



NATO Chief Criticizes Afghan President's Remarks on Foreign Forces



Brussels, October 11 (RHC)-- Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen has rebuked Afghan President Hamid Karzai for his recent comments against the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan.

In a Thursday press conference, Rasmussen strongly rejected Karzai's view that the presence of U.S.-led troops in Afghanistan has caused "a lot of suffering" to the Afghan nation over the past decade.

In response, the NATO chief hailed what he described as a "remarkable progress" in Afghanistan, claiming that the war-torn country "has come a long way in the past 10 years."

Rasmussen further said he is "confident that the Afghan security forces will be able to take full responsibility by the end of 2014 as planned."

In an interview with Britain's state-run broadcaster, BBC, earlier this week, the Afghan president lashed out at U.S.-led NATO forces for failing to bring stability to Afghanistan after more than a decade of presence in the country.

Karzai also said he may not sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States that would allow US forces to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014, if it is not in the interest of his country. Washington is pushing for the agreement to be signed by the end of October.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called



war on terror. The Taliban was removed from power following the offensive, but the country is still grappling with insecurity.