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**Afghan President Implores U.S. to Help**  
by The Associated Press

This AP story also appeared on the following websites:

**Baltimore Sun**  
**Seattle Post-Intelligencer**  
**Globe and Mail (Canada)**  
**E-Ariana – Afghan News**

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Afghan President Hamid Karzai implored the United States on Tuesday not to turn its back on his country as it did 16 years ago after the Soviet Union was forced to retreat from Afghanistan.

Karzai, speaking to a student gathering, said he was worried that once parliamentary elections are held this fall, pressure would mount for the United States to leave the country to its own devices.

This, in turn, could produce a repeat of the "pain, suffering and destruction" that followed in the wake of the Soviet troop withdrawal in 1989, he said.

"I warn you not to make the same mistake again," Karzai said, speaking to a gathering at the School of Advanced International Studies, part of Johns Hopkins University.

Karzai said he was reassured about American staying power when he and President Bush signed a strategic partnership agreement Monday that ensures long-term U.S. support for Afghanistan in economic, security and other sectors.

He predicted Afghanistan will need support from the international community for another 10 to 15 years.

Afterward his speech, Karzai was due to fly to Nebraska, where he will receive an honorary degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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