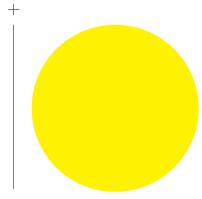
38th Moscow Int'l Book Fair opens with Iran literary heritage on display



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US rules, conditions blocking Iran nuclear talks: Gov't spox

Disarming Hezbollah would **jeopardize** security of Lebanon,

By Mohammad Irani Former Iranian ambassador to Lebanon

entire region

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Lebanon is grappling with an extremely complex situation over proposals to disarm Hezbollah. Despite mounting regional and international pressure to enforce such a plan, its implementation is far from straightforward.

Lebanon is a country built on a sectarian framework defined under the Taif Agreement that ended its 15-year civil war. The political system rests on a delicate balance among three major sects: Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims, each holding a share of power. Any move that disregards the collective interests of these communities risks triggering fresh crises and destabilizing the country.

The issue of disarming Hezbollah has gained urgency in recent months under external pressure from the United States, the Zionist regime of Israel, and Saudi Arabia, alongside internal calls from Christian parties opposed to Hezbollah. A plan recently tabled by Washington envisages the full disarmament of Hezbollah, followed by the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south and, ultimately, the demarcation of precise borders with Israel. However, this proposal clashes with **UN Security Council Resolution** 1701 and earlier agreements between Hezbollah and Israel. Hezhollah has therefore objected to the incomplete implementation of past deals and insists no new plan can proceed until existing commitments are fully honored. In the Lebanese government's latest session, which approved the disarmament of Hezbollah, Shia ministers walked out in protest. This move disrupted the sectarian balance of the cabinet, effectively rendering any decision taken without the participation of one community unlawful and unenforceable.

Nevertheless, Washington continues to push Beirut to carry out this decision, despite the fact that Lebanon's sectarian consensus rejects it. Statesmen across the political and sectarian spectrum warn that such an approach would only complicate matters further. They ar-Page 8 > gue that any resolution must be pursued through dialogue and peaceful negotiation

- the only viable path to a set-

tlement.

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