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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: NEWS-Iraq; NEWS-Mahogany
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Subject: Iraq PM: Immunity issue scuttled US troop deal (AP)

BAGHDAD - (AP) Iraq's prime minister says disagreements about legal protection for U.S. soldiers scuttled months of negotiations to keep American troops in Iraq beyond this year.

Nouri al-Maliki told reporters Saturday that he still wants American help in training Iraqi forces to use military equipment Baghdad is buying from the United States.

But he made clear that it was Iraq who refused to let the U.S. military stay on its own terms.

Al-Maliki's remarks come a day after President Barack Obama announced the full U.S. military withdrawal by Dec. 31, saying he was sticking to his 2009 commitment to end the war in Iraq.

The U.S. had offered to keep thousands of troops in Iraq but insisted they be shielded from prosecution or lawsuits. Iraq rejected that demand.

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