

Analyst urges PGCC member states to engage with Iran

Tehran, Dec ۷, IRNA – Former spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiating team Hossein Mousavian urged PGCC member states to engage with Iran instead of confronting it.

کد خبر: 81416998 | تاریخ خبر: 07/17/2014 - 13:17

He made the remarks during the opening debate of the 10th International Institute for Strategic Studies Regional Security Summit: The Manama Dialogue 2014.

We cannot put conditions or pre-conditions as it won't work and urge dialogue between the PGCC, Iran and Iraq leaders, Mousavian added.

The former nuclear negotiator called for the creation of a coalition, comprising PGCC countries, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and Iran to tackle challenges facing the region including rise of extremism.

'We need to build trust by having a regional platform which is missing at the minute in the region to deal with situations in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries,' said the Princeton University associate research scholar last night.

Iran has influence in the region and there is no doubt about it, he noted.

Mousavian was speaking during the televised debate session hosted by Sky News Arabia, called 'beyond conflict: imagining the future of the Middle East'.

The panel featured Dr Mousavian, Bahrain Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Iraqi Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

Mousavian also spoke of a possible Iran-Saudi Arabia dialogue to defuse ongoing political tensions in the region.

'The Iranian and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia dialogue is extremely important and in 1996 I was mandated to hold secret talks with Saudi officials, which resulted in good relations between the two countries from 1996 to 2005,' he said in response to a question.

The PGCC and Arab countries should decide whether to go with or without Iran, confronting or engaging with it and develop a regional cooperation system similar to the European Union, he noted.

He also said Iran backed its partners in Iraq, Syria and Hezbollah in the fight against the ISIL.

Palestinian crisis is a major cause of trouble in the region, he said, reiterating that regional states should increase cooperation and refuse foreign interference to resolve problems.

Some regional states accuse Iran of interfering in their internal affairs but they should know that Iran had no hand in most of the regional developments including the revolutions in the Arab states including Egypt and Tunisia, the analyst underlined.

He asserted that Iran's support for Lebanese Hezbollah is a support for the Lebanese nation against Israeli aggression.

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