

U.S. Official Says Afghan President Will Not Sign Security Deal



Washington, February 12 (RHC)-- A high-ranking U.S. official says he does not expect Afghan President Hamid Karzai to sign a bilateral security agreement between Kabul and Washington. U.S. National Intelligence Director James Clapper said on Tuesday that it would be best if Washington simply decided to wait for the election of a new Afghan president for signing the deal.

The remarks come amid a standoff between the U.S. and Afghan leaders over the security agreement. Under the bilateral security agreement, some 10,000 to 12,000 American troops will stay in Afghanistan until 2024 -- well after the 2014 withdrawal deadline.

Karzai has refused to sign the so-called Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), saying the Afghan nation cannot approve the agreement without guarantees that the U.S. will halt its deadly airstrikes on residential areas. Thousands of Afghan civilians, including a large number of women and children, have been killed during night raids by foreign forces and CIA-run killer drone strikes.

The U.S. and its Western allies have been pressuring Karzai to sign the pact but the Afghan president says the matter should be left to the next government after April elections. President Karzai has repeatedly said he won't be bullied into signing the security pact with Washington.

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