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Karzai Slams West, Threatens to Join Insurgency

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Afghan President Hamid Karzai has often resorted to playing the “anti-West” card in speeches when his popularity seems to be flagging, as an effort to distance himself from the international occupation forces which keep him in power. But after what could charitably be called a “cool” reception in Kandahar, a city his family and tribal affiliates dominate, the attempts are starting to whif of desperation.

Greeted by tribal elders (again, largely allied with his family) [chastizing him for failing to do anything about the almost ridiculous levels of corruption and bribery in Kandahar](#) (whose province is dominated by President Karzai’s half-brother, Wali), Hamid delivered a speech to local parliamentarians chastising the US for “interference” in Afghanistan’s politics.

The speech appears to have centered chiefly on attacking the US and its NATO allies, and parliament itself, [warning that if they didn’t assent to his takeover of the Electoral Complaints Commission it would give the impression that Afghanistan was Western dominated](#) and grant legitimacy to the Taliban. The [MPs present say that Karzai even threatened to join the insurgency at one point](#).

One Afghan official called Karzai’s comments “shocking,” and US officials, still irked by [Karzai’s claims last week that the massive vote fraud in his favor was a Western conspiracy against him](#), are complaining that the Afghan president is becoming increasing erratic and difficult to work with.

But though there is speculation that this may mean Karzai is on the outs with the Obama Administration, one mustn't forget that twice already in the 15 months since Obama took office there were reports that he was ready to oust Karzai. Yet when push came to shove in the August elections the Obama Administration shrugged off over a million fraudulent votes cast on Karzai's behalf and even praised the election as a success, championing Karzai's legitimacy at a time when many Western nations and perhaps more importantly, a large chunk of the Afghan public, were outraged at the disastrous vote.

Karzai's public antics may be embarrassing for the Obama Administration, but the latest outburst came less than 24 hours after he made a [phone call to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton assuring her of his continued support for the US](#). His public persona seems to be wearing thin domestically, and has long since worn thin internationally, but with the US having just backed his latest five year term it will be exceedingly inconvenient to turn against him now, and a few boisterous speeches are unlikely to be enough of a pretext to do so.