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Pajhwok

Karzai looking for loyal successor: analysts

By Maiwand Fida

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KABUL - Political experts believe the latest gubernatorial reshuffle by President Hamid Karzai is part of efforts to find a candidate of his choice for the presidential election, scheduled to take place in 2014.

Karzai fired some governors who he believed could damage his interest and reshuffled others with close ties to him. He appointed 10 new governors through a decree.

Former Takhar governor Abdul Jabbar Taqwa has been posted as Kabul governor, Gen. Mohammad Naeem Baloch as Helmand governor and ex-Faryab governor Maj. Gen. Ahmad Faisal Begzad as Takhar governor.

Sultan Mohammad Ebadi has been appointed as Baghlan governor and ex-MP from Nangarhar Abdul Majid as Maidan Wardak governor.

Mohammad Sarwar Subat has been named as Nimroz governor and then lawmaker from Logar Fazlullah Mujaddedi as Laghman governor. His predecessor Iqbal Azizi has replaced Logar governor Mohammad Tahir Sabari, who was transferred in his current capacity to Badghis.

Political commentator Fazl Rahman Orya told Pajhwok Afghan News Karzai's move was in his personal political interest. The president wanted to field a loyal supporter in the presidential ballot and find a successor who would promote his interest, he said.

But Karzai has publicly denied assertions from his political opponents that he wanted to stay in office beyond the 2014, when his current tenure expires. Under the constitution, he cannot run for a third term.

“Replacing and reappointing officials will not benefit the people in any tangible way. How can an incompetent official do a better job, if he is transferred from one place to another?” the expert asked.

Another commentator, Mohammad Amin Wakman, held a similar view. He said Karzai feared an honest and patriotic president would drag him to court for his deeds. That was why the president was trying to please some former jihadi groups to secure his political future, he thought.

Wakman alleged the present administration lacked policy and energy to serve the masses and could not differentiate between friends and foes, with Karzai striving to complete his days in office.

But Mohammad Hassan Haqyar looked at the shake-up from a different perspective. He said insecurity had escalated in the provinces where new governors had been appointed. The presidential move is aimed at filling the vacuum.

According to Haqyar, residents of some provinces were unhappy with their governors. Therefore, the president moved to replace them. Karzai had kept his promise of bringing positive changes to the government. “Governors who had little local support were sent home and those having local and regional backing have been replaced.”