

Iran seeks 'friendly settlement' of Lebanese crisis: Ahmadinejad

Rejecting accusations of Iranian interference in the Lebanon crisis, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Tuesday that Iran sought only a 'friendly settlement' of the crisis there.

'All are doing is to recommend that the relevant sides find a friendly settlement to end the crisis,' Ahmadinejad told reporters in Tehran.

He added that he and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah had agreed to appoint their two foreign ministers - Saud al-Faisal and Manouchehr Mottaki - to follow the issue and find a solution.

'But Saud al-Faisal rejected this - I believe he does not listen to King Abdullah,' Ahmadinejad said.

Saud al-Faisal said Tuesday that Iran's support for the 'coup' of the pro-Iranian Shia movement Hezbollah in Lebanon would affect Tehran's ties with the Arab countries.

'Saud al-Faisal was probably just angry when he said that,' Ahmadinejad commented on the Saudi minister's remarks.

'Basically we are sure that the intelligent people of Lebanon know better than anybody else how to manage themselves, and therefore they should be allowed to decide for themselves,' Ahmadinejad added.

Iran has several times accused the United States and Israel of trying to sow the seeds of discord within the political factions in Lebanon.

Tehran said last week that Iran's sole intention was to play a constructive role in the Lebanon crisis and create a balanced relationship with all Lebanese groups.

Groups linked to Iran and Syria have been accused by the US and Israel of fuelling violent clashes in Lebanon, where the pro-Iranian Shia movement Hezbollah has taken control of much of West Beirut.

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