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Subject: Long-term deal with US must be on Afghan terms-Karzai (Reuters)

KABUL, July 26 (Reuters) - Afghan President Hamid Karzai said on Tuesday that Afghanistan will only sign a long-term "strategic partnership" deal with Washington if the United States meets Afghan conditions including an end to controversial night raids on homes.

He also pledged that Afghanistan would pay for its own armed forces and police, but the only major prospective income stream for one of the poorest countries in the world is profits from mineral reserves that are still years from being mined.

Washington is negotiating with the Afghan government on a deal to define the long-term American role in Afghanistan beyond the end of 2014, when NATO-led combat troops are due to leave after handing security control to the Afghan army and police.

If successful, the deal might ease worries among those Afghans who fear the United States will pull out too quickly, leaving a weak impoverished government, and those who fear the foreign forces they see as occupiers will never leave.

"We are in negotiations over the strategic partnership; Afghanistan has laid out its conditions," Karzai said.

"The foreign troops must work within the Afghan legal framework; they should not take prisoners or go into Afghan homes at night; they must not own private prisons."

Night raids are one of the most controversial tactics used by foreign forces fighting the Taliban. NATO-led forces have defended the operations as "indispensable", but also said they were working to achieve Karzai's aim of making them Afghan-led.

"We haven't reached an agreement yet but be assured that it will happen only if our conditions are accepted," Karzai added.

Karzai was speaking at a ceremony celebrating the first phase of a years-long handover from NATO troops to Afghan security forces, which ended without major incidents last week.

"This gathering is based on our desire and will to take control of our country ... The international community is here to help us, but it isn't going to be permanent," he said.

It remains unclear whether the "strategic partnership" agreement would explicitly refer to possible U.S. military bases in Afghanistan beyond 2014, but the new U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan said on Monday that the United States has no interest in creating permanent military bases in Afghanistan.

Despite billions being poured into building up the Afghan security forces, the problems they face -- from illiteracy to corruption -- means both Afghans and foreigners expect some kind of continued military support beyond 2014, even if foreign troops are no longer on the front lines.

They will also need financial support, although Karzai promised to tap mineral riches as soon as possible to help the government feed and supply its own army.

"Will they be permanently supported by the international community? No. Afghanistan will be able to support itself, we are a rich country," he said.

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