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Antiwar.com

German General: NATO to Leave 15,000 Troops in Afghanistan After ‘Withdrawal’

By Jason Ditz

December 13, 2011

Speaking today at a NATO conference in Mons, [Belgium](#), top German General Manfred Lange said he is “extraordinarily confident” that NATO will complete its withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

But just because the [dictionary definition of “withdrawal”](#) would indicate that NATO wouldn’t be occupying the nation after that point doesn’t mean they’re not going to keep a major military footprint there going forward, as Gen. Lange says that NATO will keep “around 15,000” troops there from 2015 on.

Lange says the troops would provide “training and technical support,” but did not indicate if this figure was independent of whatever troops the US plans to keep. The US is in open negotiations to [keep an occupation force in Afghanistan through 2024](#).



Exactly how long beyond 2014 NATO envisions keeping troops in Afghanistan is unclear, but last week German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said he wanted to see NATO commit to [supporting Karzai through at least 2025](#).