remain occupying the nation, and officials are openly taking about keeping them there for at least another decade.

10 years of occupation has changed many lives, and not for the better. Afghanistan was already among the worst places to live under Taliban rule, but now not only is it bad, it is enormously dangerous place to live with massive death tolls annually.

And billions of dollars spent. Indeed, Swedish diplomat and scholar Ann Wilkens estimated the costs of the US occupation at \$12 million per hour. Can the US keep spending this sort of money through 2024?

Ambassador Wilkens doubts it, saying that the US is running out of patience (polls show overwhelming



opposition among the American public) and the situation continues to get worse. She urged NATO to stop talking about continuing the war forever and start thinking about what will happen when it ends.

It certainly is difficult to see how the US can possibly afford to continue pouring money into the failed military venture for decades to come. At the same time, there is no indication from the Obama Administration that they're even considering an alternative.