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## Foreign military presence in Afghanistan escalates insecurity

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“Evidence shows that certain countries seek to prolong their military presence in Afghanistan to achieve their trans-regional objectives,” Salehi said in an address to an international conference on the future of Afghanistan in Kabul on Thursday.

This runs counter to the policies of regional countries and the international community, which are based on peaceful solutions, and it will turn Afghanistan into a scene for security competition, he added.

The Iranian minister emphasized that the 10-year presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan has entailed consequences such as the deterioration of security situation, spread of terrorism, an increase in the production and smuggling of narcotics and organized crimes, massacre of civilians and destruction of cities and villages in various parts of the country.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes an agreement between NATO and Afghanistan on the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014,” Salehi stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi described the rising drug production, smuggling and consumption as a threat to human societies and said the fight against narcotics calls for a full international resolve.

He said the drug-smuggling network in Afghanistan is an integral part of terrorist groups, which provided a source of income for their terrorist goals.

Commenting on Tehran's policy on its eastern neighbor, Salehi said the "expansion of regional cooperation aimed at contributing to a lasting development in Afghanistan is among Iran's major policies."

He also highlighted the Islamic Republic's active participation in issues pertaining to Afghanistan, including the reconstruction of the country.

The top Iranian diplomat welcomed the conference as an opportunity for constructive cooperation in protecting the interests of the Afghan people and stressed the Afghan neighbors' role in the restoration of peace and stability in the war-torn country.

Officials and representatives from 30 regional and trans-regional countries as well as 11 international institutions are attending the international conference on the future of Afghanistan.