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## Iran warns of US stay in Afghanistan

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The director general for International and Political Affairs at Iran's Foreign Ministry, Gholam Hossein Dehqani, made the remarks in an address to a UN General Assembly session on Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the withdrawal of the US-led forces from Afghanistan and believes that the longer presence of the foreign troops should not lead to the establishment of permanent military bases in the war-torn state, the Iranian official was quoted as saying in an ISNA report on Friday.

Dehqani referred to official reports indicating that insecurity has increased in Afghanistan ten years after the US invaded the Asian country under the pretext of fighting against terrorism and restoring peace and stability.

He further warned that the longer presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan will merely lay the ground for terrorist cells and extremist groups to thrive.

Insecurity continues to rise across Afghanistan despite the presence of nearly 150,000 US-led forces in the war-battered Asian country.

A United Nations report on Afghanistan issued on September 28 said that the average monthly number of security incidents recorded for the year through the end of August had risen nearly 40 percent, compared with the same period in 2010.

The report also said civilian casualties, already at record levels in the first six months of the year,

rose 5 percent between June and August 2011, compared with the same three-month period in 2010.

Dehqani further stated that poppy cultivation, which helps terrorists and extremists to stoke insecurity, has become a serious challenge for Afghanistan.

He called on the international community to pay heed to a growth in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.