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No Intention to Stay in Office beyond Term: Karzai

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President Hamid Karzai has rejected stories in the western press as fictional that he was trying to seek a third term as president of Afghanistan.

"No, not at all. I think two terms is a very long time. You need fresh energy, you need fresh thinking, someone with more...untested ideas should come forward and build on what we could not improve upon. The western press is full of stories, though, about my trying to seek a third term," Karzai told Time Magazine during an hour long interview. The president said his term expires in 2014 and beyond that his stay in the office would be illegitimate. "...it will not help Afghanistan, it will hurt it forever. I don't want to be the president of Afghanistan one day beyond my term."

To a question, he said he had to ensure a fair and free election and had to ask the US government to put in that line about external interference, because the last elections were intervened and were actually rigged by foreign embassies and governments.

"Well, they tried, but they did it badly. They did damage our elections.. damage to the reputation of our elections and legitimacy of the process at that time. That makes me think as to what their intention is in this country. That is why we are so careful now. That is why we are so suspicious, that is why we are turning every stone to find out if there is something else in the corner waiting for us, of that nature."

He said it was the terminal mistake on the part of all of those Western governments who did not respect democracy, the vote of the Afghan people and the scope of democracy was something that people saw with suspicion because of that election. "And it was with that in mind that I insisted that the question of interference in the next elections should also be in the strategic partnership document. "

Karai rejected allegations that he helped bring warlords to power, saying he was not in Bonn when the arrangement was made in 2001. "I was in the mountains of central Afghanistan in Uruzgan. So I had no hand in forming the government. I was myself picked up by that group to be heading the government. I didn't give millions of dollars to the mujahidin who then became strongmen in areas of the country. The US did. The Europeans did. We didn't do that."

About his successor, Karzai said he was thinking of some people and had met with some people on the question. "I am busy working on this question, this is one of my jobs, one of my perhaps most important responsibilities."

He said he had to find a person who will be an Afghan, --- a patriot, good to the Afghan people and tough with Afghanistan's allies. "He must be good to the Afghan people and kind to them and tough with our allies."

Karzai said after his office term ended, he would stay in Afghanistan, not a political person, but an Afghan citizen. He said he was never in politics." If you mean by politics someone who tries to have issues raised and issues created and to be involved, no. I'll be an ex-president of Afghanistan, where if I can work as a citizen for furthering the stability and well being of the Afghan people."

He said he would continue to help if asked for advice, but not as an interventionist. "If by political, you mean interventionist, no, I will not do that. I will support the president. I know what it takes to be the president of Afghanistan in these conditions. I know the pressures on the president. It will be much less than what it is today, but I will understand his environment, and from that background that I have gained, I will be a great supporter of the president, and I will advise people to make his life easier and to help him."

To a question, he said he would either play gold or horse riding after the end of his term. "Or mountain walking, or just walking around the city. Those will be...I miss that terribly." Karzai

said almost seven years ago he used to walk in the city of Kabul. "That is what I will have to do again.