

# *Afghan President Says U.S. Started War for Own Interests*

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Kabul, March 4 (RHC)-- Afghan President Hamid Karzai says the United States and its Western allies launched the war in Afghanistan for their own interests. "Afghans died in a war that's not ours," Karzai said in an interview with the Washington Post. He said that the 12-year-old war was "for U.S. security and for Western interests."

The Afghan president also urged the U.S. to end air raids in Afghanistan, saying that, instead of Taliban militants, civilians are being killed in these airstrikes. Karzai affirmed that he will not sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with Washington and that it is up to his successor to make the decision. Afghanistan will hold a presidential election in April.

Karzai stressed that Washington must start peace talks with the Taliban and end raids on Afghan homes before asking Afghans to sign the deal. Last week, Obama ordered the Pentagon to begin planning for a full U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan if the deal is not signed.

The U.S. and Afghanistan are still at odds on some of the terms of the agreement, including immunity for American troops and their attacks on Afghan villages and homes. The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of the so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity remains across the country.

The U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, which has caused record-high civilian and military casualties, has become the longest military conflict in American history. The United States has more than 43,000 troops in the Asian country.



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