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## US will Not Leave Afghanistan: Karzai

March 19, 2013

President Hamid Karzai said Monday that the US will not leave Afghanistan alone and described the recent tensions as media propaganda.

Speaking at a joint Afghan government and BBC Persian program of "Jerga-e-Azad", he said that the US wants to sign the Kabul-Washington security agreement in the upcoming three months, but the Afghan government will make its decision with careful accuracy.

"If they accept our demands and it is good for us, then we will sign it," he said.

"The US is not leaving. They will not leave and we should ask them all our demands," Karzai said in response to the question of whether the US will withdraw completely.

He said the talks with the US continue and he encouraged the Afghan people to trust and "don't worry about the future."

On the matter of the Afghan-US relationship being widely regarded as tense, Karzai labeled it propaganda of the western media.

"This is all media propaganda. You are watching my speeches and the US wants to put pressure on us, but we are trying to put them under pressure. But they were more agile in the media than we are," Karzai said.

His comments come after recent speeches where he accused the US of holding secret talks with the Taliban without Afghan involvement and of wanting to stay in Afghanistan to take advantage of its resource-rich mines.

The new US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who was in Kabul at the time, dismissed the comments as not making any sense, while US Ambassador to Afghanistan James Cunningham described them as "inconceivable" given the "blood and treasure" that the US has poured into the country.